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Introduction: Challenges for Social Sciences and Humanities in Africa

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Introduction

The challenges for humanities and social science research in Africa, and subsequently its products, or representations of Africans in it, are very often disused among social anthropologists, ethnologists, and many other scholars as well. It can be said that most of the challenges and problems are very well identified and described, but the same cannot be said about the prospects on how to tackle those issues. In this article we focus our attention on specific challenges identified by the author as: (1) mild international cooperation between universities and research institutes from Africa and Europe; (2) lack of available funding; (3) domination in the field by non-African scholars; (4) challenging circumstances – civil unrest in some areas; global pandemic of COVID-19; (5) changing social circumstances produced by globalization and cultural unification; (6) tendency towards undifferentiated views on Africa (often negative). This paper, and as a matter of fact this whole special issue of this journal, is an example of how some aspects of those problems were addressed namely by the department of Ethnology and World Studies of University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia; and The Centre for Social and Political Research at the Dar es Salaam University College of Education, Tanzania. I believe that those specific activities undertaken by those two institutions may serve

as an inspiration for other scholars or institutions form various countries on how to address those issues; and may contribute to general improvement to the situation of this discipline; or may intensify and uplift the international cooperation in the discipline; and help with the refinement of its outputs.

Main challenges for humanities and social science in Africa

The relation of humanities and social science of Africa is rather difficult one. It must be acknowledged that there are some sources which contain materials about African people and societies coming from various sources, some of which are even older than those disciplines. But the fields of humanities and social science about Africa and in Africa, such as we understand them today were to a large extent affected by Europeans. Those difficulties stem from objectionable relation of Europe and Africa in history. Both disciplines were for a long time negatively affected by the relations between those two domains. Without any questions slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism, even though some of those practices were used before the disciplines were even established, affected them by a large margin. The types of relations between Europe and Africa led to formation of so called "scientific" theories of racism or social evolution and resulted in the attitudes such as ethnocentrism and paternalism. Even though those theories and attitudes have been unequivocally refuted for several decades, they still affect the discipline even into the present day. Because of the fact that those issues were already discussed by a number of scholars (Grinker, Steiner 2010; Meredith 2011; Mudimbe 1988; Rodney 1972; Trnovec 2019; Tymowski 2009) and because of the limited scope of this paper, they will not be discussed in detail.[1] There is also another reason for this decision, since there are many more recent problems which humanities and social sciences are facing in the present, our attention will be focused more on those specific issues.

As a matter of fact, some of those problems were already identified by various authors in a few scholarly works. Some of them only identify specific challenges faced by those disciplines, other go a bit further by providing the reader with the

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[1] This is just a selection of some of the most influential works illustrating this situation, however, there are many more publications addressing this issue, but for the purpose of this paper, this list should be sufficient.

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propositions about actions which should be taken to further improve the general quality and inclusiveness of those disciplines.

By further analysis of selected articles which are trying to address those issues, it is interesting to see how different authors identified various problems which they decided to address, and how the attention of scholars has been shifting throughout the different times.

For instance, the paper *The Evolution of Social Science in Africa Problems and Prospects* by Abdalla S. Bujra and Thandika Mkandawire (Bujra, Mkandawire 1980) is focused mostly on the evolution of social science in Africa, and it makes use of historical perspective to address this issue. The second part of the paper is concerned mostly with the post-colonial period while the authors examine mostly inherited institutions and the development of institutions and structures of social science research in Africa during that time. In the last part of the paper, the author offers some suggestions concerning the prospects for future development of the discipline in Africa, among which probably the most important is the creation of more institutions with sufficient funding, by which the representation of authors of African origin in social sciences about Africa will be increased.

The second selected paper, *Problems and Prospects of the Social Science in Africa* by Thandika Mkandawire (Mkandawire 1989) is also greatly concerned about historical context of the discipline. In this article author claims that the two most compelling problems which social science in Africa is facing are a relative newness of an indigenous social science in Africa and dramatic changes in the environment of social science in general, in Africa and global changes in the environment (political, natural, economic, social, etc.) which are affecting the social sciences of Africa. Even though the author also utilizes historical perspective in this article, the shift in attention from the history into the more up-to-date problems, can be seen in this article.

This shift of attention in the themes which were concerning scholars who were trying to improve the situation in social sciences of Africa is even more evident in more recent publications, such as for instance *Research Issues in the Humanities and Social Science in Africa in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities* by Kgomotso H. Moahi (Moahi 2010). Among the challenges identified by Moahi are the lack of funding for the research, the lack of time for the research due to teaching loads and administration faced by the scholars and continued marginalization of social science and humanity research. For his argument Moahi uses his personal

experience form the University of Botswana. Moahi argues that improvement of the discipline can be achieved by more intensive collaboration and partnerships among the social scientists within Africa, and by the internationalization of the discipline and increase in the number of interdisciplinary research.

Johann Mouton's *The State of Social Science in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Mouton 2010) focuses its attention mostly on the trends in research outputs of social science from Africa. Mouton cites some very interesting works providing hard data to support his argument, among which the most comprehensive is probably *Africa´s Contribution to the Worldwide Research Literature: New Analytical Perspectives, Trends, and Performance Indicators* (Tijssen 2007) by Robert Tijssen. Tijssen claims that the share of world's science production of sub-Saharan Africa dropped from 1% in 1987 to 0,7% in 1996. It is interesting because overall number of databased social science and humanities research outputs in sub-Saharan Africa is increasing, but because the number of outputs has grown even more significantly worldwide, therefore the result is an overall decrease in percental representation of African based scholars. Another challenging aspect of social science of Africa identified in this text is the number of universities, research institutes and centres in Africa. Mouton argues that the number of the institutes is low, and some of them do not have continuous funding, which can be seen as one of the contributing factors to overall decline of the number of outputs produced by African social science scholars. Further in the text Mouton discusses the models of knowledge production, funding of the research or main themes reoccurring in the research. Mouton concludes that the increasing of capacity of universities and research institution and economical improvement of their situation may help with the tackling of the brain drain problem in Africa. This may result in more inclusive version of social science of Africa.

The latest paper to be examined closely is Mattias Basedau's *Rethinking African Studies: Four Challenges and the Case for Comparative African Studies* (Basedau 2020). Basedau very clearly identifies the four main challenges which African Studies[2] are facing:

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[2]   The main concern of the field of African studies is continent's culture and societies, including history, politics, demography, culture, languages, economy, and religion; so, in this regard it can be perceived as a part of a larger cluster of social sciences of Africa.

1. *research on Africa is strongly dominated by outside, non-African, mostly Western views,*

2. *there is a tendency towards undifferentiated views on "Africa," which usually concentrate on negative aspects, overlooking progress in many areas,*

3. *methodologies that focus on causal identification are rarely used; and*

4. *the field focuses on micro-perspectives while few works examine the big picture and the longue durée* (Basedau 2020, 194).

Basedau provides very interesting data to support his arguments. For instance, the domination of non-African authors in this field of study is confirmed by the analysis of authorship in three leading journals on African studies for years 2019-2020, namely *African Affairs*, *The Journal of Modern African Studies,* and *Africa Spectrum*. Between 2019 and 2020, only 18.18% of articles in *African Affairs* were written by authors based in Africa. *Journal of Modern African Studies* have even fever contributing authors based in Africa, namely 4.17%. The biggest representation of African based scholars from this period, 33.33%, could be found in *Africa Spectrum*. In total the representation of African based authors in those three journals only accounts for 13.64%. Basedau also tries to identify some of the causes, such as the fact that most of the universities in Africa do not have a tenure track that require publications from employees, or that the funding for research is very difficult to get. The second cause identified by the Basedau involves the tendencies among some authors to focus their attention on individual actors, parties, countries, or regions which are facing some problems, and the tendency to generalize their findings onto Africa as a whole, which is creating negative stereotypes. Because of this tendency progress and positive aspects of African reality, such as increase in income or life expectancy or decrease in infant mortality, etc., are often neglected. According to Basedau, the third challenge is the fact, that in social science it is very difficult to identify causation of certain phenomenon which is not surprising because of the nature of the discipline and the type of research it uses. One of the possible solutions to this problem may be the utilization of specific quantitative methods, such as process-tracing, sequential nested research design, or comparative research design. The fourth cause is also supported by the hard evidence, while the sample is the same as with the first one. Among the journals examined in selected period, 85% of all papers are case studies and only 21% of authors consider period of more than ten years. To tackle this problem, cooperation among scholars from different fields of study and of different origin is necessary.

Despite some differences between main challenges recognized by the authors, many similarities can be identified. Based on those corelations and owning to my personal experience as a social scientist focused on Africa, I will outline six main challenges, which the African social science is currently facing, and which can be addressed by a specific form of action. In my opinion those challenges are:

1. Mild international cooperation between universities and research institutes from Africa and Europe

2. Lack of available funding

3. Domination of the field by non-African scholars

4. Challenging circumstances – civil unrest in some areas; global pandemic of COVID-19

5. changing social circumstances produced by globalization and cultural unification.

6. Tendency towards undifferentiated views on Africa (often negative)

I would like to point out, that the sequence of those points does not reflect the notional importance of each point. The order is arbitrary and is affected more by my intentions to gradually reassess each point in the following paragraph.

How to overcome selected challenges for social science in Africa

Even though some scholars focus their attention on identifying the problems faced by social sciences and humanities of Africa, and even though they often provide the reader with the proposal for improvement, it can also be said that they lack concrete examples from practice how to implement those proposals. I firmly believe that this article will be a different one, because instead of proposing the action, we will focus on already preformed activities, which we take to tackle those issues. In previous section we identified some of the relevant challenges which need to be addressed.

The first point is "mild international cooperation between universities and research institutes from Africa and Europe". The reasons for the lack of cooperation are numerous, such as relative distance between two continents and some of its countries especially, relatively short period of time during which universities and research institutions were active, but probably the most importantly the lack of funding. This last problem is also recognized by the European Union. For this specific

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reason, the special program for mobilities of staff and students, named Erasmus+ KA 171, has in recent years prioritized especially the countries from sub-Saharan Africa. The department of Ethnology and World Studies of University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius (UCM) in Trnava (Slovakia) managed to secure funding through this program (apart from universities in other parts of the world) with the Mount Kenya University (MKU)[3] form Kenya and managed to prolong its contract and cooperation through the same platform with the Dar es Salaam University (UDSM)[4] in Tanzania. Because the cooperation between UCM and MKU is relatively new as of writing of this article, I will focus my attention solely on the cooperation between UCM and UDSM. Thanks to this cooperation, several mobilities already took place. In the first phase of the cooperation, the scheme was used mainly to networking of the researchers from those workplaces. Emília Bihariová (2015; 2016), our tragically deceased colleague, used this network to carry out her research focused on Datoga community in Tanzania. As a result of her tragic death, her project was interrupted and both departments had to find new possibilities to take full advantage of the program. After negotiations with the UDSM, an idea was suggested to host an international workshop to strengthen the future cooperation between the departments. This idea came into fruition on 29th of September 2021. The workshop was named *Challenges for Social Science in Africa and Humanities and Social Science Research during COVID-19 Pandemic*. It was hosted by UDSM (namely the The Centre for Social and Political Research at the Dar es Salaam University College of Education) and it took place in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The workshop was co-organized by scholars from UCM, and it was broadcasted online and available to students, scholars, and general public. This brief section of activities illustrates how some of the cooperation can be established and nourished and with the right attitude, some academic fruits can be achieved.

The second point, "lack of available funding," is interrelated with the first one, and the program of Erasmus+ KA 171 can be perceived as one of the first steps to secure funding of especially initial phases of cooperation between universities in Africa and the European Union. There are many other possibilities how to fund research in Africa, however, most of them are regionally or, more specifically, nationally bound. Based on my personal experience with the Slovak grant schemes, it is often very

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3   Erasmus + 022-1-SK01-KA171-HED-000069533

4   Erasmus+ 2019-1-SK01-KA107-060402; 2020-1-SK01-KA107-077790

difficult to include some foreign institutions in the grant, let alone the research institutions and universities from Africa. It is also important to point out that the funding for the projects is very limited and possibilities to secure funding for the project are therefore low. This problem was also addressed in the meetings between representatives from UCM and UDSM, and during the aforementioned workshop, especially by the opening speakers, prof. Katarina Slobodová Nováková, then the dean of the Faculty of Arts of UCM; and prof. Stephen Oswald Maluka, the principal of The Dar es Salaam University College of Education. Those opening speeches focuses their attention apart from other relevant problems on this issue as well. But it is also important to acknowledge, that despite those specific activities by those two institutions, in general it still proves to be a very difficult challenge to tackle.

My third identified challenge for social science in Africa outlined above is "domination of the field by non-African scholars". As mentioned above, it is very often in journals based outside of Africa to publish papers mostly by the scholars from outside of Africa. In many cases, this is not a pure intention of those journals or publishers. I believe that most often it is a result of the fact that the journals are based abroad, and the papers submitted to the journals are most often submitted by the scholars of the institutions which are publishing those journals and their professional network of contacts. This fact only highlights the importance of the first point which we discussed above. Improvement of the cooperation between departments and universities from Africa and Europe can help to address this issue. For this reason, the editors of this very journal decided to publish a special journal issue containing mostly papers written by participants of the aforementioned workshop. This means that the five out of the seven articles in this issue are written by the authors from Africa. We will discuss the content of those article in following sentences.

The fourth identified challenge is "challenging circumstances – civil unrest in some areas; global pandemic of COVID-19". Some of the articles published in this issue are directly responding to one of the challenging circumstances, which in great deal affected the research in social science and humanities mostly between 2020 - 2022. Namely it is Amani Lusekelo's *Framing of COVID-19 News in Font-Page Headlines of Standard (Hardcore) Swahili Newspapers in Tanzania*. This paper analyses how the words themselves are affecting the way in which we understand the COVID-19 pandemic. In the paper, Lusekelo analyses the way how the pandemic was represented in the headlines of three major newspapers circulating in Tanzania, namely Habarileo, Mwananchi and Uhuru. Lusekelo argues that contrary to the findings of some other scholars, Tanzanians were taking the pandemic seriously

even during the rule of President John Magufuli. He claims that the existence of specific connotative strategies of communication surrounding the pandemic is a proof of this. Hija Alfani Urassa's paper named *COVID-19 Control: Challenges and Responses of Muslims in Tanzania* analyses the ways in which Muslim community in Tanzania responded to the pandemic and the ways in which the community helped with the adherence of Muslims to control measures installed by the government of Tanzania, despite the fact that some of those measures directly and arguably negatively affected some of the religious practices of the group, such as prayers (*Salah*) or fasting during the Ramadan. Urassa argues that the positive role played by the Islamic religion in tackling the pandemic justifies the importance of involving faith-based communities in solving this problem. The third paper addressing this issue was written by Amani Lusekelo, Chrispina Alphonce and Onesmo Nyinondi, and it is called *The Language of the Public Spaces in Tanzanian Universities during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. It analyses the ways in which messages concerning the spread of COVID-19, made by the Central Government of Tanzania, were presented at the universities in Tanzania. The authors argue that even though in this sector of society, English words used to be commonly used to share similar types of the messages in the past, in the case of COVID-19, the messages in signposts at universities in Tanzania used mostly Kiswahili language. Despite the fact those articles address very specific problems, it can be said that social scientists in Africa are also rapidly adapting to challenging circumstances which are affecting not only the social science, but as a matter of fact are faced by the society. The article written by Josefína Kufová and Kateřina Mildnerová called *Co-productive Strategies and Grassroots Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic inn Urban Settings of Zambia* was not presented during the aforementioned international workshop but was included in this issue since it also discusses the pandemic of COVID-19, just like most of the articles presented in this issue. This article explains how religious representatives affected the way in which the pandemic was perceived by the local people from Zambia. It is interesting to see the interplay between the locally produced explanation about the nature of the virus and vaccine with the global hoaxes.

The fifth challenge was labelled "changing social circumstances produced by globalization and cultural unification." As a result of globalization and other so-called modernisation projects, the diversity of cultures and their specific manifestations are on the decline. This situation is probably more worrying for traditional ethnographers and ethnologists who focus their attention mostly on describing the specific forms of cultures, but it must be acknowledged by the social sciences and humanities as well.

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This process underlines the fluidity of the culture and its tendency to constantly develop and respond to environmental stimuli. This nature of the culture may be seen as challenging, but it also offers researchers probably never-ending possibilities to study those processes and specific responses of certain communities or cultures to them. I think that the other two articles in this issue are examples of this exact phenomena. Stephano Lazaro Ayo's *Failure of Ujamaa in Modernising Wataturu Community in Igunga from Early 1970s to the Mid of 1980s* describes the response of Wataturu community (a segment of large Datooga ethnic cluster) to so-called policy of *Ujamaa*. This socio-economic policy was inspired by the ideas of socialism, adapted to African conditions and its main goal was to resettle the segments of populations into newly established villages or cities, which were meant to be participating on collective production. This scheme was applied between 1967 and the mid-1980s. The Wataturu community did not comply with this program. Most of the scholars who previously described this issue focused their attention on the failure of the program, its economic consequences, land disputes or social unrest resulting from unsuccessful implementation. Ayo argues that the socio-cultural setup of the community is not described in those accounts in detail, even though it was probably the most important factor contributing to Waataturu resilience towards this program. Kerindo Abeid Sumara's paper *The "Nets and Anchors" on the Indian Community in Mwanza City, Tanzania: Ethnographic Challenges and Encounters* describes the difficulties encountered by Sumara in his ethnographic research on Indian community living in Mwanza City. The most difficult challenge for the author to tackle was a utilization of social distancing because of prevention from the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the neglect of the community to speak with the stranger or initial fears to share the information with the outsider. This fact stems from the recent history of the community, which results in certain attitudes towards "outsiders".

The last challenge identified in this paper is "Tendency towards undifferentiated views on Africa (often negative)". I probably do not need to point the finger on many scholars who focus their attention primarily on negative aspects of the social life in Africa. However, it is important to point out that those types of studies are very important and can be very helpful for the prevention of for instance civil unrests, wars, or some cultural practices, which prove to be very dangerous to the health and well-being of people who undertake them (such as female circumcision). But it is also very important to acknowledge some progress made in Africa, or, even more interestingly, to shed a new light on some practices which may be seen as cruel by some outsiders. Such an article will be published in the next issue of this journal. It

was written by Hosiana Abrahamu and is called *Infanticide: A Survival Strategy among the Gweno People during the Early Colonial Period in Tanganyika*. This paper, as its name suggest, tries mainly to reconstruct the reasons why this practice was exercised by the Gweno People who inhabit the Kilimanjaro region in northern Tanzania. Abrahamo argues that infanticide practices served as a socio-political, economic, and cultural survival strategy for them, and they were used most often during the times in which the existence of the whole group was in jeopardy. Apart of this whole article focused on this specific problem, it can also be said that all the articles present in this special issue are in one way or another tackling this challenge, even though indirectly. They do not tend to create negative stereotypes about Africa, and they are very precise in addressing selected issues.

Conclusion

 I believe that most of the readers will agree with the assertion that the humanities and social sciences, like culture itself, are inherently dynamic. And the same can be said about the challenges faced by those fields of study. Because of this, I firmly believe, that it is important to re-evaluate which of the challenges have been overcome, which are still relevant, and which are new. Identifying the problem is however only the first step in the long process of addressing those issues. The positive action aimed to address those issues is arguably even more important.

This special issue of *Ethnologia Actualis* consists mostly of the papers presented during the joint international workshop called *Challenges for Social Science in Africa and Humanities and Social Science Research during COVID-19 Pandemic* organized by UCM and UDSM. Because five articles out of seven in this issue are written by African authors, the representation of African scholars in the research focused on Africa is increased. Since the workshop was organized in September 2021, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the articles published in this issue are directly or indirectly addressing this problem. Some of the articles are more concerned with the specific effects of the pandemic on culture, other address this issue as a form of a challenge which faced by social sciences. It can also be said that those challenges are bringing opportunities for a new topic which needs to be addressed by scholars. The changing social circumstances identified as one of the challenges for social sciences can be also seen as an opportunity, because their by-products are new topics which can be discussed by social scientists, as was mentioned in the previous paragraph. Even though only one of the articles was used

as an example of how to overcome "tendency towards undifferentiated views on Africa (often negative)," it can be said that all of the articles presented in this special issue are examples on how to avoid this tendency in one way or another. Because of this, it can be said that thanks to the cooperation between UCM and UDSM this special issue and articles themselves are examples on how some of the problems which our field of study is facing can be addressed.

It must be said that the impact of those actions is limited but they should not be underestimated. The limited effects of them are a result of the fact that those actions originate from individual actors and departments in which they work at, with very limited systematic support for them. Despite those facts, I believe that this issue will prove that the determination of some individual actors can be effective and can serve as an example for others, so it is important in its own regard. I believe that by following this example or by creating even more effective forms of action or by gaining more of a systematic support for this field of the study some of those challenges can be overcome. But as I mentioned earlier, because of the very nature of the discipline or its subject of study, there will almost certainly be some new challenges, which we will need to address in the future.

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Co-Productive Strategies and Grassroots Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic in Urban Settings of Zambia

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Co-Productive Strategies and Grassroots Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic in Urban Settings of Zambia

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the systemic and grassroots response to the COVID-19 health crisis in the urban settings of Zambia. The research examines the cooperative strategies of local actors – traditional health practitioners, pastors and prophets of Pentecostal and Spirit-type churches and actors of non-governmental and state health organizations in addressing the COVID-19 crisis in Zambian urban settings of Lusaka and Livingstone. The paper explores the levels of perception and conceptualization of the disease held by local community authorities (cultural brokers) and explains how they may differ from state-orchestrated medical explanations and recommendations. The authors argue that local cultural epistemologies, which are activated in times of crisis, can be seen as co-productive strategies in the systemic and executive response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

KEY WORDS: Christian pastors and prophets; COVID-19 pandemic; medical culture; state health organizations; traditional healers; urban Zambia

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on social life and the healthcare system worldwide. In the urban setting of Zambia, namely the capital city Lusaka and Livingstone, where we carried out the ethnographic research in 2022, the response to the crisis has been shaped by the specific medical culture, which consists of the traditional health practitioners, pastors, and prophets of African Christian Independent Churches (AIC´s), and the biomedical sector. As people have faced the crisis, they have often turned to locally specific cultural explanations of misfortune to help them understand and cope with the situation.

In this paper, we will explore the systemic and executive responses to the COVID-19 crisis in those urban settings, focusing on how these different actors have cooperated to address the crisis. We will examine how traditional health practitioners, pastors (and prophets), and state and non-governmental health organizations have worked together to disseminate medical knowledge about COVID-19 and vaccination amongst members of local communities. We will also explore the strategies of these local actors that have internalized and shared local cultural perceptions of the disease, which often differ from state-sanctioned medical explanations and recommendations.

In the case of COVID-19, the lack of effective transmission of medical information from state authorities has led to the adoption of alternative interpretations and a shift in focus from symptoms to the causes and nature of the illness. We will explore how these different coping strategies have interacted and negotiated within the contested realities of medical and spiritual conceptualizations of the disease and pandemic.

Our aim is to show that these grassroots initiatives have played a crucial role in responding to the crisis in the poverty-stricken compounds of Lusaka and Livingstone. By providing information and material aid to local communities, these actors have helped to mitigate the impact of the pandemic to the population in the densely inhabited compounds. We will also argue that local cultural epistemologies, based on witchcraft and spiritual explanations of misfortune, are not necessarily counter to state health politics, but may be interpreted as creative and co-productive strategies in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

The basic conceptual and methodological framework was derived from the premises of ethnography. To fulfill the aim of the research, the design of a multi-sited ethnographic research was chosen, using methods of semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and desk research. The combination of these methods allowed us to employ emerging emic analytical categories and to better understand their intertwined meanings, thus broadening our interpretation framework. This paper is based on a three-week long fieldwork that was carried out in January and February 2022.

Our research sample consisted of traditional healers, Christian pastors (and prophets) and representatives of both governmental and non-governmental institutions, namely Traditional Health Practitioners' Association of Zambia (THPAZ), Zambian National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI) which is a part of Ministry of Health, Office Health District in Livingstone, Church Health Association of Zambia (CHAZ), Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) and Zambia Albinism Matters Organization. To specify the research sample, 28 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Ten interviews with traditional healers, ten interviews with pastors (and prophets), and eight with representatives from aforementioned institutions. A part of the interviews was conducted in English, but some had to be done in local languages, particularly chiNyanja and chiTonga, hence we had to cooperate with local translators. We carried out participatory observations of church services in two Zion churches and two Pentecostal churches. This short-term research follows on from the long-term ethnographic fieldwork carried out by Katerina Mildnerová who published the book *From where does the bad wind blow? Spiritual healing and witchcraft in Lusaka, Zambia* (2015).

As traditional healers operate mostly in the margins and cannot advertise their services (according to the Constitution of THPAZ), we first contacted the THPAZ headquarters to get in touch with a few healers that could participate in our research. The association also provided us with a Research permit and recommendation for participation of traditional healers in the research. We approached most of our participants by using the snowball technique. We also analyzed primary documents, pamphlets and audio-visual materials related to COVID-19 issued by the involved organizations.

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Medical culture

By the term medical culture, we mean a pluralist and dynamic complex of socio-cultural representations linked to health, diseases, and body, as well as diagnostic, prophylactic, and therapeutic practices in each place and time. Medical culture in the urban setting of Zambia consists of three different but coexisting, interlocked, and mutually influencing "healing/medical sectors". Firstly, it is Christian spiritual healing churches that include African independent churches, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches, secondly it is a sector of traditional medicine and thirdly, a sector of biomedicine (Mildnerová 2015).

According to the estimate of Zambia Statistics Agency, 95.5% of the country's population is Christian; of these, 75.3% identify as Protestant, and 20.2% as Roman Catholic (Office of International Religious Freedom 2022). Belonging to the church community is thus a fundamental part of social life and social identity of many Zambians. In the compounds[1] of Lusaka and Livingstone, the Pentecostal and prophet-healing churches are the most popular. The common typical feature of these churches includes a strong emphasis on healing through the power of the Holy Spirit, fighting evil and witchcraft, strong faith and prayers which are believed to have healing power. These church communities serve as important social bodies that provide solid social networks of mutual support and solidarity for their members in times of social, economic, and health-related hardship. While classical churches (such as Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists etc.) rely primarily on the Western-type medical care system, Pentecostal and Spirit-type churches are mainly involved in spiritual healing. However, there are significant differences between these latter types of churches. Whereas pastors from Pentecostal churches generally consider indigenous medicine as a source of evil and witchcraft, most Spirit-type churches, such as Zion or Mutumwa church, have much in common with the indigenous medico-religious system. Another significant difference, which became most visible once the state restricted gatherings due to COVID-19, is the way of how these churches represent themselves. In this context, the Pentecostals

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[1]   Compound, a term common throughout the southern African region, first came to use for housing types adopted at the gold and diamond mines in South Africa in the late 1980s. In postcolonial Zambia, the semantic field of the term has come to encompass all low-income areas (Hansen 2005).

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showed to have a comparative advantage over the other religious organizations with their long-term experience with the media and especially the Internet. They have been using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube as popular means of not only for representing their religious ideology, but also for sharing and spreading various religious explanations of COVID-19. At the same time Pentecostal churches use their own media and websites to promote so-called COVID-19 "golden rules" and to proclaim their effort to join a nation-wide fight against the pandemic.

Second sector we investigated is that of traditional medicine. According to World Health Organization (WHO) statistics from 2020, about 70% of the Zambian population regularly use traditional medicine (Muyenga, Musonda, Chigunta 2022). Like the prophets and priests, traditional healers have high credibility and authority among Lusaka dwellers. Since the 1980s, the Zambian government has started incorporating traditional healers in the national health care system. This led to the formation of the Traditional Health Practitioners' Association of Zambia (THPAZ) that patronizes activities of more than 35 000 registered traditional healers in Zambia today. The ratio of traditional healers (registered with THPAZ) to the whole population stands 1:371, compared with a ratio of one medical doctor to 13 000 people. Thus, the use of traditional medicine in Zambia is widely accepted and used among Zambians (Lungu 2019, 5). Although the Government of the Republic of Zambia recognizes traditional medicine, it is neither integrated with allopathic medicine nor with the national health system.

The third sector involved in the medical culture is biomedicine, which represents the mainstream of the national health care system. It provides standardized, evidence-based treatment validated through biological research and a network of formally trained doctors, nurses, and other practitioners. This sector encompasses a few state or private hospitals, clinics and specialized medical facilities that are financed from the state budget and from international donor organizations (USAID, WHO, Red Cross etc.). The biomedical treatment is generally not very popular among Zambians living in Lusaka compounds because of perceived incompatibility of scientific and local cultural conception of illness. In their eyes, biomedicine is ineffective and incapable of dealing with social and spiritual causes of illness. As belief in cultural aetilologies, such as spirit possession, or witchcraft, pervades the mind of most Zambians, the option of indigenous therapy or therapy in African Christian churches is the most popular (Mildnerová 2015).

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Conceptual and theoretical framework

While the former anthropological works on interpretation of misfortune, illness, and suffering published in the 1970s and 1980s[2] were mainly concerned with the symbolic aspects of healing and a structure and a function of rituals of affliction, medical anthropologists from the 1990s onwards started to emphasize pragmatic social actors' perspective and to focus on the agency of local actors. They were interested in how the actors practically respond to suffering. What is their knowledge arising from practical experience? How do they hedge against uncertainty and suffering through particular action? In the same way, we approached our local actors, traditional healers, pastors, and prophets. Our goal was to investigate how they are contributing in practice to the fight against COVID-19 in Zambia while using different systems of knowledge.

In our interpretations, we also drew from the concept of culture brokering that Jezewski and Sotnik (2001) define as "an act of bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of differing cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change". Zambian healers, prophets and priests are typical cultural brokers who mediate and translate messages produced by state-level policies to local communities. As the culture brokers they can act in both directions. They provide a sort of "semiotic translation" between the system of biomedical knowledge and other cultural systems of knowledge. At the same time, they use a community-based approach in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. As they represent local authorities endowed with power, credibility, and authority, they can easily mobilize and sensitize members of local communities.

To understand the local conceptualisations of misfortune, suffering, and disease, we also employed the concept of symptomatic and aetiological idioms of Susan Reynolds Whyte (1997). These idioms are culturally conditioned ways of interpreting misfortune and diseases that are at the same time socially constructed and situationally negotiated according to medical contexts, in the course of therapy shopping, and by means of therapeutic trial. Symptomatic idiom treats common sickness using herbal medicine or biomedical pharmaceutics. Most usually, it is the

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[2]   For example Bucher 1980; Devisch 1993; Douglas 1996; Jacobson-Widding a Westerlund 1989; Janzen 1992; Turner 1970; 1968.

first option in a quest for therapy in Zambia. However, when the sickness worsens or spreads to other members of the family, it is taken as an indication that a higher level of explanation is needed. The treatment thus shifts from symptomatic into an "aetiological idiom". The healer searches for the cause of the sickness by means of divination that identifies the agent lying behind the symptoms. Invisible agents, human or non-human (spirits, ghosts, sorcerers etc.), must not only be diagnosed, but also addressed and dealt with through the ritual mechanism of negotiation, exchange, and reciprocation. The main goal of the therapy is to adjust or harmonize the spiritual relationship between a patient and an agent and thus alleviate the patient's suffering (Whyte 1997).

In our paper we also consider the anthropological concept of multiple modernities based on critics of linear modernisation theory that proclaims the progress from tradition to modernity. Authors such as Comaroff and Comaroff (1993), Copper (2005), Ferguson (2006), Geschiere, Mayer and Pels (2008), Meyer (1999) and others emphasize that African modernities should be studied as a historical phenomenon that is still developing in relation with the Other (Europe and the rest of world). "This relational study of modernity in Africa takes into account the forms of globalization, extraversion and appropriation by inhabitants of the African continent and its others and the creative recombination of elements of modern package with its local and global alternatives" (Horáková 2011, 35).

The cultural ideas and beliefs linked to the interpretations of misfortune and disease in contemporary urban settings of Zambia (particularly in Lusaka and Livingstone) represent the cluster of revitalized cultural and religious traditions (belief in witchcraft, magic contagion, mashawe spirit possession, spiritual danger of albinism etc.) adapted to modern society. Cultural local specifics contain both traditional and modern elements, mixed and recombined with globalized modern cultural patterns which give rise to various forms of cultural syncretism and cultural hybridity (Appadurai 1996; Hannerz 1996; 2002).[3] At the same time these local discourses (in particular those about witchcraft) epitomize the "modernity ambivalence"

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[3]   When talking about cultural hybridity in Africa, we should take into account on the one hand the experience of mixed times referring to the coexistence and interspersion of premodernity, modernity and postmodernity and the process of migration and mobility as a multi-directional current, flow, circulation of cultural ideas, values, discourses and identities that overflow over physical borders and imaginary boundaries (Appadurai 1996; Hannerz 2002).

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encompassing both attraction and discontentment of modernity as critical studies of many recent anthropologists studying Africa showed (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Ferguson 2006; Geschiere 2002). The influence of mass media, new technologies and other aspects of modernity (such as commodification, individualization, citizenship, and democratization etc.) on local cultural discourses is particularly noticeable in contemporary Zambian urban settings. The ideas on witchcraft and albinism that are presented on the Internet, press and television spread quickly and impact on many people.

COVID-19 and Zambia

The Central and Southern African regions have been least affected by the pandemic of COVID-19 in the African continent. Southern African countries, including Zambia, accounted for only one sixth of the confirmed cases in the whole Africa. "One of the major challenges in the management of and the fight against COVID-19 in many African countries, such as Zambia, is the poor health care systems. Compared to other countries in the region such as South Africa, Botswana and Namibia, Zambia has a weaker health care system because of lack of modern facilities in form of infrastructure and equipment, and the low funding" (Lombe, Phiri, Madabwe 2020).

Since the emergence of COVID-19, Zambia has experienced four waves.[4] The first wave reached its peak in July-August 2020. The second wave started in February 2021 but was shortly followed by the third wave in July 2021. The third wave was the most severe one, as it brought an increased number of hospitalizations and mortality. The fourth wave started in December 2021 and was accompanied by the highest positivity rate so far, although it did not surpass the third and second waves in mortality (Masebo 2022).

The Zambian government adopted the WHO´s recommended prevention methods to limit the further spread of the disease. The Ministry of Health of Zambia with the

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[4]   In the first half of 2020, Zambia had an insignificant number of cases and deaths. In the second half of the year the number of cases increased from 1594 at the end of June 2020 to 20,727 by the end of the year. This upward trend in the number of cases continued in 2021 reaching 89,009 cases by 6 April 2021. A similar trend has also been observed in the number of deaths, which rose from 24 at the end of June 2020 to 1,222 on 6 April 2021 (Worldometer 2022).

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help of other governmental and non-governmental institutions[5] strengthened surveillance of COVID-19 by introducing lockdown and testing which led to a particular decrease of cases. Besides, there has been a strong call for all Zambian adults to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as a way of controlling the pandemic, especially after general elections in August 2021. However, since the launch of the vaccination programs, there has been a high level of vaccine hesitancy.

The first reported case of COVID-19 in Zambia was confirmed in March 2020. Shortly after, the Zambian government introduced protective measures to mitigate against the spread of the disease. The first systemic response was enforcement of a partial lockdown, closure of a few international airports, religious and educational institutions, and other places offering non-essential services. Simultaneously, the Zambian government introduced the recommendation methods issued by the WHO, five "golden rules", which included wearing a mask in public, maintaining physical distance, increased hand hygiene, avoiding crowded places, and seeking medical attention and isolation if symptomatic. Furthermore, restrictions on mass gatherings, such as church services, have been limited to a maximum of fifty people. Surveillance of respiratory infections has been reinforced to help identify the COVID-19 cases and monitor the disease outbreaks. Testing and other screening strategies were put in motion, focusing on the high-risk population (United Nations 2020).

Second wave of the pandemic, which began in December 2020, led to an increase of both morbidity and mortality. The Ministry of Health of Zambia started a vaccination campaign in April 2021, but their efforts were not successful. The campaign was accompanied by a significant level of vaccine hesitancy.

The third wave hit the country in June 2021 and gradually became the most serious one yet, as the positivity, hospitalization and death rates increased. Zambia lacked necessary medical equipment for testing, intensive care unit beds, and other resources. Furthermore, Zambia held presidential and parliamentary elections in August 2021, that were preceded by mass gatherings and rallies without strict compliance to masking up and social distancing. Due to the scarcity of resources,

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[5]   Namely Traditional Health Practitioners' Association of Zambia (THPAZ), Zambian National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI), Office Health District in Livingstone, Churches Health Association of Zambia (CHAZ) and Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ)

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non-compliance with the preventive measures, and unsuccessful vaccination campaign, the spread of the virus was accelerated (Mudenda et al. 2022).

At the end of December 2021, a predicted fourth wave started, which yet again brought the increase of hospitalization and deaths, even amongst children (Masebo 2022). The vaccination coverage continued to be the focus of interest for the Ministry of Health of Zambia and other institutions, as the vaccination remained a key factor in averting serious cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. At the same time, several publicly circulating narratives based on mythologization of both the COVID-19 disease and the vaccination occurred, which created barriers preventing an increase in vaccination rates (Mudenda et al. 2022). A vaccination campaign focused on disseminating medical-based knowledge on the disease led to an increase in vaccination rate during early months of 2022.

Approach to COVID-19 pandemic in Zambia at state, civic and community level

As Zambia suffered through multiple COVID-19 waves, a few local emic conceptualizations and explanations were circulating throughout the communities and public spaces. As a result, attempts of the governmental institutions to spread biomedical awareness about COVID-19 in the communities were not fully sufficient. A prominent campaign of the Ministry of Health aimed at spreading information about the five "golden rules" and ways to be adhered to was launched. Billboards, radio and TV spots, newspapers and pamphlets informed about the preventive measures. Compliance with the regulations turned out to be complicated for several reasons. Masking up in public showed to be difficult due to insufficient distribution of face masks by the government into local urban compounds. Lack of funds and unequal accessibility of masks, together with an absence of explanation about how the masks work, resulted in their half-hearted usage. Our participants either wore them out of obligation, but were not convinced about their functionality, or used them repetitively, kept them in unsanitary places, or used them randomly, not systematically and consciously. Maintaining physical distance proved to be the most difficult rule to follow, as most of the urban population lives in densely inhabited compounds. This rule was primarily criticised by traditional healers living in these areas. Moreover, it is quite common to see that a whole family shares one or two rooms, which makes the isolation impossible. Moreover, isolation of an individual stays in contrast to the traditional way of treating patients in the family circle. The family usually serves as a

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decision-making body that determines an appropriate type of treatment based on consultation with a traditional healer or a Christian pastor. The therapy is thus always a collective issue.

In addition, more than half of the population in Zambia has insufficient access to water or washing facilities, which is problematic for following the rule of hands-washing. During our research, we witnessed several places that had small portable hand-washing facilities accessible to their visitors. Many of these facilities were governmental or belonged to an NGO. Frequently visited churches and establishments in the compounds were nearly always lacking any sanitation station. We did witness, however, a change in people's personal greetings, shaking hands has been replaced by a touch of elbows to limit direct contact.

Because most Zambians are believers and often visit church multiple times a week, adhering to the rule of avoiding crowded places turned out to be challenging, especially when they believe that praying and showing devotion to God can keep them from getting ill. Like isolation of symptomatic individuals, seeking medical attention was also problematic. To get tested for COVID-19, a person must be recommended by a medical doctor and go to a specific testing spot. However, in the localities of our research, the testing spots were in scarcity.

Another prominent state campaign was aimed at raising vaccination rates that have been one of the lowest in all Africa. Vaccination campaign was supported by different church organizations and their leaders, who took part in the campaign together with newly elected political leaders. The head of programmes at CCZ explained to us: "*We did a research survey which was two months ago (11/2021) Zambia only had 3% vaccinated, now 3% is a little bit scary. So we thought as a church we could jump in and try to help the government efforts. Currently, and of course I cannot contribute this only to us, it has gone to 27%*" (Interview, Lusaka, February 2022).

The new government swiftly shifted its strategy from COVID-denial propaganda to pro-vaccination campaigns. This approach heightened the position of church leaders as trustworthy authorities even more in the eyes of people.

The Zambian government was not the only entity involved in creating strategies and fighting COVID-19 at the national level. Although the Zambian National Public Health Institute, which is a part of the Ministry of Health, was the main body responsible for the response to the pandemic, they closely cooperated with other organizations as well. As our research mainly aimed at the response of local communities to

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introduced regulations, we also focused on cooperation of government with local institutions, namely Traditional Health Practitioners' Association of Zambia (THPAZ), Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) and Church Health Association of Zambia (CHAZ).
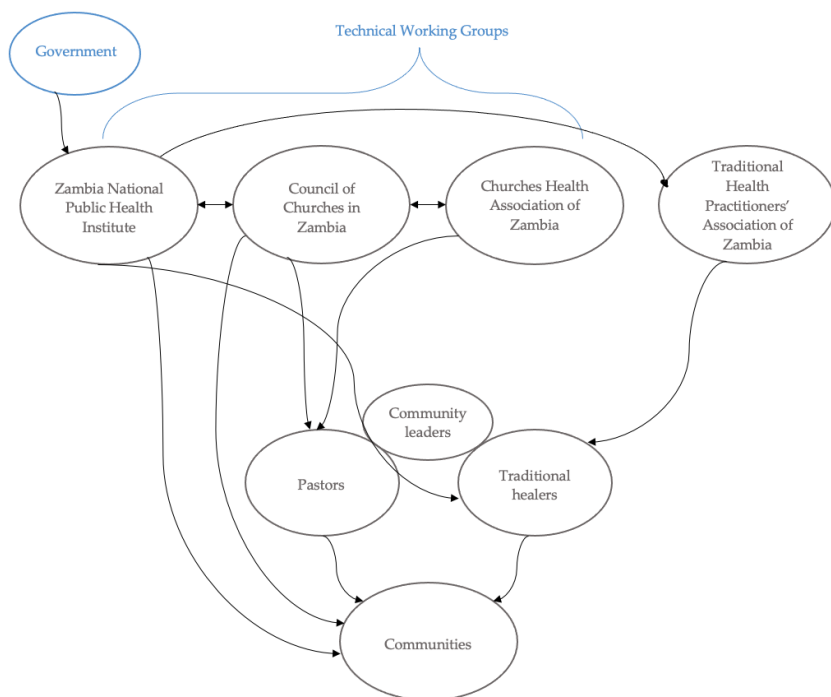
Figure 1: *Schema of the cooperation of organizations and actors in the fight against COVID-19 in Zambia.*

The scheme above shows the ways of cooperation between the Zambian government (mainly the Ministry of Health), governmental institutions, community authorities (culture brokers) and communities. As our research disclosed, there were several top-down strategies aimed at disseminating medical-based knowledge about COVID-19, its prevention and vaccination into communities, as well as bottom-up strategies of its acceptance and refusal. Apart from the golden five rules and vaccination campaigns, ZNPHI´s cooperative activities focused on organization of

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seminars targeting community gatekeepers (traditional leaders, pastors, civil leaders). The aim of these seminars was to convey biomedical information on the pandemic from medical professionals to local leaders to clear the confusion surrounding the disease in the communities through public debate. To fulfil this aim, the ZNPHI established cooperation mainly with leaders of THPAZ who were supposed to inform traditional healers about the prevention of COVID-19. However, as it follows from interviews with THPAZ leaders, their main area of interest was not so much in public education about COVID-19 as in a joint effort to scientifically test traditional medicines (in state medical laboratories) to find an effective herbal cure for COVID-19. "*We as traditional health practitioners have got medicine and we are ready to work with the government (...) we are confident that the cure will be found*" said Dr. Nyoni, the general secretary of THPAZ (Interview, Lusaka, January 2022).

As for the vaccination campaign, the Ministry of Health decided to approach affected urban communities by offering mobile vaccination booths for churches during their main church gatherings as well as to directly approach people living in poverty-stricken compounds by means of door-to-door vaccination.

Organizations linked to Christian churches in Zambia (CCZ and CHAZ) also engaged in crisis-response and strategies to help tackle the pandemic. They cooperated with ZNPHI on various events involving their members, in a similar manner as THPAZ. The CCZ was a part of the governmental Technical Working Groups created for the purpose of managing the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Technical Working Group, as an umbrella group that brings together experts from different fields and institutions, elaborated the most suitable solutions for emerging problems. Although CHAZ focuses mostly on running health establishments, it also joined the fight against COVID-19 by providing health information to the community. CHAZ members organized meetings for pastors and scientists, where they discussed their concerns. In addition, both CHAZ and CCZ use the media to advocate for vaccination and compliance with the preventive measures.

During the first phase of the outbreak of pandemic, the CCZ´s specialists focused primarily on creating public awareness and distributing highly needed hygiene items (i.e. sanitizers, masks) to poverty-stricken compounds. During the second phase, they advocated for vaccination and created so-called action plans. Being aware that several alternative interpretations are circulating in the communities, they focused on fighting these local cultural perceptions of COVID-19 and created plans on how to overcome them. For this purpose, CCZ cooperated with individual church leaders

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and other community leaders who analyzed the issues and searched for solutions. Most often, the CCZ identified leaders with medical background, who could pose as credible authorities. "*We identified the issue that there is a lack of knowledge of the vaccine and the agreed action is to invite health personnel to come sit and talk. Despite the Covid fear, people still come to church. So we are using the platforms to call medical personnel to come and do Q&A session*" says Mr. Chibwana, the head of programmes at CCZ (Interview, Lusaka, February 2022). CCZ also helped translate medical brochures to local languages and distributed them among compound dwellers.

Although many above-mentioned organizations engage in programs focused on COVID-19, community-level response to those efforts is not fully satisfactory. Despite the attempts of church organizations to refute biomedical information amongst pastors, not all of them identify with and adhere to this explanation. Some pastors, mainly of Pentecostals churches located in compounds, employ a different strategy on how to approach COVID-19 crisis and proclaim the spiritual interpretation of the pandemic.

However, there are other pastors (both Pentecostal and from other AIC's) who endeavor to refute these misinterpretations through media broadcasting and talk about how the Scripture is being misinterpreted.

Similar interpretations surround the vaccination, which is also one of the reasons and causes of Zambia's high COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy. However, reluctance of Zambians to get vaccinated against COVID-19 is a multifactorial issue – it is influenced by lack of objective information (and prevalence of disinformations circulating in internet media space), concerns about vaccine´s safety, sensitization of the disease or general mistrust in the vaccine itself due to competing beliefs about its origin (Mudenda et al. 2022). "*We are getting the key people, the bishops and others, to these messages of this nature to the church. It's different, when a church leader stands in front and says this or a politician stands and says this, it's different, they will trust the church leader*" adds Mr. Chibwana (Interview, Lusaka, February 2022).

As we observed, all above-mentioned top-down campaigns focused primarily on the prophylactic aspect of the pandemic. However, they lacked any aetiological explanation of what exactly the COVID-19 itself is (and what are its causes) as well as a therapeutic explanation of how to behave once a person gets sick. In other

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words, the "golden rules" based on principle "what to do", that were widely spread among the people, lacked the important follow-up information "what the COVID is" for better understanding of the prophylactic measures – "why to adhere to it".

This finding led us to argue that most Zambians adhere to the "golden rules" from civil obedience, to avoid punishment for non-compliance. As the pure medical explanations about COVID-19 from the state authorities are not well transmitted and apprehended by local people, they tend to explain the pandemic by framing it into the more familiar cultural aetiologies. In other words, the information vacuum of the pandemic left room for alternative cultural interpretations and shifted people´s focus from simple symptomatological level to a deeper aetiological level, i.e. of understanding the causes and nature of the illness.

Multiple frames of meaning of COVID-19

Our research disclosed several types of explanations of the pandemic circulating in the society in urban areas of Zambia. It was a conglomerate of ideas, perceptions, myths, and interpretations that shaped the meaning of the disease of COVID-19. Cultural and religious explanations of the pandemic (such as influenza, or HIV/AIDS) were common in the past and usually linked with either individual, or collective aspects of human morality. While the former explains a new disease as a product of individual transgression of socio-cultural norms, religious taboos, or God's commandments, the latter see the new disease as God's punishment of collective sinful mankind´s behavior.

As our research indicates, the individual moral level of aethiology has not been much activated during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it was during the HIV/AIDS pandemic (in 1990´s) that produced victimized and socially stigmatized groups of "sinners". The HIV/AIDS pandemic also created the ground for reaffirming the social values of the majority against the group of culprits. However, even in the case of COVID-19 pandemic, the same pattern of searching for "culprits" occurred to a lesser extent – that of people with albinism.

„*They say it's connected to Covid, at some point people were attacking persons with albinism (..) because people cannot find out where Covid came from, it's a sudden thing, nobody understands and people were saying perhaps it's persons with albinism (...) they were hunting them, because they said when we kill them that it will probably lessen up the cases, the number of people dying out of COVID-19. We had*

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to take a stance as an organization to communicate with the government (...) so recently, since the Covid started, we had about three to five cases in Zambia. Luckily these people didn't die, but after being attacked their body parts were chopped off", says the director of the Zambia Albinism Matters Organization (Interview, Lusaka, January 2022).

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the collective moral level of explanations has prevailed and has been spread among the local communities by Pentecostal pastors and AIC´s prophets. These interpret the COVID-19 pandemic as approaching biblical apocalypse and God's punishment for human sins. Another explanation often preached in Pentecostal churches is that COVID-19 is a result of Devil's conspiracy aimed at the elimination of Africans by the global giants like China or the USA who want to disrupt the world system in order to consolidate their hegemony or to gain more power and resources. This collective moral explanation leads to the strengthening of the faith and belief of the members of the church. Interpreted as a plague or God's punishment, the COVID-19 pandemic is seen as understandable and controllable divine retribution that prescribes a course of action as a remedy - which is a return to God, wholehearted devotion, immunizations through regular prayers, acknowledgement of God in human affairs and so forth. Another common interpretation of the disease widespread among traditional healers and their patients is that it is a modern form of witchcraft. "*Witchcraft has many forms (...) but we're not denying, somebody could use it to say "let me hide behind Covid" but it's something else. They can use Covid, but yet it's not Covid, it's something else. Just as a cover. Wizards are clever, very very cunning",* says Dr. Nyoni, general secretary of THPAZ (Interview, Lusaka, January 2022). In Zambia, alleged witches are abnormally "clever" inventing new tools and methods, how to bewitch its victims. According to traditional healers, witches can imitate any fatal disease (such as cancer, HIV/AIDS etc.).

Religious and cultural interpretations surround the COVID-19 vaccination too. The most common belief is that a person dies slowly after the vaccine, or that the vaccination will mark a person as a Satan's disciple which will prevent him/her from going to heaven. Such a cursed man can be recognized by "a special chip" placed under his skin. Another common imagination is that vaccination causes infertility in both men and women.

Although the official statements of organizations like CHAZ and CCZ do not support the spiritual interpretation of COVID-19 and even argue in favor of the biomedical

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interpretation, some pastors (mostly Pentecostal) in compounds still proclaim the spiritual version. To fight these local narratives, above mentioned organizations have both organized multiple meetings for pastors and medical specialists, where they debate on "local misinformation" or "myths" of COVID-19.

For example, the CCZ organized its own research on the most common ideas that potentially keep people from getting vaccinated and came up with a plan for each selected community to overcome it. By consulting local community leaders, the individual needs of each community were approached as individually as possible. As for traditional healers, The Ministry of Health also organized a training for members of the THPAZ to raise their knowledge and understanding on the disease and to promote prevention practice into local communities.

There is a wide variety of alternative explanations for the emergence and spread of COVID-19 circulating in the urban setting of Zambia, but it is possible to identify a global trend in these interpretations. Obtaining information about the disease through social media or through internationally active Pentecostal churches, which are among the largest churches in the country, a more international trend can be found among the circulating narratives. These sources often convey a mix of global and local ideas about the disease, sometimes adjusting the interpretation to better appeal to local audiences.

One common explanation that has been widely internalized in the urban setting of Zambia is the idea that the vaccine for COVID-19 is causing infertility. Another belief that has gained traction is the notion that the vaccine contains a chip that will be used to track and control people. These interpretations often draw on global hoax and are not specifically tied to local cultural epistemologies. Another explanation that has gained popularity is the idea that COVID-19 is a punishment from God or a sign of a biblical apocalypse. This interpretation is often rooted in religious beliefs and may be influenced by global trends in the way the disease is perceived.

While some explanations for the disease are more local or regional in nature, such as the belief that people with albinism are to blame for the spread of COVID-19 or the idea that the disease has its origins in witchcraft, most of the interpretations that have been observed in the urban setting of Zambia are not exclusively derived from local cultural epistemiologies. Instead, there is a heterogeneous mix of ideas that employs different levels of aetiology, whether at the individual or collective level, to explain the emergence and spread of the disease.

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Conclusion and reflection

As our research disclosed, local cultural epistemologies (based on moral economy of witchcraft or spiritual conceptualization of misfortune) as well as religious explanations of COVID-19 on the collective moral level have been activated by local communities in times of COVID-19 crisis in Zambia. Although it may seem that these interpretations are counterproductive to the state-health preventive interventions (as mentioned in recent expert biomedical studies), we argue that the opposite is true. In our opinion, biomedical, cultural, and religious explanations might not only coexist together (as it has been already proved by the HIV/AIDS pandemic) but might be interpreted as co-productive strategies in both systemic and executive responses to COVID-19 pandemic in Zambia. Firstly, by framing relatively unknown and dangerous mortal disease into more familiar local medical culture aetiologies (such as witchcraft or albinism) or religious theodicea, people attain desired psychological relief from anxiety and fear. Secondly, various local explanatory narratives that circulate in the community in forms of "stories'' about the origin and reason of COVID-19 occurrence, help people not only to reduce uncertainty but also to induce and activate a cooperation on a community level that is highly needed in times of crises.

In the case of Zambia, the main grassroots cooperative strategies that we identified were: involvement of community leaders and authorities in the national state fight against COVID-19, involvement of traditional healers registered in the THPAZ in joined national effort to find a cure to COVID-19, faith strengthening during church services as a way of immunization against COVID-19, and cooperation of community leaders with biomedical specialists to clear the uncertainty surrounding the disease and to promote vaccination.

The top-down strategies advocated by different, mainly governmental, organizations focus primarily on dissemination of biomedical knowledge of COVID-19 and public education aimed at its prevention. Despite their efforts to involve the local community authorities in public education about COVID-19, the awareness remains low. The message conveyed to members of local communities is one-sided, emphasizing only "what to do to protect oneself from COVID-19" but insufficient in explanation of what exactly COVID-19 itself is and what are its causes. The lack of aetiological explanation of COVID-19 itself (and overestimation of prophylaxis) leads to the practice of adhering to the "golden rules" without a proper understanding of the reason for this prophylactic measure. Many Zambians adhere to the rules from civil obedience, to avoid punishment for non-compliance. As the medical explanations

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about the COVID-19 from the state authorities are not well transmitted into the urban settings, COVID-19 is often framed within the globally emerging categories, i. e. of understanding the causes and nature of the illness in spiritual terms – COVID-19 being a sign of approaching biblical apocalypse, God's punishment for human sins, infertility-causing vaccination or as a scheme to reduce the number of Africans. However, there are two locally emerging explanations – that COVID-19 was brought and transferred through people with albinism and that the disease is created by witchcraft.

Unlike in the cases of HIV/AIDS, circumcision or menstruation complexes where cultural, spiritual and biomedical interpretative levels have been integrated in a complex aetiological explanation over time, in the case of new disease COVID-19 the particular explanatory levels have not been yet adjusted and integrated in the commonly shared local cognitive schema. The phenomenon of COVID-19 remains a rather new disease that evokes not only feelings of fear among people, but at the same time activates different registers of explanations in order to understand it.

Acknowledgments

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The Language of the Public Spaces in Tanzanian Universities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The language of public space in Tanzania is increasingly reported to be dominated by English in the bottom-up signage for maintaining the higher status quo. At the same time, the utility of Kiswahili predominates for the top-down signposts that aim to pass information to the public quickly. While the literature shows the utility of Kiswahili is skewed towards the communication intended message, the COVID-19 situation expanded this utility in the public universities in the country. The expression of statements that select Kiswahili words is primarily associated with a warning (e.g., *tafadhari nawa mikono* 'please wash hands') and safety (*Tujilinde* 'Let us protect ourselves). Therefore, English words are not featured in the signposts, except for the statement produced by manufacturers of the handwashing

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machines. Apart from texts, visual pictures are provided in the COVID-19 signposts to reinforce the text message.

KEY WORDS: choice of words, COVID-19, English, Kiswahili, linguistic landscape, Tanzanian universities

Introduction

The state of bilingualism in the education system in Tanzania is reported to involve the utility of Kiswahili even in environments in which English is expected (Puja 2003; Lema 2021). The presence of English is narrowed down to involve formal settings, mainly classroom teaching (Lema 2021). But even during classroom teaching, code-switching is the norm of the day (Shartiely 2016). To understand the way information is communicated to the public by the universities' administrations, we investigate the language used in the signposts and notice boards placed for public consumption during the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country.

The linguistic landscape of the education institutions in Tanzania represents a bilingual situation. The primary usage of Kiswahili in regular conversations outnumbers the use of English, even though English is the medium of instruction (Legére, Rosendal 2019; Lusekelo, Mdukula 2021; Mdukula 2018). This is a common phenomenon reported in the studies of linguistic landscape in urban centres in the country (Lusekelo, Alphonce 2018; Peterson 2014). However, the prevalence of COVID-19 altered the socialisation in universities worldwide, and consequently, the communication structure changed (Basch et al. 2021; Mohlman, Basch 2021; Uwiyezimana 2021). Therefore, the current investigation assumes that the language of public space in universities in Tanzania, which was reported in Mdukula (2018) and Legére, Rosendal (2019), has changed due to COVID-19 protocols. This article makes a representation of the linguistic landscape in universities during the COVID-19 crisis in the country.

This investigation focused on four public universities located in three places in the country, namely, the University of Dar es Salaam and the Muhimbili University of

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Health and Allied Sciences in the ancient commercial city of the country[1], the University of Dodoma in the centre of the country, and the Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro region. Images about COVID-19, which are shared by the university authorities with the public, had been photographed by the authors. Based on the analytical procedures in linguistic landscape (Backhaus 2007; Huebner 2006), we focused on three aspects, namely, (i) the language choice in the COVID-19 banners, signposts, and public notices; (ii) the lining and font choices for the deliverance of the intended messages, and (iii) extra-linguistic information embedded in the signposts of COVID-19.

The onset of literature about language usage during the COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 crisis caused the rise of new research grounds for the subject matter of language use in Africa. In Africa and beyond, different scholars have approached this subject matter from the sociolinguistic angle of multilingualism (Rudwick et al. 2021; Schroeder, Chen 2021). Others look at it through pragmatic approaches to communication strategies during the crisis (Basch et al. 2021; Mohlman – Basch 2021), an alteration of the cultural-based language usage due to social distancing trends (Boswell 2020), and the fight against COVID-19 manifesting in artistic works (Otieno 2021), among other attention. We review these studies in this section and then highlight areas that require further illumination from the findings obtained in universities in Tanzania.

On the imposition of language issues by COVID-19 on the sociolinguistics of multilingualism, RUDWICK et al. (2021) present a scenario in which four ministers switch between the many national languages of South Africa. The main languages used in the speeches include Afrikaans, English, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu and SeSotho. An important point to underscore here concerns switching to another language to deliver the emphatic message to the intended audience. For instance, Rudwick et al. (2021, 251) point out that "the Minister of Transport Fikile Mbalula addressed taxi drivers who in the majority are known not to be fluent in English. Therefore, he switched into

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[1] Although the intent of the investigation reported herein was not quantitative in nature, by July 2021, the amount of signposts placed on the main campuses of the University of Dar es Salaam and Sokoine University of Agriculture exceeds by far the amount of messages placed on the main campuses of Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences and the University of Dodoma.

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IsiZulu, communicating directly to his core target audience." Therefore, the choice of the language to use is paramount in investigating the language of public space in the education institutions in Tanzania because both English and Kiswahili are the official languages of formal communication.

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic is associated with the choice of words (terms) used by personnel from the central government, local authorities, and (public) government institutions. Studies show that some specific categories of words are selected and used to communicate the COVID-19 messages (Basch et al. 2021; Mohlman, Basch 2021). Mohlman and Basch (2021, 3), for instance, provide these categories attested on the websites for universities in the United States of America: anxiety (*worried, nervous, concerned*), insight (*decide, know, interpret*), positive emotion/resilience (*perseverance, support, safety*), sadness (*loss, sad, grief*), social (*community, public, shared*) etc. The variation in the choice of terms manifests in the websites investigated by Mohlman and Basch (2021). Therefore, the choice of diction in the messaging of the COVID-19 information becomes necessary to investigate the public institutions of higher education in Tanzania.

The COVID-19 pandemic is associated with social distancing, a phenomenon in which laws restrict physical contact of people to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (Bashizi et al. 2021; Boswell 2020; Gittings et al. 2021). Boswell (2020) reports that language usage built on social gatherings in churches, festivals, weddings etc. had been fully disrupted for the Creoles of Mauritius. Also, the penetration of expressions such as 'social distancing' had appeared already due to COVID-19. But Tanzania experienced a brief lockdown during the John Pombe Magufuli Government between late March 2020 and early June 2020 (Mumbu, Hugo 2020); as a result, the physical contact of people continued. Furthermore, universities in Tanzania and other education institutions re-opened on the 1st of June 2020 (Mumbu, Hugo 2020), making physical contact with students, university lecturers, and administrative personnel continue. Nonetheless, the language of the public spaces changed due to the instructions provided by the central government, local authorities, and public institutions to the public in general and the university populations. This paper reports on changes in public signage during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The specific case for this paper involves the language of communication in universities worldwide, which appear to have changed drastically due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the changes could be associated with the decline

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in social words due to the social distancing phenomenon. In the United States of America, Mohlman and Basch (2021, 2) investigated the language used in the websites of "the most relevant university communications related to closures during the COVID-19 outbreak from 151 universities in the New York City metropolitan area." The study did not find increased social words in messages from larger universities. This may be due to the limits on interpersonal activities and larger gatherings, which were gradually being discouraged, restricted, and eventually banned" (Mohlman, Basch 2021, 3).

The choice of the words is another area highly likely to be changed due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mohlman and Basch (2021, 3) found that "it was also expected that the target word type categories and enrolment would be positively associated with the presence of a COVID update on the university's homepage within three months. We did find this association with positive emotion/resilience words but not social or power/organisational words."

The fight against the spread of COVID-19 disease has been represented in artistic works, which indicates that the information about the pandemic is getting entrenched in society. Otieno (2021) presents the contents of the specific songs about the pandemic as produced in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Regarding Tanzania, Otieno (2021) reports the song by Mrisho Mpoto, which contains information about the essence of the pandemic, its mechanisms of spreading, and mitigation measures. The famous music artist makes the required choice of diction, e.g., *korona*=Corona, *kukataa kukusanyika*=social distancing, *hatushikani mikono*=no hand shaking etc., like the choice of words reported elsewhere in the literature (Mohlman, Basch 2021).

The state of COVID-19 in Tanzania

The recording of the COVID-19 pandemic in Tanzania appears mostly from mass media: printed newspapers, radio stations, and television services (Bashizi et al. 2021; Gruenbaum 2021; Mumbu, Hugo 2020; Rapisarda, Byrne 2020). Some of the facts assembled in previous publications include the announcement of the lockdown by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa. As of the 17th of March 2020, the Government of Tanzania announced the first control measures for COVID-19 local transmission: (i) "closure of all school levels and ban of all public or social gatherings while on the subsequent date, the order was extended to colleges and higher education

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institutions for indefinite close"; (ii) on the 23rd of March 2020, "the Government declared that all incoming travellers from COVID-19 affected countries to be quarantined for two weeks at their costs"; (iii) the Government of Tanzania announced "self-isolation at home or hospitals and wearing face masks in crowded areas were compulsory to any who suspects any COVID-19 symptoms to avoid more spread of the virus" (Mumbu, Hugo 2020, 749). This is the kind of lockdown institutionalised in April and May 2020 in Tanzania.

On a specific note, Rapisarda – Byrne (2020, 914) reports three efforts established by the Government of Tanzania to fight against the spread of COVID-19 in prisons and jails, i.e., "temporary suspension of all visitations", "handwashing stations installed within prisons and jails" and "release of nearly 4,000 inmates into the community in April 2020". In addition, the second strategy used to combat the spread of COVID-19 has been implemented in public universities in Tanzania.

The state of lockdown was revoked by the beginning of June 2020 (Gruenbaum 2021; Mumbu, Hugo 2020). Specifically, Mumbu and Hugo (2020, 749) assembled the information that "although there is no biological evidence for the disappearing of the disease, the President on the 21st of May 2020 declared that all colleges and high school students to re-open with effect from the 1st of June 2020." Furthermore, the Government of Tanzania re-opened sports and international flights without any quarantine (Mumbu, Hugo 2020). While the socialisation in the country was reverted to normalcy in June 2020, instructions about COVID-19 prevailed. Mumbu and Hugo (2020) report on the usage of face masks, sanitisation of hands, use of running water for sanitation, social distancing etc.

The strategies utilised to combat the spread of COVID-19 had been issued by the Government of Tanzania Mumbu, Hugo 2020). As a result, the banners, signposts and notice boards appear to have produced the top-down structures presented in previous studies (Legére, Rosendal 2019; Mdukula 2018; Lusekelo – Mdukula 2021). Nonetheless, the contents and portraits of the signposts had not been investigated. This is the lacuna that the current study covers.

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The language in banners and signposts for COVID-19 in Tanzania

Language in top-down signage in universities

The Government of Tanzania issued a statement that demanded education institutions to institutionalise the COVID-19 protocols. However, based on the characterisation in Backhaus (2007) and Cenoz, Gorter (2006), the signage that emanates from such instructions is typically top-down. The nature of such signposts and the language contained therein is the core of the discussion hereunder.

Figure 1: *Signpost at the entrance to the Administration Block of the University of Dar es Salaam.* Photo: authors (June 2021)

The positioning of the COVID-19 signposts, which is intended to target public consumption, is found to be important. The universities require an important platform to submit and share the information about COVID-19, as Mohlman and Basch (2021, 2) states that "identification of the "most relevant" communication occurred by identifying where COVID-19 messages were housed on each university website." Higher education institutions did not lock down in Tanzania, unlike other universities

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worldwide, where lockdown has been the norm, and online teaching was adopted (Radić et al. 2021). Nonetheless, numerous banners, public notices and signposts containing COVID-19 related information were placed in strategic public spaces on campuses.

Figure 2: *Signpost at the main entrance to Sokoine University of Agriculture.*
Photo: authors (July 2021)

The main entrance and administration building remain important in providing the first impression of instructions that an institution ought to stand for. In this article, we argue that the COVID-19 pandemic altered the primary public inscriptions on the walls of the administration blocks and main entrances of the institutions of higher education, which appeared in previous publications that used signposts captured before the year 2019 (see Legére, Rosendal 2019; Mdukula 2018; Lusekelo, Mdukula 2021). For instance, at the University of Dar es Salaam, the main entrance

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to the administration block[2], which is usually stationed with an Auxiliary Police Officer to enforce the laws and regulations, provides an impetus to the instructions about COVID-19 (Figure 1). Likewise, COVID-19 banners are placed at the main entrance gate of the Sokoine University of Agriculture, which is also guarded by security personnel (Figure 2).

The colouring of the banners is another fascinating point to make here. The universities adopted specific colours for their banners and signposts. For instance, the colours in Figure 1 (namely blueish and goldish) are typical of the University of Dar es Salaam. Likewise, greenish, and yellowish colours are used in the logos, banners, and signposts for Sokoine University of Agriculture. With the evidence at hand, we argue that although COVID-19 altered the language of the public spaces in the universities of Tanzania, it has not changed the colours adopted by the universities. Instead, the universities incorporated the colours in the banners and signposts for COVID-19.

The choices of the language of communication of COVID-19 messages contribute to understanding the information passed to the public. In the multilingual setting of the United States of America, Schroeder and Chen (2021) argues that English as a second language has been a useful vehicular communication of COVID-19 message to second-language speakers of Latinx descent. But most of the signposts are provided in Kiswahili-only, which is very contrary to the findings obtained in higher education institutions in Tanzania. For example, Mdukula (2018) found that the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences in Tanzania uses both English and Kiswahili languages. Likewise, Legére and Rosendal (2019) found the dominance of English and Kiswahili at the University of Dar es Salaam. In Figures 1 and 2, the usage of the Kiswahili-only has the main target to communicate the required COVID-19 message to the public in Tanzania. We argue that the choice of Kiswahili-only COVID-19 message is based on the competence and performance of Tanzanians in the language, rather than English which is preferred in the formal universities' businesses in the country. Our argument is consonant with Peterson

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[2]   By 3rd July 2021, the main administration office of the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) did not contain any signpost for COVID-19 message. Likewise, by 3rd July 2021, the two main entrance gates at the University of Dar es Salaam, namely Maji and Ardhi Gates, did not contain any COVID-19 message.

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(2014), who examined bottom-up signposts and found that the utility of a Kiswahili-only message is central in passing the message to the public of Tanzanians who mainly command Kiswahili than English fluently.

The foregrounding of the texts is also an important line of investigation in the language of public space because the fonts add extra information (Backhaus 2007; Cenoz, Gorter 2006). Similarly, Lusekelo and Mdukula (2021) found that in urban Tanzania, catchy words, or phrases in texts of signposts are bolded and/or provided with a separate font in order to pass the intended message clearly. The evidence is attested in Figure 1, which partakes one clause divided into two lines, one on top of the other at the bottom. The first line (top) reads "HII NI SILAHA MUHIMU" [This is an important weapon]. The second line (bottom) reads "USIIACHE" [Do not abandon it]. Each of the lines is provided in a different font, which is an indication that it is foregrounded. Making a general observation, one may establish that the entire text bears important information to be passed wholesome to the public. Further evidence is attested in Figure 2, which contains one foregrounded message which reads: „COVID-19, CHUKUA TAHADHARI" [COVID-19, take care]. The public is warned of the need to take care against the spread of COVID-19.

The signpost from Sokoine University of Agriculture also comprises a loaded message which is given in this long line in sentence case (Figure 2): „*Tafadhari nawa mikono kwa maji tiririka na sabuni kabla ya kuingia na wakati wa kutoka Ofisini, Darasani, maeneo ya kujifunzia na maeneo ya Malazi*" [Please, wash hands with running water and soap before entering and while exiting offices, classrooms, study areas and dormitories]. Then the short message is provided underneath: „*Jilinde, Mlinde, Tujilinde*" [Protect yourself, Protect other, Let us protect ourselves]. These texts contain Kiswahili words associated with motivation or encouragement (*tafadhari*=please), warning or caution (*nawa mikono*=wash hands) and safety (*jilinde*=protect oneself), which is partly like the findings in the study by Mohlman and Basch (2021).

In the language of public space, the picture on the signpost reinforces the message that the whole signpost wants to deliver to the public (Bwenge 2009; Huebner 2006). For instance, based on signposts gathered in Tanzania, (Bwenge 2009, 158) highlights that "billboards are large outdoor signboards posted in places with high traffic and typically show large, textual materials printed alongside alluring pictures, which are intended to be memorable, enjoyable, or amusing." The alluring image on the signpost at the University of Dar es Salaam is a face mask, which is claimed to

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be a protective gear. In East Africa, mask-wearing had been enforced, and failure to abide by the regulations that required mask-wearing resulted in punishment (Bashizi et al. 2021). Therefore, in Figure 1, a picture of a mask is provided to allow the public to see it. The face mask is assumed to be a weapon to fight against COVID-19. Likewise, Figure 2 shows pictures of people washing their hands, which is one of the strategies instituted by the Government of Tanzania (Boswell 2020; Gruenbaum 2021; Mumbu – Hugo 2020).

Further information is shared on *Daladala[3]* 'bus stops' on the University of Dar es Salaam campus. Figure 3 portrays two pictures of COVID-19 messages. To the left, the signpost contains a message in capital letters provided in two lines that read: „TUKUMBUSHANE" [Let us remind one another] and „OSHA MIKONO" [Wash hands]. The first line is provided in goldish colour, while the second line is whitish. Both the colouring and use of high caps add to the foregrounding of the message in the signpost. In Figure 3, the left signpost contains a picture that portrays the washing of human hands. The picture reinforces the statement given in the text.

The fight against COVID-19 is another linguistic area worth investigating. OPPONG et al. (2021) report that the African healthcare systems are under-equipped and under-staffed to face COVID-19. The capacity to provide critical care is the lowest in the world. The situation is acute regarding "the shortage of ventilators is particularly acute in Africa" and "over-dependence on imported medical technology and pharmaceuticals" (OPPONG et al. 2021: 3). To be safe from COVID-19, citizens are advised to exercise. Figure 3 contains the picture to the right, which constitutes the sentence: *„Tujikinge kwa kufanya mazoezi"* [Let us protect ourselves by exercising]. Apart from the text's message, the image also contains pictures of eleven persons doing a running sport. The pictures contribute to the understanding of the message contained in the signpost.

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[3] *Daladala* is a popular name for the commuter mini-buses in the city of Dar es Salaam (Schotsman, Bryceson 2006). By July 2021, a number of commuter mini-buses (*Daladala buses*) commute between Mawasiliano and Makumbusho terminals via the Main Campus of the University of Dar es Salaam.

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Figure 3: *COVID-19 signpost at a Daladala bus stop on the Mlimani Campus of the University of Dar es Salaam*. Photo: authors (July 2021)

Other public places where COVID-19 information could be obtained in universities of Tanzania include main entrances and areas allocated for cafeteria services. Figure 4 contains two foot-operated handwashing machines. The inscriptions are worn out to the left, perhaps because of the weather conditions. Based on this image, this service must have been placed during the first waves of COVID-19 in Tanzania, which occurred in March 2020 (Bashizi et al. 2021; Mumbu, Hugo 2020).

The choice of the language here provides an interesting point. The whole message is given in English only. However, according to the URT (2003), English is one of the languages authorised for publication communication in Tanzania. Therefore, the use of English does not violate any regulations in the country.

An entrance to the Savings and Credits Cooperation Society (SACCOS) at the University of Dodoma also provides a message that washing hands using clean water is mandatory in higher education institutions in Tanzania. Figure 5 shows the notice provided at UDOM SACCOS Ltd., which offers financial services to the University of Dodoma members.

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Figure 4: *Handwashing machines at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences.*
Photo: authors (July 2021)

The same message, which the Government of Tanzania shares with the public, is placed at the main entrance via UN Road to Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences. Both Kiswahili and English are used. However, the notice contains 36 Kiswahili words, which outnumber by far the five English words. The predominance of both English and Kiswahili in Dodoma is already reported by Lusekelo and Mdukula (2021). But in this COVID-19 notice, the usage of Kiswahili is preferred, perhaps because the administration at the university realised that the language could serve the purpose of serving the message efficiently to the public.

The sticker provided in Figure 5 is typically simple top-down signage as it manifests in almost all campuses of the universities surveyed by the current researchers. In the sticker ring, the name of the ministry responsible is provided in Kiswahili-only, namely „WIZARA YA AFYA, MAENDELEO YA JAMII, JINSIA, WAZEE NA WATOTO" [Ministry of Health, Social Development, Gender, Elderly and Children]. Even the department responsible is provided in Kiswahili-only, namely, „IDARA YA

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KINGA, KITENGO CHA ELIMU YA AFYA KWA UMMA" [Department of Prevention, the Section of Public Health Education]. The choice of Kiswahili aims to target the public, which speaks more Kiswahili than English (Puja 2003; Lusekelo, Mdukula 2021).

Figure 5: *English-Kiswahili notice at the University of Dodoma*. Photo: authors (June 2021)

The contents of the messages involve the standard practice for the precautions associated with the prevention of COVID-19. For example, one of the lines reads: „KARIBU. Tafadhali Nawa Mikono kwa Maji Tiririka na Sabuni" [WELCOME: Please Wash Hands with Running Water and Soap]. First, the message is in Kiswahili-only. Second, the message is provided in a red strip, which underscores the message in the language of the public space (Backhaus 2007; Huebner 2006). The choice of Kiswahili, providing the red ribbon, and choice of words contribute to the prominence of the prevention message.

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Another line is provided in capital letters: „JIKINGE, WAKINGE NA WENGINE" [Protect yourself, protect others]. This line is followed by the line that reads: „*Corona inazuilika*" [Corona is preventable]. Both lines contain the message associated with prevention. Nonetheless, the capital letters foreground the message about the prevention from COVID-19. In the literature, capital letters help to underline a specific message (Backhaus 2007; Huebner 2006).

Two other lines read: „Piga 199 Bure" [Dial 199 free] and „Afya Call Center" [Health Call Centre]. The first line is in Kiswahili-only, while the second is bilingual in Kiswahili-and-English. This is because both languages are formally authorised in the education sector in the country (Puja 2003). Nonetheless, the English words are for the names of Call Center and UDOM SACCOS Ltd. It is the assumption that the prominence of Kiswahili emanates from the utility of the language in passing important information about the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

The fight against COVID-19 also involved herbaceous medication in Africa. Nevertheless, some institutions managed to produce COVID-19 medicine in Africa (Bashizi et al., 2021). For example, the University of Dar es Salaam produced medication for the pandemic.

Turning to the language of communication in the health sector, Mdukula (2018) found that prescriptions appear in English only. But COVID-19 disrupted the situation as medication for the pandemic appeared in bilingual Kiswahili-and-English instructions. For instance, Figure 6 shows „FUKiZA UDANOL", which constitutes two words. The name of the trademark is „FUKiZA' = vapour bath; human treatment with fumes' and UDANOL, which is a coinage of UDA- 'University of Dar es Salaam' and the conventional technical label -NOL.

The banner for the drug bears the clause „KORONA BADO IPO Tuchukue Tahadhari" [CORONA still prevails, Let us take precautions]. The first part of the clause is in capital letters to make the message more prominent, as discussed for the other datasets obtained in Tanzania by Lusekelo and Mdukula (2021). The second part of the clause, which gives caution to the public, is provided in the title case. In this arrangement, it bears second rate prominence in the banner.

Moreover, Figure 6 also contains three pictures: a single bottle of the FUKiZA medicine, three containers of hand sanitisers, and someone sanitising him/herself. These pictures contribute to a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation as the pictures show the prevention through sanitisation and treatment by the FUKiZA drug.

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Put in the words of HUEBNER (2006), the images reinforce the message provided about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 6: *The banner for the COVID-19 medicine manufactured at the University of Dar es Salaam.* Photo: authors (May 2021)

Furthermore, Figure 6 also contains a picture of a young person holding a blanket or towel over him. The picture also contains a bucket of FUKiZA UNADOL. The picture points toward the utility procedures for the medication.

The nature of bottom-up signage in universities in Tanzania

Some signposts reveal bottom-up features provided in Backhaus (2007) and Cenoz, Gorter (2006). Each college administration or faculty leadership envisaged notices to be shared with the public through the notice boards or entrances to offices. Since this signage is localised in each university, we analysed them as bottom-up signposts.

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The first characteristic feature of the localised COVID-19 signage is the dominance of Kiswahili-only messages (see Figures 7 – 8). This is quite different from the features of bottom-up signage analysed from streets of Tanzania, in that English-only and English-and-Kiswahili signage dominate (Lusekelo – Alphonce 2018; Peterson 2014).
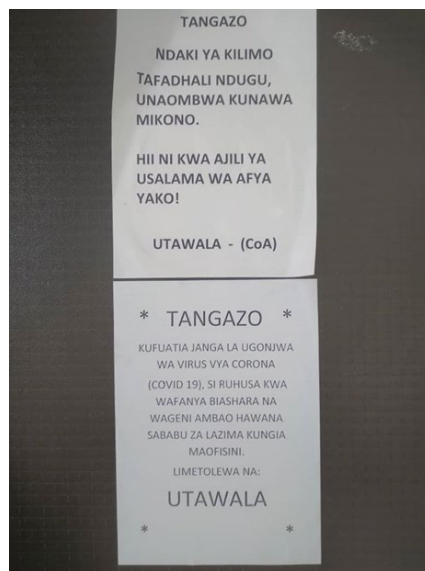
Figure 7: *A notice at the main entrance to the College of Agriculture at Sokoine University of Agriculture*. Photo: authors (July 2021)

The first paper of Figure 7 comprises two main themes[4]: „TAFADHARI NDUGU UNAOMBWA KUNAWA MIKONO" [Please, you are asked to wash hands]. „HII NI KWA AJILI YA USALAMA WA AFYA YAKO" [This is for the safety of your health]. The second paper of Figure 7 contains the main theme of prohibition: „SI RUHUSA KWA WAFANYABIASHARA NA WAGENI AMBAO HAWANA SABABU ZA LAZIMA KUINGIA MAOFISINI" [It is disallowed for business people to enter into offices

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4   For the purpose of meeting the demand of the target of this paper, the choices of the words CORONA and COVID-19 in Figure 8 are covered in another research work.

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without dire need]. Also, both papers bear the words „TANGAZO" [announcement] and „UTAWALA" [administration], which is another indicator that these make localised signage.

Figure 8 illustrates a Kiswahili-only notice placed at the main entrance to the building for the University of Dar es Salaam School of Business. The message reads: „VAA BARAKOA UINGIAPO HUMU NDANI" [Wear face-mask when entering inside]. Since the message is provided in Kiswahili-only, it is plausible to argue that the university's administration assumes correctly that the public easily understands the message given in Kiswahili rather than in English.

In the literature, the choice of words appears to express anxiety, sadness, positive emotion etc. (Mohlman, Basch 2021; Basch et al. 2021). For example, in the text of Figure 8, the message contains the verb „VAA BARAKOA" [wear face-mask], which is instructing the entrants to put on face-masks. Another instruction is about „UINGIAPO HUMU NDANI" [when entering inside], which indicates that wearing a face mask is mandatory.

Figure 8: *A notice at the main entrance to the University of Dar es Salaam School of Business.*
Photo: authors (June 2021)

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Conclusion

The present article had intended to expand the nature of the linguistic landscape of Tanzania. YANG (2014) stipulated that many actors are at play when the linguistic landscape of Tanzania is concerned. The current actors are the central Government of Tanzania, which issues banners with specific content about observing the COVID-19 protocols in public places. The are attested in the public universities investigated for the purpose of this contribution. Nonetheless, each faculty or college envisages localised notices, comprising banners the bottom-up signage.

Another issue discussed in this paper is the language of public space in Tanzania, which is increasingly reported to be dominated by English in the bottom-up signage for the maintenance of the higher status quo, while the utility of Kiswahili predominates for the top-down signposts that aim to pass information to the public quickly (Bwenge 2009; Lusekelo, Mdukula 2021; Peterson 2014; Yang 2014). In this paper, we argued that although the literature shows the utility of Kiswahili is skewed towards the communicating intended message, the COVID-19 crisis in Tanzania expanded the utility of Kiswahili in the public universities in the country. This is contrary to the suggestion proposed by Lema (2021) that English is pushing further into the domains of Kiswahili usage. This investigation finds that the universities' communities communicate easily in Kiswahili for the imperative information related to the COVID-19 pandemic. If English had been the vehicular communication of vital information, public universities would not have opted for Kiswahili to address COVID-19 issues.

Another discussion revolved around the contents of the expressions about the COVID-19 pandemic. We argued that the expressions in statements selected specific Kiswahili words which are primarily associated with some clusters provided in Basch et al. (2021) and Mohlman and Basch (2021): warning (e.g. „tafadhari nawa mikono"=please wash hands), caution (e.g. VAA barakoa=wear face-mask), safety („tujilinde"=let us protect ourselves; „hii ni silaha muhimu usiiache"=this is an important weapon, do not abandon it, etc. Unfortunately, we found no English word features in these signposts that express the key terms provided in the references cited above.

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COVID-19 Control: Challenges and Responses of Muslims in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 in Tanzania was both a health and religious puzzle. The government insisted all citizens regardless of their religious affiliations to join hands in fighting the disease through prayers and by adherence to the health measures. Muslims in Tanzania complied with the disease control measures instituted by the government. These measures in turn affected their prayers and fasting rituals. In this context, Muslims turned to religious texts and scholarly interpretations to seek for guidance and clarification (fatwa) on how to practice Islam under COVID-19 situation. Consequently, this shaped Muslims' perceptions and responses towards the pandemic. This article analyses challenges of COVID-19 to Muslim rituals and the role of religion in shaping their responses during the first four months of the onset of COVID-19 in Tanzania. The article uses online publications, religious teaching provided through social media, interviews and personal observation in Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro regions. The article argues that the role played by Islamic religion in understanding COVID-19 pandemic justifies the importance of involving faith-based communities in solving health related problems.

KEY WORDS: Corona Virus, COVID-19 control methods, Islam, Muslims rituals, Tanzania

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COVID-19 Control: Challenges and Responses of Muslims in Tanzania

Introduction

From March 2020, the world witnessed the spread of deadly corona virus disease of 2019 (SARS-COV-2) to the pandemic level (Isiko 2020,78). The new viral infection began in Wuhan, China in the end of 2019. Statistics as per September 20, 2021, recorded 228,206,384 cases worldwide and 4,687,066 deaths (WHO 2021). During the onset of COVID-19 there was no proper medication, vaccine, or the perfect science of the virus. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommended measures which would keep virus at bay such as hand washing, use of sanitizers, face masks, physical distancing, testing and separation of the infected cases. Also, WHO recommended lockdowns at the public places such as shops, schools, and religious centres. Limiting the number of people and insisting on hygienic regulations to unavoidable social gathering such as burial ceremonies were also enforced (WHO 2020; Isiko 2020, 79).

In Tanzania, the first case of COVID-19 was reported on 16th March 2020 (MOH Tanzania 2020). By September 20, 2021, the government released publicly a recorded total of 1367 infected cases with total of 50 recorded deaths (Epidemc-stats.com 2021). Tanzania found itself at the middle of the road. This was partly because certain control measures were not applicable as most of the citizens got income in informal sectors on their daily basis. Strict measures such as lockdown could require government intervention which was unaffordable (Mfinanga 2021, 1542-43). Therefore, upon realization of COVID-19, health responsible authorities-imposed control measures to prevent further spreading of the disease. Measures such as closing schools, educating citizens on the transmission pathways, insistence on hand washing, mask wearing, and keeping one metre distance from one person to another as well as limiting overcrowding in the public transports, were taken (United Nations 2020, 7). In addition, other methods such as use of local herbs, steam inhalation and resorting to prayers were insisted. These were used as ways of minimizing symptoms and creating psychological well-being of the citizens (Magoti 2020). However, WHO measures were highly insisted during the first three months of COVID-19 existence in Tanzania (Mfinanga 2021). Around June, traditional healing and prayers were highly observed (BBC News 2020). The choice of involving prayers as a weapon towards COVID-19 made by Tanzanian government was positively accepted by Muslims in Tanzania (Mjahid 2020). In one way, it allowed the freedom of continuation of religious and social services offered by religious centres

but in other way it developed positive coping and adherence to the measures identified by the Government.

Muslims belong to one of the major identified religions in Tanzania, namely Islam, Christianity, and Traditional religions. Basing on the existing statistics, Islam ranked second after Christianity. To obtain the exact formal number of Muslims in Tanzania is challenging. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) rejected the religious aspect in census since 1967 which estimated the number of Muslims to be 30 percent (Heilman, Kaiser 2002). Other non-governmental data that try to analyse yield different numbers. D. Barrett estimated 32 percent of Muslims in 1980 (Mandivenga 2007). Pew Forum research in 2010, 2018 and 2020 estimated the number of Muslims to be 36, 35 and 34 percent, respectively. Substantial numbers of Muslims are found in Zanzibar. It is estimated that 99 percent of the population are Muslims (U.S Department of State 2018). In the mainland, considerable numbers of Muslims are to be found along the mainland coast and along the long-distance trade routes such as Tabora and Kigoma. In other regions, Muslims are a minority found mainly in urban centres (Mandivenga 2007).

In one way or the other, Muslims in Tanzania engage in religious practices. About 87 percent of Muslims in Tanzania affiliate to religion and practice the major rituals in varying degrees (Pew Forum 2010). Whereas some of the Muslims pray five congregational prayers daily, others at least attend the weekly Friday prayer. Majority are active in prayers during Ramadan and two Eid prayers per year. Also, about 70 percent of the Tanzanian Muslims observe fasting during Ramadan (Pew Forum 2010, 29). Again, Tanzanian Muslims seek religious services during the social events such as childbirth, marriage, and burial rites. They also give alms to the needy especially when they are passing through tough time or thanking God for certain achievements. In these moments, religious leaders and elites are consulted to officiate the prayers. During the confusing tragedies such as COVID-19, Muslims tend to seek guidance and explanation from religious leaders and increase the connection with God through prayers and righteous deeds.

The outbreak of COVID-19 and the intervention of Islamic religion have attracted the attention of academic scholars. Debates on the relationship between religion and

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public health were elevated.[1] In the current literature, scholars have unveiled how religious behaviour of Muslim communities impacts the rate of the spread or coping with the diseases.[2] The negative response of some communities such as the resistance of Indonesian Muslims to comply with the lockdown of religion centres have been said to spark up more infections (Suyadi, Nuryana, Fauzi 2020, 2). On the other hand, Piella (2020) demonstrates how Muslim women's veil *(niqab)* functioned as an alternative way to a face mask. Amidst COVID-19, Niqab offered religious advantage to the Muslim women who were harassed publicly in Western countries for covering their faces. This work found that there is an increase of the tolerance of the community on niqab. The history and Islamic perspectives on controlling pandemics show that there is a body of literature in Islam influenced by Quran and hadith[3] which deals with explanation of the causes and control of the pandemics and other infections (Zohaib, Arzoo 2021). The occurrence of several plagues since the time of Prophet Muhammad led to the creation of guidelines on control measures, necessary supplication and ritual performance which have shaped the history of pandemics thereafter (Efendi, Masriyah, Riadi 2020; Shabana 2021). These religious teachings hold that diseases are trials from God. Also, they insist on the importance of taking care of one's health and others which consequently instils a positive outlook to disease control. Positive emotions developed from these religious teachings are a factor for improving immunity hence the ability to fight the infections (Al Khayat 1997; Oman 2018, 156; Koenig 2020, 2). In Tanzania, studies show the symbiotic relationship between the Tanzanian government, traditional healing, and religions in fighting COVID-19 (Magoti 2020; Mpota 2020). It is evident that disease control in Tanzania is an interplay between political, social, and economic position of the country. Considering the country's economic position and

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[1]   Current research on relationship between Religion, Islam and Islamic rituals and COVID-19 See Isiko 2020; Zohaib, Arzoo 2021; Shabana 2021; Koenig 2020; Tootee, Larijani 2020).

[2]   For more on how Islamic teaching and rituals helped or worsen the COVID-19 spread see Piella 2021; Shiwani, Barber 2020; Thomas, Barbato 2020; Suyadi, Nuryana, Fauzi 2020.

[3]   Quran (Islamic holy book) and hadith (narratives about saying and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad) are the two major sources of knowledge for Muslims worldwide. Quran is the final revelation of God to Prophet Muhammad as a divine guidance to the humankind. Hadith refers to the collection of the reports of the own deeds of prophet Muhammad, his decisions, orders, and teachings. It also includes what he approved or rejected during his lifetime. Hadith were collected and compiled into volumes by Islamic scholars after the death of Prophet Muhammad. (See Nigosian 2004, 66-79 and 81-85).

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its relationship with religious organizations, the choice of control measures echoed the government demands. The existing literature on COVID-19 and religion has not clearly unveiled the experience of Muslims on COVID-19 in Tanzanian context. However, Islamic religion landscape in Tanzania justified the need of researching their perceptions and experiences towards COVID 19. This article acknowledges the previous scientific research and contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the relationship between religion and health.

The article deals with two specific aspects. Firstly, it examines the impact of COVID-19 control measures on the two major obligatory religious rituals (prayers and fasting during the holy month of Ramadan) among the Muslims in Tanzania. These two rituals are chosen because of their wide practice in Tanzania. Also, prayers and fasting involve congregational aspect which made them vulnerable to COVID-19 infections. Secondly, the article analyses the role of the Islamic teaching and behaviour in shaping the perceptions and practices of the Muslims towards COVID-19 particularly during the first four months (March-June 2020) of the emergence of COVID-19. This timeframe is inspired by the change of attitude of the Tanzanian government and its citizens toward COVID-19 measures as identified by WHO. A glimpse of how Tanzanian government involve religions in control measures is made to map the relation between the political stand and the nature of religious response.

The Involvement of Religions in COVID-19 Control Measures in Tanzania

It has been shown above that religious approach formed one of the measures taken by the Tanzanian government to control the widespread of COVID-19. The religious approach toward COVID-19 in Tanzania justified that illnesses are holistically understood, and intervention is both medical and spiritual (Grillo et al. 2019, 179). Faith-based organization in Africa provides moral and material support to the disease-ridden communities such as families affected by HIV and AIDS. Sick people also practice both scientific medicine and prayers as a way of healing or preventing serious impacts of the disease. Furthermore, medication prescribed in religious books as well as moral and psychological support have been used to enhance positive ways of coping with the disease, stress, and emotions (Grillo et al. 2019, 179; Koenig 2020). After the emergence of COVID-19, Tanzania allowed the continuation of the religious practices including prayers in the mosques and eliresponding to the pandemic in the absence of proper solution (Koenig 2020, 3).

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In this period, a symbiotic relationship between the government and religious organizations was more realized. Government leaders teamed up with the religious leaders and citizens against COVID-19. Both religious and political leaders used mosque stages to create awareness about COVID-19. The then Tanzanian president, the Late John Pombe Magufuli addressed the nation and appealed to religious leaders and all citizens to pray and seek Gods' mercy (Magoti 2020). Also, the Prime minister of Tanzania, Hon. Kassim Majaliwa addressed Muslim congregants on the same issue during the *Eid el Fitr* 2020 (BBC News 2020). Three days from 17th to 19th of April 2020 were singled out for national prayers to seek Gods' healing and protection. Thereafter, from 22nd to 24th of May, Tanzanians conducted prayers to thank God due to the decrease of infection (Mjahid 2020; Famau 2020). Tanzanians accepted continuation of religious services as a better option in comparison with other countries where security forces had to be used to maintain curfew and closing of religious centres (Garda World 2020). Though some people such as opposition politicians and international community were sceptical about the approach, majority of the citizens were happy with the freedom. (Kombe 2020; Mpota 2020). Religious believers praised their president as a winner against the scourge and a God-fearing man (ASIA MUNISSI, personal communication, August 17, 2020; ZALIKA KILUA, personal communication, August 5, 2021).

Among the praying, the continuation of religious services in the mosques was important for three reasons. Firstly, according to Islamic teachings, Muslims are required to perform five obligatory prayers in a specified time. Some of these prayer times, especially the afternoon prayers, find many people away from their homes. At the same time, men's five obligatory prayers in congregation (salat al jamaa) are twenty-seven better in grade than praying alone (Al Haqiqi 2020). Secondly, the nature of Muslim prayers involves actions such as performing ablution, prostrating and kneeling. Also, prayers need an area free of physical impurities and quiet atmosphere. Therefore, mosques are conveniently designed to accommodate those needs. Thirdly, mosques are service provision centres and public spaces for social events. Some Muslims obtain their social services such as water and religious education for the children and adults. Again, mosques provide them with spaces for social events such as preparation and handling of burial services, weddings, and religious meetings. For these reasons, locking down mosques could affect the religious rituals and other social activities.

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Impact of COVID 19 control Measures on Muslim Praying and Fasting Rituals

Prayer (*Salah*) is the second obligatory ritual among the five pillars of Islam.[4] According to Islamic teachings, a prayer is the first thing to be inquired by God on the judgment day. If the prayers are perfectly observed a Muslim will enter the paradise (Nigosian 2004, 107). One of the conditions that Muslims adhered to before attending the prayer is purifying the body (ablution) by washing certain identified body parts including hands and face or wiping them with fine sand in case of the absence of water. Also, Muslim prayers involve actions such as standing in rows (shoulder to shoulder), kneeling and prostration (Hidayat 2017; Al Haqiqi 2020, 141). Every adult Muslim is required by law to observe five daily prayers in their prescribed times (Nigosian 2004). Apart from daily five prayers which are performed in congregation or individually, there are other congregational prayers such as Friday public prayer and Eid prayers (Sonn 2010). Friday prayer is mandatory for men, but women have an option to attend or perform afternoon prayer *(dhuhr)* at home. A woman prayer at home is more rewarded than attending a mosque (Nigosian 2004).

Fasting, a fourth pillar of Islam, implies the practice of adult health Muslims to abstain from food, drink and all illegal deeds (*haram*) from dawn to dusk for 29 or 30 days during the holy month of Ramadan.[5] Ramadan is known to Muslims as a month of seeking forgiveness and blessings from God, bonding and strengthening social relationships through communal breakfasting food (*iftaar*), reciting Quran, special night prayer (*taraweh*) as well as giving alms (Sonn 2004; Al Fārūqī 2012, 36). It is ended by Eid prayer and celebration (Sonn 2004). During Ramadan period the substantial number of Muslims in Tanzania perform daily prayers in the mosque and live according to religious prescription hoping to achieve the rewards found in this

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[4] Pillars of Islam are the blueprints of Islam common to all Muslim communities worldwide. There are five pillars of Islam ranging from declaration in oneness of God (*Shahada*), compulsory five daily prayers, giving annual alms (zakkat), fasting in the holy month of Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca (See Sonn 2010).

[5] Ramadan began in seventh century, after the revelation of Quran chapter 2:183. Ramadan is the ninth month in the Hijr calendar. In this whole month, Muslims worldwide are supposed to fast. It is believed the Quran was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad during the month of Ramadan in the Hira cave during the night of power (laylatul qadir) commemorated within the last ten days of Ramadan. Quran is extensively recited during Ramadan especially in the night prayer (*taraweh*) (See also Al Fārūqī 2012).

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month. Ramadan in 2020 started on 23rd April when the COVID 19 pandemic was still in infancy stage. This meant Muslims had to experience or adjust some Ramadan practices to save them from infections.

After the spread of COVID-19 in Tanzania, the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (*Baraza Kuu la Waislam Tanzania* - BAKWATA) communicated the health regulations to Muslims through a press conference. The chief Mufti, paramount leader of BAKWATA Sheikh Aboubakary Zubery addressed the modality of conducting congregational rituals. These measures intended to ensure that congregants wash their hands before entering the mosque, carrying their own praying mats, maintaining one meter distance during the prayers, wearing of face masks as well as performing ablution at home (Sana TV 2020). In addition, all Muslims were asked to recite *Qunuti*[6] in every prayer to seek Allah's mercy. Few days before the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan in April 2020, BAKWATA reviewed and insisted on more measures specific for Ramadan such as abandoning the common iftaar tradition and use the whole month for more prayers to end COVID-19 (Nkusa 2020). Muslims in different localities started working on health regulations by establishing hand washing facilities close to the entrance of mosques and their homes. They also maintained distance in their prayers while others abstained from congregational prayers. These measures seem relaxed when compared to a total abandoning of religious activities.

Some of the adopted measures conflicted with the normal experience of praying and fasting before the pandemic, hence it created challenges to the Muslims. Wearing of face mask for example was not easy to implement. Mwamuzi Alfani, who normally attended prayers at different mosques in Dar es Salaam said that,

during the early days of COVID-19, I was afraid of infection because some people did not wear mask at all. Others took off their masks when they wanted to pray. If they were infected, they could contaminate the mats during the prostration. We were advised to carry our own prayer mats, but others did not do. Even carrying a mat

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[6]   *Qunuti* is a supplication recited while standing in the last unit of a prayer to seek Gods' mercy especially during calamities such as COVID-19. Some Muslims recite Qunuti in every morning prayer while others recite it only during the calamities.

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was not a solution because you could lay your mat on the infected spot which could end up in taking the virus home through your belongings.

Many mosques in Tanzania do not have security guards hence it was not easy to monitor the law breakers. Given the enormous number of congregants especially in big cities it was sometimes hard to check on all prayer attendants. Also, there was insufficient knowledge of the COVID-19 hence people were not aware on how the control measures work. Some people refused to wash their hands before entering the mosque on the account that they have already washed hands at home (Chumvi 2020). Whereas some people were less caring about control measures, others abandoned the congregational prayers in public places due to the fear of infection.

Moreover, there were changes in the timetables and modality of using the mosques. Different mosques in Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro regions posted notice on their doors and walls of regarding a new timetable and reminder about the government health regulations. For instance, at Mtoro mosque in Dar es Salaam region and at University of Dar es Salaam Mosque, there were notification on the walls reminding Muslims to observe government regulations and a new timetable for closing and opening the mosque for each prayer. Also, at the praying room in Mlimani city shopping mall, women were informed to bring their own praying outfits. Before COVID-19, prayer outfits (*Swahili kanga's*) for the women who came to the mosque uncovered or in need of extra clothing were provided. During the period under study these clothes were removed to avoid sharing and spreading of infection. Some people ended up missing some of their prayers if they forget to bring the needed clothes.

Furthermore, several mosques were closed shortly after congregational prayers to limit the crowding and gathering. This had impact not only on prayers but also on the social activities such as religious classes and meetings taking place in the mosques (Mpota 2020). This change of freedom in the operation of mosques brought disturbance especially for those who attended late after congregation prayer since it was not possible to have individual prayers inside the mosque. Respondents named Ramadhan Athuman and Thabit Ally, shared their experience in Dar es Salaam. On one occasion they had to pray along the corridors of Kitumbini mosque because the mosque's doors were closed soon after the congregational prayers. Some people who wanted to perform voluntary prayers (*sunna*), could not do so.

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Measures such as using of sanitizers and keeping distance while praying left some people in dilemma. Some Muslims were asking if using sanitizers which contains some alcohol contents could affect their prayers because, in Islamic religion, alcohol is considered illicit. Also, keeping distance from one person to another during the congregation prayer is discouraged. According to Islamic teachings, Prophet Muhammad directed the congregants to straighten the rows and to avoid leaving space between them (Al Haqiqi 2020, 146-148). Some Muslims had strong beliefs that prayers cannot be altered for the fear of diseases. Standing apart in a prayer led to the questioning whether the God's reward for a prayer would be the same. The other respondent said that, there was no congregational prayer when people stood apart from each other (RAMADHAN ATHUMANI, personal communication, September 2021).

Upon the commencement of Ramadan in April 2020, there was no hope of recovering from the pandemic. There was a concern raised by health specialists that fasting could lower immunity and increase the danger of infection. Likewise, as a way to fight off infection, medical personnel had advised people to keep hydrated by drinking water regularly during the day. Though there is no considerable evidence that it is a shield against virus, fever and prolonged illness is associated with severe dehydration (Tootee, Larijani 2020). This could occur in Ramadan as a result of abstinence from liquids during the day. Therefore, it was thought that Ramadan could be a challenge. Several authorities issued guidelines on how Ramadan could be practiced. (WHO 2020; Tootee, Larijani 2020). Muslims were advised to eat balanced diet and stay hydrated after breaking their fast until dawn.

Based on the previous concerns, the number of prayer attendants during Ramadan was low compared to previous years especially for the night prayers (MIRAJI AMIR, personal communication September 5, 2021). Furthermore, other gatherings such as iftaar gathering in the mosques where wealthy people could feed the people in need were restricted. Fundraising for some social projects and Ramadan programmes coordinated by the charitable groups such as collecting food and distributing to the people as well as visiting the vulnerable groups, done by charity groups were limited. Instead of visiting hospitals, orphanages and the poor people as groups, money was collected and then few people represented others on delivering the packages (MWAMUZI ALFAN, personal communication, September 2, 2021). The religious classes conducted at different places were also affected hence the spread of disease limited Muslims in experiencing a normal festive

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Ramadan. These changes became a concern among Muslims in Tanzania. Several questions were asked to the religious leaders while intense discussion continued in different chatting platforms. Some people had no knowledge of how to fullfil the religious rituals in the midst of changes. Muslim scholars in Tanzania and worldwide responded to these matters to guide their followers (Hirani 2020; Spiritual Antidote 2020). The response of religious leaders in Tanzania will be addressed in the next section.

Role of Islamic Religion in Shaping the Tanzanian Muslims Perceptions and Responses on COVID 19

The emergence of COVID-19 in Tanzania and the challenges experienced in ritual practices called for scholarly opinion from Quran and hadith. There were debates among Muslims from the family to the international level on how to balance health demands and religious duties. The main theme was on the causes, reasons, disease control measures and disruption of normal way of practicing rituals. In Tanzania, the guidance came mainly from religious leaders of different organizations.[7]

However, Muslims' response was not only shaped by religious teaching but also depended on the political approach to COVID-19 in the country. Response taken regarding to mosque organizations adhered to government health regulation. The individual responses depended on knowledge of COVID-19 and influence of religion to individuals.

It is evident that religion and religious practices can be both the agent of spreading or controlling the pandemics. Whereas religious practices such as coming together

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[7] Muslims in Tanzania are divided into sects such as Shia and Sunni, but there are also sub classification among these major groups. Among the Sunni for example, there are Muslims of Sufi origin (mostly identified as traditional group or BAKWATA Muslims), Ansaar Sunna and Sallafy (became popular in Tanzania from about the late 1970s because of Islamic reform waves). Each of these groups depend on fatwa from their trusted Sheikh. However, majority of Muslims and Government depend on BAKWATA's ruling. Also, the growth of science and technology has had a large impact because religious teachings are readily available through television and internet sources. Currently social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook are among the channels where the teachings of the prominent Sheikhs notably Sheikh Walid Al haddi, Yusuph Kidago, Nurudeen Kishki, Othman Maalim, Salim Barahyan and Kassim Mafuta are obtained. During the pandemic, the teachings and opinion of these Sheikhs formed the Muslims' perception and responses of the pandemic.

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for congregational rituals would increase the risk of contracting the infection, religious teaching can also function as a pathway to educate the population about health regulations (Oman 2008, 157). Islamic teachings did not offer scientific explanation of the virus but provided spiritual meaning to the causes of pandemics. They also use the history of the previous recorded pandemics to inform the believers about the control measures and how to continue being religious during the time of the crisis. After the spread of COVID-19 in Tanzania, religious scholars on one hand translated the government health regulation into Islamic context, maintained the spiritual well-being of the community and guided rituals and religious activities (Sana TV 2020). Muslims on the other hand adhered to the religious teachings and fitted them to their battle with COVID-19 (Isiko 2020, 78).

During the early days of the announcement of disease and its control measures, Muslims had different perception on the disease itself and the instituted control measures. Whereas some people held that COVID-19 was American and Chinese plan against humanity, others took it as a form of a trial and a sign of the nearing of the Day of Judgment (Markazpongweliveduruus 2020; Akasha Daawah Channel 2020). These thoughts were disturbing, and many people were not sure of what to believe. In addition, the fear of death due to COVID-19 was increased by the information from the countries where large number of COVID-19 cases were recorded. Muslim sheikhs notably Othman Maalim of Zanzibar, Nurdeen Kishki of Dar es Salaam and Kassim Mafuta of Tanga intervened by providing the Islamic context of the disease even before the confirmed cases of the pandemic in Tanzania. They used knowledge from religious writings and history of the previous pandemic to inform their followers about the existence of such calamities in human history. COVID-19 as stipulated by the Sheikhs and academic scholars was not a new disease rather a continuation of pandemics and epidemics recorded in history since seventh century. These afflictions and pandemics were such as plague of Shirawayh in the Al Madain city in Iraq 627-628, Plague of Amwas between 634-44 and the Shams plague 638-39 (Shabana 2021, 6; Suyadi, Nuryana, Fauzi 2020, 2; Akasha Daaawah Channel 2020). Some of the pandemics such as Plague of Shams swept more than 30% of the population (Suyadi, Nuryana, Fauzi 2020, 2). There are also pandemics which happened in a more recent past such as cholera which began in Indonesia in 1961 and the Spanish flu epidemic in 1918-19 (Acosta et al. 2001, 583). In Tanzania and neighbouring countries there were also several epidemics outbreaks such as cholera in 1977-78, 1992 and 1997, and the spread of AIDS,

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Ebola and sleeping sickness cases during the German colonial period (Acosta 2001, 2, Beck 1977, 21). COVID-19 was listed among or as another form of these afflictions. Therefore, the previous pandemics functioned as a model for the handling of COVID-19. This kind of intervention revolutionized the mind to focus on how the previous generation managed the pandemics.

In Islamic perspectives diseases of pandemic nature such as COVID-19 are trials from God. One notable hadith in Sahih Bukhari recorded that Aisha, the wife of Prophet Muhammad, asked the Prophet about plague and he said "plague was a punishment which Allah used to send on whom he wished, but Allah made it a blessing for the believers. …" (Bukhari 5734; Zohaib, Arzoo 2021, 36). When human beings are increasingly corrupt, God lets them taste the consequence of their wrong doings so they can change.[8] Acts such as corruption in the world, single sex marriages, taking loans with interest or obsession with world pleasures have been explained by religious scholars and activists as reasons which may have caused God's anger to be revealed through COVID-19 (DarsaTV 2021; Akasha Daawah Channel 2020). In explaining this statement Muslims in Tanzania quoted religious teachings which predicted COVID-19. Prominent among them is a recorded video clip in which Sheikh Nassoro Bhachu, twenty years back, associated the occurrence of epidemics and pandemics with corrupt human deeds (Mkusa 2020). Therefore, COVID-19 have been perceived as God's reminder for the believers to abstain from sinful acts. During the sermons Muslims were reminded to abstain from the corrupt acts which were against the religious orders. Hardships created by COVID-19 on economy, social gatherings and ritual practices were translated as part of the punishment to prove the greatness of God to the sinners as well as a wakeup call to the believers (Hirani 2020).

On one hand, the scant information available among the scientists and the mutation of COVID-19 virus which was caused by the newness of the disease, have been regarded as the failure of science and scientists who do not have faith in God. To the believers, the perceived failure of science and scientists have been considered as a call to restore their faith in God (Mwaikenda 2021). Such responses were inspired by religious understanding of the texts. Muslims believe that if God wants to

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8   See Quran Surah Ar-Rum [30:41].

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punish or show his greatness to humans, he uses different approaches (Ndundu 2020). There are several mentions in the Quran where God used different organisms to fulfil religious missions.[9] As a result, Muslims acknowledged the presence of virus but went further to assign COVID-19 a spiritual role. On the other hand, Muslims were pushing the scientists to believe in God and look for cure of COVID-19 at the same time. It was held that God is the owner of knowledge and success depended on hard work. The solution to COVID-19 was associated with pleasing God and make more efforts in finding cure. In Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 5678, Prophet Muhammad said: "there is no disease that Allah has created, except that he also has created its treatment" (Hirani 2020, 11). This hadith was used to show that Muslims were supposed not to despair but rather find a cure for COVID-19. The Muslim doctors and scientists were expected to press for more research until the mystery was solved (Hirani 2020). The above explanation shows clearly that the analysis of health and illness causation should consider different understanding in the community. The perception that Muslims held meant that their role was not only to fight COVID-19 as a disease but also to purify their deeds.

The understanding of causation of virus led to another step in controlling the infection from spreading. Diseases such as COVID-19 are controlled by limiting the spread of virus by separating the infected from health persons or communities which are not yet infected. Prophet Muhammad in Sahih Bukhari hadith 5734 said "…none (among the believers) remains patient in a land in which plague has broken out and considers that nothing will befall him except what Allah has ordained for him, but that Allah will grant him a reward similar to that of a martyr". This hadith corresponds perfectly with the control measures identified by WHO such as quarantine and isolation. Among the Muslims in Tanzania and elsewhere, it was said with pride that quarantine and isolation measures were already directed in Islam 1400 years ago (Chumvi 2020; Ndundu 2020). Numerous evidence from history plastered that explanation. Umar ibn al- Khatwab, the second caliph of Muslims and his companion were saved from the plague because they retreated from entering Syria upon being informed of the outbreak (Bukhari 5727; Zohaib, Arzoo 2021, 37). In translating the health

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[9]   God used a flock of birds against the strong army of Abrah Al Hisham when he wanted to invade Makkah in the same year when the Prophet Muhammad was born. Quran Surah Fil [105:1-5]. Also, God used locust, lice, frogs, and floods to the people of Pharaoh (*Fir'awn*) because of their rebellion and disbelief. (See Quran Surah Al Aaraf [7:130-133]).

regulations in COVID-19 context, Muslim scholars made it clear that protecting lives is the primary concern in Islam hence religious rituals were not an excuse to put their lives and lives of others at risk (Hirani 2020, 33; Al Haqiqi 2020). In this case the opinion of the health experts was to be followed. They ruled out that Muslims were supposed to adhere to health regulations while seeking help from God. Though Tanzania did not adopt lockdown, other measures such as wearing masks and distancing were regarded as efforts to reach the stated goal.

On the contrary, some people believed that adhering to COVID-19 control measures which jeopardize religious practice was a form of lack of faith in Gods' power to protect humankind (Ndundu 2020). The information that the pilgrimage to Mecca might be cancelled as well as enforcement of health guidelines on congregational prayers sparked these ideas among Muslims in Tanzania. Some people believed that the suspension of the pilgrimage was a bad sign to Muslims. Others held that it was better to pray alone than praying together in congregational prayer. For this case, the intervention of the religious leaders made clear that the failure to adhere to the control measures on religious basis could endanger lives. One of the resolutions given about congregational prayers held that diseases are among the justified reasons which could excuse a person to attend congregational prayers. In addition, praying individually was not prohibited and if one did not want to go to the mosque, he could hold congregational prayers at home (Al Haqiqi 2020). Regarding the sanitizers it was ruled that synthetic alcohol which is used in sanitizers is haram for consumption but permissible to be used as disinfectant since it has not passed the fermentation process. In the same vein, adhering to government control measures was also religiously grounded. Muslims were reminded to be obedient to the authority if what they are ordered to do is not illegal (Markazpongwe Live Duruus 2020; Global TV online 2021). Since the government did not suspend freedom of worship during the pandemic, Muslims were satisfied. As a result, they participated in the national prayer days for COVID-19 in addition to the specific acts of worship individually and collectively (Mjahid 2020). Also, BAKWATA from time to time warned those mosques which were violating the control measures (Sana TV 2020).

COVID-19 control practices such as hand washing, wearing masks and the use of personal protective equipment (P.P.E) worn by health workers when working in an infected environment resembled Islamic practices. As one of the identified measures to fight off the virus, Muslims held that hand washing was already a known fact. Sheikh Walid Alhad of Kichangani mosque in Dar es Salaam, told the congregants

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on Friday sermon that COVID-19 solution was within the Islamic practices and traditions. There are mentions where Muslims are taught to clean parts of the bodies. This includes washing hands before and after eating, wash their bodies after having sex and perform ablution before prayers (Al Khayyat 1997). While performing ablution, for example, they wash among other things, hands and faces. Therefore, body purification before prayer was a necessary weapon for a Muslims to conquer COVID-19 because it entails both cleanliness to improve hygiene and a part of faith (Al Khayyat 1997, 17-18; Darsa TV 2021). This partly means Muslims had to go beyond the purification of the body and proceed to prayers to seek forgiveness and asks Gods mercy towards COVID-19. However, the effectiveness of hand washing practice depended on the knowledge of individuals about COVID-19. It was necessary to avoid contact with the infected surfaces and touching nose and mouth with infected hands.

Also, some Muslim women who cover their faces with Islamic veil (niqab) used them as an alternative to face mask. There have been cases in the world where women were harassed with niqab due to the fear created about terrorism. In Tanzania niqab is not totally tolerated by all community members and institutions but some women can still wear them around in the areas which do not require strong revelation of one's identity. Niqab provided an alternative to face masks for Muslim women. The common wearers said they had no need for a mask as they have learned to cover themselves even before COVID-19 (HAWA KIMARO, personal communication, August 19, 2021). The number of people wearing veils in public places in Tanzania increased. During the interviews three Muslim women said that they were not wearing niqab before COVID-19. They adopted it because they could not breathe properly with face masks.[10] However, some of the permanent niqab wearers who were not sure of the effectiveness of the niqab on protecting them from virus wore face masks underneath (MASSAWE, ZAINA, personal communication, August

[10] Among the Muslim women I interviewed, (MWASHA A) at Dar es Salaam and two at Kilimanjaro (KILUA Z and MWINYI F) held that they were not common niqab wearers but used them only for protection against COVID-19. For some Muslim women COVID-19 was the beginning of wearing niqab as a religious obligation. The study done in America and Europe by Piella 2021 discovered that some women started the niqab wearing for COVID-19, but they have developed love for it and decided to use it as a religion obligation. One woman in Dar es Salaam said she had worn niqab as a young girl under the influence of her father but abandoned it when she was old enough to make her own decisions, but COVID-19 made her put on her niqab again.

29,2021). Other Muslim women used their head scarfs of several kinds to cover their mouth and nose in public. Concerning the P.P.E, Muslims justified that God showed his powers to those who were not covering their bodies. This was especially directed to women that it was necessary for them to start wearing clothes as obliged by their religion. Masks and P.P.E were also seen by Muslims as a lesson to those who mock the Muslim women who covered themselves. It was said that COVID-19 showed them how a woman was supposed to appear in public. (MIRAJI URASSA, personal communication, August 17, 2020)

Moreover, spiritual measures of rectifying COVID-19 were shared through sermons, radio, televisions, booklets and social media platforms. These were daily prayers, fasting, night prayers, remembrance of Allah (*dhikri*), helping the needy and sending peace to Prophet several times (Spiritual Antidote 2020; Hirani 2020). The administrator in one of the Muslims' WhatsApp groups for example, persuaded group members to wake up for the last hours of the night for prayers and supplication.[11] Special protective supplications against diseases, which were not common among Muslims before the pandemic, were now taught and memorized. One of the supplications derived from the Prophet Muhammad invocation to God was, "O Allah, I seek refuge in Thee from leprosy, madness, elephantiasis, and evil diseases."[12] In addition to the online and offline sermons, small booklets with COVID-19 religious guidelines explained what Muslim had to do during the pandemic. One booklet was translated from English to Swahili and shared online.[13] The Ramadan month was also singled out as a month of prayer because God's mercy is abundant in this month. In almost every event the prayers were directed to asking God's mercy against COVID-19. Fortunately, at the end of Ramadan the infection decreased, and

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[11]   I was a member of a certain WhatsApp group which was formed after the closure of physical classes. Every single night the Quran teacher would remind and pleaded the group members to wake up for night prayers. She insisted that doing so could please God to end COVID-19 and allow Muslims to attend important rituals such as the pilgrimage.

[12]   Sunnan Abu Dawood 2: C Hadith 1554. For more explanation for these supplications (*duah*) see Hirani 2020; Spiritual Antidote 2020. For evidence from the teaching from Tanzanian Sheikh see QURAN NA MAWAIDHA YA KIISLAM: CORONA BY SHEIKH OTHMAN MAALIM.

[13]   See Spiritual Antidote (2020). "Kijitabu cha Waislam Kuhusu Covid-19 Mwongozo wa Jinsi ya Kukabiliana na Gonjwa la Covid-19 kwa Mtazamo wa Kiislamu: Kimechapishwa kwa Mashauriano ya Wanazuoni wa Ngazi za Juu na Madaktari wa Tiba" [The Muslim Covid 19 Handbook.: Guide on How to Cope with Covid 19 from the Islamic Perspective. Published in Consultation of Higher-Level Scholars and Medical Doctors]. https://www.peacemakersnetwork.org

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Tanzanian government stopped releasing COVID-19 updates. This step led to the notion that God had released Tanzanians from the pandemic due to prayers. The Muslims' responses on the one hand fulfilled the religious goal of praising their God and on the other hand released them from fear which could jeopardize mental well-being and the body's ability to fight the disease.

In connection to the use of radio and television, COVID-19 culminated to innovative ways of attending religious activities. The use of online forums in religion was just beginning in Tanzania but it increased tremendously after the onset of COVID-19. There was an increase of religious classes in social media groups to cover the gap left by the closing of physical meetings. Links were shared through the media for people to join these classes. Religious subjects were taught in the form of written articles, audios, videos and discussion. For smartphone owners it was an advantage since some of them did not attend physical classes. Also, conferencing through platforms such as Zoom which was a bit recent technology in religious events in Tanzania was also put into use. This enhanced religious discussion as well as celebration of religious events. In 2020 and 2021, Muslims conducted mawlid (celebration of prophets' birthday) through Zoom platform where Tanzanian Muslims from different countries attended virtually (Swahili Islamic Ensemble 2021). Other activities such as fundraising were also done through digital platforms. One group responsible for supporting students' learning had a tradition of conducting physical Ramadan events but due to COVID-19 members formed WhatsApp sub-groups and collect funds from the contributors which at last managed to reach their goals. (MIRAJI AMIR, personal communication September 5, 2021).

Although religious teachings had an impact on the way some Muslims behaved during COVID-19 the success and a way of observing the control measures changed with government position on COVID-19 and religious institutions as well as individuals' consciousness. Tanzania did not adopt lockdown as translated from religious teachings but even social distancing which was instituted was hard to practice. Areas such as markets and mosques brought many people together and activities continued in congestion. The applicable control measures were masking and sanitizing and the effectiveness depended on individual consciousness. Most of these regulations were mainly practiced during the early days of the emergence of COVID-19. However, the level of adherence dropped when it was announced by the end of May 2020 that COVID-19 was under control (Mpota 2020). Several health rulings on ritual performance, abstinence and adjustment were brought to light to

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limit the spread of infection but were sometimes violated publicly. At the Eid el Adh-ha, an event broadcasted via Tanzania Broadcasting Company, Muslims were sitting close to each other and many of them had no masks (Global TV online 2021). As far as the religious institutions and individuals were concerned, several video clips readily available in the digital platforms reveal that some of the religious scholars were educating Muslims about the quarantine measures while these people were sitting close to each other and very few had masks on (Ndundu 2020). In another incident in Kilimanjaro, I observed Muslim women at a wedding ceremony convincing the mother of the bridegroom to remove her mask since there was no outsider among them. All of them were from a single village and were not sick hence there was no need to put on a mask. Sometimes avoiding handshaking and hugging each other was viewed as weakness of faith and exaggeration. Therefore, it was not only upon the religious teachings but also upon how the government and individuals' awareness guided the responses.

Conclusion

The initiatives of Tanzanian Muslims in fighting the COVID-19 map the undeniable relations between religions and public health. Religions and religious rituals can both be a factor of limiting or sparkling the spread of disease. Muslims religious rituals such as prayers and fasting were apt to increase the spread of disease if the normal practices were to take place. The impact caused by COVID-19 on prayers and fasting rituals suggests that disease control should consider the individuals and religious community understanding and work out a better way of striking balance between the disease control and religious needs of the people. In one way or the other the effect of COVID-19 on Muslim rituals could lead to resistance from Muslims if the government did not collaborate with religious leaders who acted as a bridge between the Muslims and the government. Muslims responded by changing the normality of using the mosque, limit gathering during the Ramadan and adopt health control measures such as hand washing and face masks.

The role played by religious teachings in shaping the response of Muslims in Tanzania is an asset that need to be utilized positively. The government health authorities utilized the religious and faith communities to engage in solving health problems. The religious teachings on the aspect such as the control of pandemics theories found in Islamic religion, the need to protect life, prayer and other religious activities were necessary to maintain health and the community stability. At the same

time, aspects which brought misunderstanding among Muslims such as the use of sanitizers and abstaining from congregational rituals were handled in a way which balanced the religious and health demands.

Besides the understanding of the disease control in religious perspectives, adherence to health regulations depended on education, awareness of individuals and political position of the country. The control measures instituted in Tanzania and insisted on by religious teachings were violated because of the government position on COVID-19 and community understanding of the transmission of virus. Practice of the spiritual control methods identified depended on how religion makes impacts on individuals. The practice and views of the Tanzanian Muslims contextualized COVID- 19 as a reminder to the Muslims to practice and embrace religious practices. Therefore, while fighting for the physical health, they were also abiding by the religious demands in order to receive God's rewards. Muslims' perceptions and practices when correctly utilized helped to minimize chances of contracting and spreading the disease but also increased the knowledge and frequency of doing religious practices.

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Framing of COVID-19 News in Font-Page Headlines of Standard (Hardcore) Swahili Newspapers in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic rampaged the health of the world population for a very short period, from December 2019 to-date. Since the pandemic attacked each nation, in this article I discuss the representation of COVID-19 information in the headlines of front pages in "Habarileo", "Mwananchi" and "Uhuru" newspapers circulated in Tanzania. Much of the information entrench transmission and prevention, as most of the verbs and nouns frame them. The contents of the headlines reinforce the political matters surrounding the disease, health and medication for the pandemic and economic turmoil emerging due to COVID-19 in Tanzania. The conclusion is that the pandemic had been entrenched in the Swahili society of Tanzania in that utility of Swahili terms have become part of the culture of the nation.

KEY WORDS: COVID-19, framing, headlines, multimodality, Swahili newspapers, Tanzania

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to address issues related to the choices and targets of journalists in their representation of information to the public through selected stylistic devices. The contribution of the paper lies on the utility of an eclectic

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approach to understanding the purpose of text that expose the reality about a global burning issue such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this article, I invoke the framing theory of mass communication (Goffman 1974) and multimodal theory of text analysis (Leeuwen 2004) to account for the reporting of the COVID-19 pandemic in the standard or hardcore newspapers published and circulated through Swahili language in Tanzania. Both theories help to unearth with precision the presentation of information surrounding the pandemic in the Swahili nation of Tanzania. The motivation for dealing with the pandemic is mainly on its impact on the livelihoods of the many people in almost each country in the continent Africa (see Fox 2021; Lone, Ahmad 2020; Mahmud, Zaman, Islam 2021; Mutanga, Abayomi 2020; Obi-Ani, Anikwenze, Isiani 2020; Zondi 2021, among others).

It is already reported that a better understanding of the sourcing of the COVID-19 news covered in mass media outlets is required in any country worldwide (Gabore 2020; Kiptinness – Okoye 2021). But Gabore (2020) reported that Western mass media channels do not use appropriate sources of information about the pandemic. This calls for a detailed study of the sourcing of information published and circulated in mass media of a specific country. In another specific study for Kenya and Tanzania, Kiptinness and Okoye (2021) do not deal with sourcing of the COVID-19 news presented in English dailies circulated in the two countries. I find this as another gap that is required to be filled.

Content analysis of articles in English newspapers called "Daily Nation" (published and circulated in Kenya) and "The Citizen" (published and circulated in Tanzania) revealed upraising of the coverage of COVID-19 in both countries as from February to April 2020 (Kiptinness, Okoye 2021). I want to compare their findings which were gathered from online platforms to my findings which were gathered from physical publication of the newspapers owing to two reasons. One the one hand, conclusions based on the statistical data are not really painting the proper picture as out of 3811 nodes, 189 articles were extracted (i.e., 4.5 percent of all nodes) for Kenyan newspaper, while 504 nodes produced 127 articles (i.e., 25.1 percent) for Tanzanian newspaper; yet Kiptinness and Okoye (2021, 9) argue that "the Tanzanian government paid little attention to the pandemic". I find this conclusion not supported by the datasets. The methodological procedure also begs for a question: Which keywords were used to search for the news stories covering COVID-19? On the other hand, apart from the mention of the key term *coronavirus*, Kiptinness and Okoye (2021, 7) did not enlist the keywords they used to search for the articles

documenting COVID-19. Other studies dealing with newspapers (e.g., Fox 2021, 7; Mahmud, Zaman, Islam 2021, 7) and social media and newspapers (e.g., Mutanga, Abayomi 2020, 4) used keywords such as *COVID-19*, *corona-symptoms*, *coronavirus*, *lockdown*, *stay-safe* and *Wuhan virus*, which yielded appropriate amount of information about the pandemic. Given these circumstantial biases, I want to evaluate the truthfulness of the claim by Kiptinness and Okoye (2021) by looking into the framing of COVID-19 information in newspapers headlines in three Swahili dailies published and circulated in Tanzania.

The literature shows that the Government of Tanzania did not take serious precautions and preventions of COVID-19 due to the authoritarian regime of the late President John Pombe Magufuli who opted for local herbs and prayers as alternatives to social distancing and lockdown measures (Gruenbaum 2020). Also, Gruenbaum (2021) outlines that President Samia Suluhu Hassan have taken back the measures to combat COVID-19 in Tanzania. I want to confirm the truthfulness of these contentions based on the contents of the Swahili newspapers published and circulated in Tanzania.

Theoretical underpinnings of the paper: Framing theory of mass communication and multimodal theory of text analysis

Selected key terms are adopted for the theoretical analysis herein, namely, construe, foregrounding, frames, framing, image act, salience, signal, and topography. These terms come from two theoretical bases geared to analyse information for mass communication, namely framing theory of mass communication and multimodal theory of text analysis.

I adopted the multimodal theory of public communication in this paper. The "multimodal (or multisensory) communication is defined as communication via composite signals received through more than one sensory channel" (Partan, Marler 2005, 231). Multimodal communication is a preferred means of communication as it involves many sensory organs. Higham and Hebets (2013, 1382) pointed out that "a signal of a particular physical form may be perceived by different sensory systems." Leeuwen (2004) incorporated multimodal signals into the theory of public communication under the communicative act approach.

Regarding multimodal communication theory, important terms adopted from it for the purpose of the analysis herein include foregrounding, image act and topography. In

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mass communication, the selection of the image of the protagonist is central because it provides visual interpretation of the information provided in the text (Leeuwen 2004). The act in an image (or photograph) is coupled with topography, which entails font type and font size. Both contribute to an added interpretation of the information contained in the text. Machin and Van Leeuwen (2006, 167) pointed out that "in contemporary publishing there is a tendency for the photograph to be used as part of the page layout alongside fonts, colours and borders." This statement means that a combination of these stylistic features adds information to the text.

Also, I adopted the framing theory because it is commonly used to analyse the representation of political and economic information and health information to the public. Therefore, framing theory has to do with political communication (Brugman, Burgers, Steen 2017) and health communication (Bullock, Shulman 2021). In this paper, I focus on COVID-19 which is a health problem with political predisposition.

The focus of framing theory in mass media lays on the salience of some messages as opposed to other messages in the same larger text (Goffman 1974; Entman 1993; Scheufele 1999). The proponents of the framing theory have shown that in presentation of information to the public, journalists tend to purposefully make some texts more prominent than others in the same larger message to attract and catch the attention of the audience (D'Angelo 2002). This happens in a manner how the information is composed. Bullock and Shulman (2021, 320) pointed out that "as a message design strategy, framing refers to the strategic presentation of information in such a way that draws attention toward certain aspects of information while simultaneously drawing attention away from other aspects."

In making some texts prominent, journalists do extract and promote some information from the real world as they represent such information in the mass media (Bullock, Shulman 2021; D'Angelo 2002; Entman 1993). I so doing, journalists tend to promote certain problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the phenomena. Likewise, journalists tend to demote some of the information by assigning less prominence to it (Bullock, Shulman 2021; Entman1993). The framing of mass media could be advising, discouraging, encouraging, promoting, demoting, sorting the source etc. Consequently, the audience is likely to be influenced either negatively or positively by the decision of the journalists to frame a given information (Aziz, Imtiaz, Saeed 2022). This happens because framing of the information helps in sense-making among the audience. In

this regard, framing is characterized as being psychological (Entman 1993; Scheufele 1999).

It is argued that "as a theoretical framework, framing explores how people construct their social worlds, generate meanings, relations, and identities through linguistic and paralinguistic means" (Aziz, Imtiaz, Saeed 2022, 3). The outbreak of COVID-19 in the year 2019 and its spread all over the world had tremendous impact on the people. Thus, the way the audience construe the medical, social, political, and cultural matters surrounding the pandemic is represented in the newspapers (Mutanga, Abayomi 2020). It becomes important that such representation is examined.

In mass media, the choice of catchy keywords is one of the strategies that journalists employ to frame the news. Both resources by Aziz, Imtiaz, and Saeed (2022) and Mutanga, Abayomi (2020) have shown that as the world faces the impact of COVID-19, journalists tend to utilize the popular keywords such as *CORONA, COVID-19, LOCKDOWN, PANDEMIC, VACCINES* and *WORKOUTS*. Thus, I look at the choice of keywords in the reporting of COVID-19 pandemic in the Swahili newspapers published and circulated in Tanzania.

COVID-19 in Tanzania: Complaints, Claims, Facts and Figures

The COVID-19 pandemic had been a burning issue in Tanzania owing to complaints from the global organizations like WHO, claims by the President John Magufuli upon the disease, medication and vaccination, and the rise and fall of the facts and figures about the cases in the country. I have surveyed four publications about the pandemic in Tanzania (Bashizi et al. 2021; Gruenbaum 2021; Kiptinness, Okoye 2021; Mumbu, Hugo 2020). In this section, I outline several lines that attracted the attention of the public about COVID-19 in Tanzania. I, too, highlight the issues covered in the literature that attracted the attention of the journalists.

Ummy Mwalimu, the Minister of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children in Tanzania, announced the first case of COVID-19 in the country on the 16[th of] March 2020. The patient travelled through Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) in Arusha from Belgium (Mumbu, Hugo 2020). Immediately on the 17[th of] March 2020, Majaliwa Kassim Majaliwa, the Prime Minister of the country, announced control measures for COVID-19 local transmission, namely, closure of all schools and colleges and ban of social gatherings (Bashizi et al. 2021; Mumbu, Hugo 2020).

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One of the burning issues is that the onset of the pandemic in Tanzania began in mid-March 2020.

Trending news about COVID-19 were made public in the country. Mumbu and Hugo (2020, 749) recorded that "the infection transmission trend was announced parallelly in both Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar by the respective Ministers. On 31st March 2020, the first COVID-19 death was recorded in Dar es Salaam." They further claim that "until 29th April 2020, 196 more people were infected, bringing a total of 480, of which 167 were recovered and 16 died." (Mumbu, Hugo 2020, 750). Therefore, towards the end of April 2020, in Tanzania, too much information had been generated under the themes of screening for and treatment of COVID-19 patients, the relations of Tanzania with neighbouring states during COVID-19 pandemic, the position of President John Pombe Magufuli, and power relations between Tanzania and donor states (Gruenbaum 2020; Mumbu, Hugo 2020).

The turn on of the trending news emerged in early May 2020. The end of May is the period I end in gathering datasets from newspapers because I am aware the COVID-19 news was formerly blocked by the state house. Mumbu and Hugo (2020, 750) report of what transpired in the country: "Tanzania stopped reporting any new cases on 4th May 2020 following false test results issued by National Health Laboratory after biological samples submitted from a papaya, a car oil and a goat been tested positive during its laboratory equipment standard check-up." This was dully covered in the media.

While "officially, the confirmed cases counted a cumulative total of 509, with recovered patients 183 and 21 deaths" (Mumbu, Hugo 2020, 750), the Government of Tanzania remained reluctant in implementation of the WHO protocols on COVID-19. As a result, Tanzania is criticized of evading COVID-19 protocols in the second half of 2020 and first quarter of 2021 (Bashizi et al. 2021; Gruenbaum 2020; Kiptinness, Okoye 2021).

Another trending news arises from the fact that life in Tanzania turned into normalcy in May 2020 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in the world. Mumbu and Hugo (2020, 750) report that "although there is no biological evidence for disappearing of the disease, the President on 21st May 2020 declared that all colleges and high school students to reopen with effect from 1st June 2020, the same on sports and international flights without quarantine." This decision put the late President John Magufuli into the frontlines of mass media (Gruenbaum 2020).

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During the second and third wave of COVID-19, Tanzania re-instituted prevention measures. The main strategy to combat COVID-19 had been wearing of face masks (Bashizi et al. 2021). But President John Pombe Magufuli criticized openly wearing face masks produced outside Tanzania. Later, President Magufuli made statements which appeared to ban the use of face masks on the ground that God served Tanzania from coronavirus pandemic (Gruenbaum 2021).

Another theme reported in the existing literature concerns the debate on the effectiveness of lockdown, drugs and vaccines lingers the world through the mass media (Gruenbaum 2020). Tanzania recorded COVID-19 infection in March 2020 and President John Pombe Magufuli challenged the western drugs and vaccines until his death (Gruenbaum 2021). President John Pombe Magufuli advocated for traditional medicaments, which included herbaceous tea, steam/vapour treatment and nutrition-based treatment etc. (Bashizi et al. 2021; Gruenbaum 2021). President Magufuli also called for prayers. Gruenbaum Gruenbaum (2020, 239) points out that "Tanzania's president, John Magufuli, looked to 'prayer and snake oil' to fight the pandemic, the Institute for Security Studies said, after he claimed Christian rituals killed coronavirus, then sent a plane to collect an herbal potion touted by the Madagascan president."

The swearing in of President Samia Suluhu Hassan marked a new era in trending news about COVID-19 (Gruenbaum 2021). The journalists in Swahili newspapers also covered the stories about the female president in Tanzania.

Why to be Concerned with the Mass Media?

Information about burning issues in Africa is gathered and circulated through religious gatherings (Obi-Ani, Anikwenze, Isiani 2020), newspapers (Kiptinness, Okoye 2021) and social media (Mutanga, Abayomi 2020). The same happens for COVID-19 information in the continent. Engagement of mainstream mass media is required to evaluate the authenticity of the information about the pandemic. In fact, this is already noted by Mutanga and Abayomi (2020, 7) who found that the mainstream media (online, print, and electronic) show the burning issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic that are being discussed, reported, or broadcasted. It was found that they align with the results of the topics and words generated by the LDA method that we applied on the COVID-19 tweets.

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The existing literature on COVID-19 in Africa surrounds the field of mass communication (see Gabore 2020; Kiptinness, Okoye 2021), technology and innovations (see Mutanga, Abayomi 2020) and local politics and development perspectives (see Zondi 2021). The outlines of linguistic contribution to the representation of COVID-19 pandemic are amiss. This is the lacuna that I want to fill.

Practitioners in media industry are very aware of the significance of the front pages in attracting the attention of the media users. Practitioners choose trending news and place them in the front pages (Reisner 1992). Also, in line with Bell and Coche (2020), mass media practitioners choose burning news which are perceived to attract attention of the public and place them in the front page of newspapers for that purpose. Therefore, my choice of investigation of COVID-19 news in front pages is determined by this kind of significance of the front pages (i.e., drawing attention of the readers) in mass media platforms.

My choice of the utility of headlines (rather than full news articles as has been done by Kiptinness, Okoye 2021) is based on three merits of headlines which had been articulated by Bleich et al. (2015, 946-947). Firstly, "headlines serve as cognitive shortcuts that draw readers' attention on the printed page more than other text and are thus highly influential relative to the full transcript of an article." Secondly, headlines are composed by newspapers editors rather than reporters. Therefore, "headlines are thus crafted by non-specialist editors with non-specialist readers in mind and are consequently more likely to reflect prevailing societal beliefs than are full-text articles." Lastly, "headlines are frequently incomplete or ambiguous summaries of the article that follows, and that readers often bring their own ad hoc interpretive schemas to bear when interpreting them."

An analysis of the headlines in Tanzanian newspapers is provided by Msuya (2019) who outlined linguistic properties of the headlines by looking at the nature of the constructions therein. The first feature is that some headlines revealed semantic under-terminacy in that they missed recoverable linguistic constituents within a clause, while other headlines exhibited multiple encodings in that they were composed of multiword phrases. But some headlines were exhaustive in that journalists craftly framed headlines in complete sentences. Since Msuya (2019, 60) was interested in headlines for business news, international news, and local news, I find this to be unfocused. In my analysis, I focus on one theme of COVID-19 and

strive to establish how journalists framed the pandemic in Tanzania national language of Swahili.

The present paper turns to be the fourth round of utilization of Swahili newspapers in articulation of linguistic issues contained in Swahili newspapers circulated in Tanzania. In the first place I wanted to look at an interface of linguistic morphology and pragmatics in representation of commercials (Lusekelo 2010). The concentration was purely linguistic information, like the study by Dzahene-Quarshie (2013) that dealt with English and Swahili usage in Swahili newspapers in Tanzania. Another linguistic paper by Lusekelo (2013) contains the properties of object marking in Swahili which were unearthed through the utility attested in the sentences provided by Swahili journalists. Central to the current contribution, the focus of Lusekelo (2017) had been more on unearthing of the representation of social classes in the tabloid and hardcore newspapers. I showed that the high class in Tanzania, mainly the bureaucrats, people in political cadre, successful businessmen, and elites prefer information contained in hardcore newspapers, while the majority poor and least educated people dwell into the framed news in tabloids mainly for entertainment purposes.

In the current contribution, I focus on three hardcore[1] newspapers, namely, "MWANANCHI", which is run by a privately owned firm of Mwananchi Corporations Limited, and "HABARILEO", that is owned and published by the Government of Tanzania through Tanzania Standard Newspapers Limited. I, too, use datasets from "UHURU", a party newspaper that is produced by Uhuru Media Group Limited. In the current contribution of datasets gathered in Swahili newspapers, I combine both a critique of the social class in Tanzania as manifesting in newspapers and articulation of linguistic information contained in the newspapers.

Methods and Materials

I used printed newspapers assembled by the library of the University of Dar es Salaam at Dar es Salaam University College of Education. I scanned for headlines

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[1] Two kinds of newspapers exist in Tanzania, namely hardcore (standard or formal) newspapers and tabloid (street) newspapers (Kihore 2004; Lusekelo 2017). All three Swahili newspapers are characterized as hardcore or formal newspapers in Tanzania.

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on front pages of "HABARILEO", "MWANANCHI" and "UHURU" newspapers published between 1st January 2020 and 31st May 2020 and then between 1st January 2021 and 31st May 2021. The purpose for choosing these periods in time was to compare the trending of the COVID-19 news, which trended elsewhere on the continent during this period (see Fox 2021; Mutanga, Abayomi 2020; Obi-Ani, Anikwenze, Isiani 2020; Zondi 2021). As articulated in the literature review above, COVID-19 cases in Tanzania were recorded right from March 2020.

I read through each headline covered on the entire front page of each issue to identify headlines covering COVID-19 crisis. Before reading through the headlines, I outlined these keywords: *Corona*, *coronavirus* (English name for the virus), *UVIKO* (abbreviation for *Ugonjwa wa Virusi vya Korona* 'Coronavirus disease'), *tatizo la upumuaji* (respiratory disorder), *virusi vya corona* (Swahili name for coronavirus), *barakoa* (Swahili name of face-mask), *karantini* (quarantine or self-isolation), *takasa vikono* 'Swahili name of hand sanitizer', *sanitizer* (English name), and *COVID-19* (English abbreviation for coronavirus disease 2019). Notice that I enlisted English terms *COVID-19*, *coronavirus, sanitizer,* and *corona* due to the tendency of Tanzanian journalists working with Swahili newspapers to employ code-mixing and code-switching (Dzahene-Quarshie 2013; Lusekelo 2010).

The tendency of usage of English terms in Swahili and Swahili terms in English in Tanzania is one of the reasons I call for the keywords used by Kiptiness and Okoye (2021). The same tendency is reported for the "TAIFA LEO" Swahili newspaper produced and circulated in Kenya (Mutonya 2008).

In the analysis, I also conduct comparison of the framing of the COVID-19 news in each newspaper. For instance, while I obtained 122 headlines in "MWANANCHI" newspaper, "HABARILEO" newspaper contained 116 during this period. I gathered only 59 headlines in "UHURU" newspaper. The presentations in Figure 3-11 demonstrate only variations in the quantity of the frames as the datasets exhibit similar frames.

A Multimodal Account of the Headlines in Swahili Newspapers

In this section, I invoke the multimodal theory by Van Leeuwen (2004) that underscores the significance of visual aids to communication. As outlined in one of the preceding sections, the visual aids include the position of the text, the font size and colour of the text, portraits provided in the text, and the wording itself. In this

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paper, I am working with a sample of 297 independent headlines extracted as follows: 122 titles from "MWANANCHI" newspaper, 116 headlines from "HABARILEO" newspaper and 59 headings from "UHURU" newspaper. I worked with front pages alone, looking at the main headlines.

Figure 1a: *Main headline of COVID-19 that contain text from the front page in MWANANCHI newspaper*. Source: field data, author

On some occasions the main headlines are supplied with a photograph of the protagonist, which is common in the media platforms (Bell, Coche 2020). For instance, Image 1A contains the headline *Serikali yatoa mwongozo wa corona kwa vyuo, shule* 'The Government issued COVID-19 protocols for colleges, schools. The text is reinforced with an image of the protagonists wearing facemasks. The image reinforces understanding of the content of the main text of the story itself. Figure 1b portrays the foregrounded front-page headline which reads: *Amana yaongezewa nguvu kuhudumia wenye corona* 'Amana strengthened to care for corona patients. The headline bears the idiom *corona* that helps to identify that it carries news about the pandemic. Also, the symbol of the pandemic is supplied at the end of the headline.

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Figure 1b: *The headline of COVID-19 that contains text and symbol from the front page in HABARILEO newspaper.* Source: field data, author 2021

The protagonist could be an important figure in Tanzania, as is the case of the photograph of Minister Doroth Gwajima (Figure 2a). The photograph of the protagonist reinforces the position of the Government of Tanzania for the headline text that reads: *Utata chanjo ya corona* 'complications about COVID-19 vaccine'. In Figure 2b, the protagonists are the Prime Minister Majaliwa Kassim Majaliwa or the famous Archibishop of Catholic Church Jude Thadeus Ruwa'ichi. Both images reinforce the better understanding of the contents of the text in the headline *Mjadala wa barakoa* 'Debate about facemask'. On the one hand, the Prime Minister stands for the role of the Government, which dominated the issuance of information about COVID-19 in Tanzania (Gruenbaum 2020). On the other hand, the Archibishop of Catholic Church symbolizes the position of the church in handling prayers, which was sorted for by the Government of Tanzania (Gruenbaum 2021).

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Figure 2a: *The main front page headline and content of COVID-19 in UHURU newspaper.*
Source: field data, author

Figure 2b: *The main headline of COVID-19 that contains main text in the inside page of the MWANANCHI newspaper.* Source: field data, author

In fact, the size of the photographs is central in reinforcement of the information contained in the front pages. Bell and Coche (2020, 4) succumb to the claim that "the size, location, and prominence of photographs adds a complex layer of framing analysis beyond the text." This is true for the Swahili newspapers in Tanzania. Imagine the size and location of the Prime Minister on the one hand and that of Archibishop of Catholic Church on the other hand. Based on size and location, both

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images exhibit significance of the two institutions in mankind, namely the government and church.

I, too, looked at other running headlines in the front pages, as illustrated by *Mahujaji njiapanda tamko la Saudia* 'Saudi's proclaiming places Pilgrims at crossroad' in Figure 3.

Figure 3: *Secondary headline of COVID-19 that contains text from the front page of Swahili newspaper.*
Source: field data, author

The texts of the headlines on front page of Swahili newspapers warrant to characterize them into three categories given in Figure 4. Many headlines (47.5 percent in total) constitute the first category. This is the main headline which is usually foregrounded by bold and large size of letters (see Figure 1 and 2). Based on Van Leeuwen (2004), this is purposefully done to attract attention of the reader. In all the main headlines, a running heading(s) normally follow the main heading. The running headings serve to summarize the main ideas available in the text of the news.

The secondary headline bears some less weight as compared to the main line. There are also many (30.4 percent) of the headlines of this kind in the datasets. Their font size would be small and font colour will be regular (not italicized) (see Figure 3). Once a story is selected to be included in the front page, it bears some burning issue worth paying close attention.
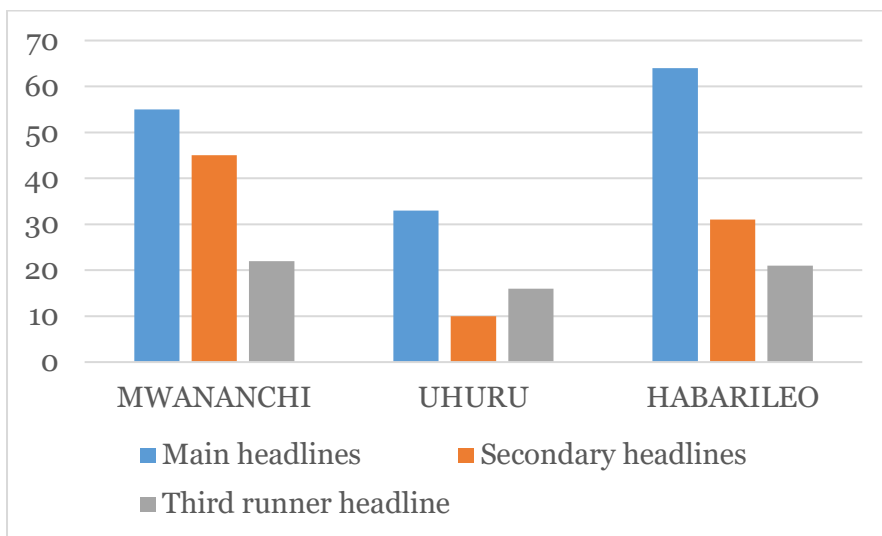
Figure 4: *Foregrounding of the headlines in Swahili newspapers in Tanzania.*
Source: field data, author 2021

Few of the headlines (22.1 percent) fall in the last category, which is third runner headline and involves important news whose information is embedded within the inner part of the newspapers. These are usually foregrounded by colour (see Figure 3).

The information gathered indicates high frequency of reporting in 2020 that declined in 2021 as is shown in Figure 5. My sample is satisfactory to advance points targeting this theme. The amount of information circulated in "HABARILEO", "MWANANCHI" and "UHURU" newspapers covered a long period in time to allow Tanzanians to be aware of the transmission, prevention and treatment of COVID-19 patients.

Based on the statistics of the headlines in these three newspapers, it becomes plausible to argue against Kiptinness and Okoye (2021) who appeared to think that Tanzanians did not cover COVID-19 news. I want to argue that the choice of the "GUARDIAN" newspaper was bad because the majority of Tanzanians make use of the Swahili newspapers such as "MWANANCHI", "UHURU" and "HABARILEO". Petzell (2012) articulated correctly that English is minimally used in Tanzania, mainly in the formal settings such as courtrooms of the high court of Tanzania and the

education sector. Even in these specific linguistic areas, English is poorly used in courts in Tanzania (Keya 2018), in privately owned primary schools in Tanzania (Rubagumya 2003) and in colleges and universities (Puja 2003; Qorro 2003).
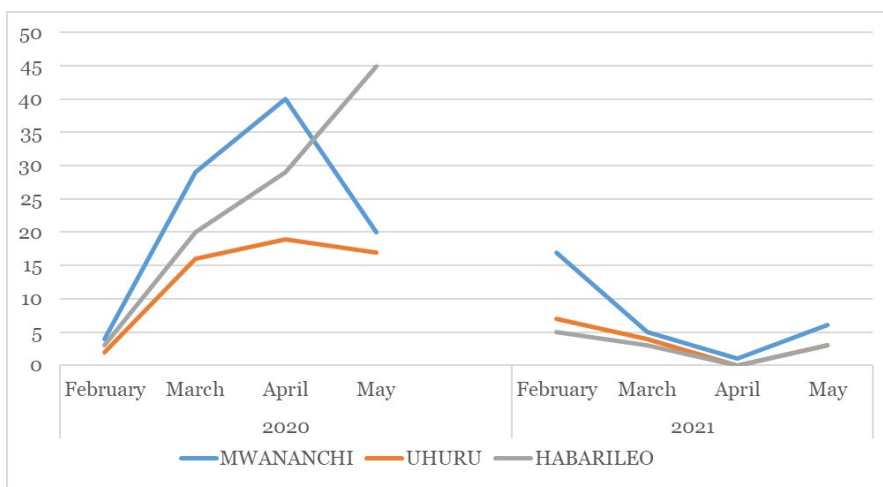
Figure 5: *Reporting of COVID-19 information in Swahili newspapers in Tanzania.*
Source: field data, author 2021

Framing of COVID-19 in the Headlines

In this section, I invoke the framing theory in understanding the representations of COVID-19 information in newspapers. As outlined in one of the preceding sections, the framing theory of mass communication has to do with two principles, namely (i) purposeful choice of wording or diction so as to frame some news and (ii) subsequent impact of the frames on the audience upon the construction of a social, political, health or economic issue in the society.

Sourcing of COVID-19 News Reported in Swahili Newspapers

Another important feature of the coverage of COVID-19 is the circulation of authentic information gathered from authoritative sources. Mass media outlets differ in their sources of the COVID-19 news covering the continent Africa (Bagore 2020). I understand that Kiptinness and Okoye (2021) did not look at the sources of information embedded in the journalistic articles which they analysed for their paper.

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But in my research, I looked at the sources of information, which are captured in Figure 6. I, too, argue that framing of the sources of information is part of the foregrounding of the COVID-19 information in the newspapers.
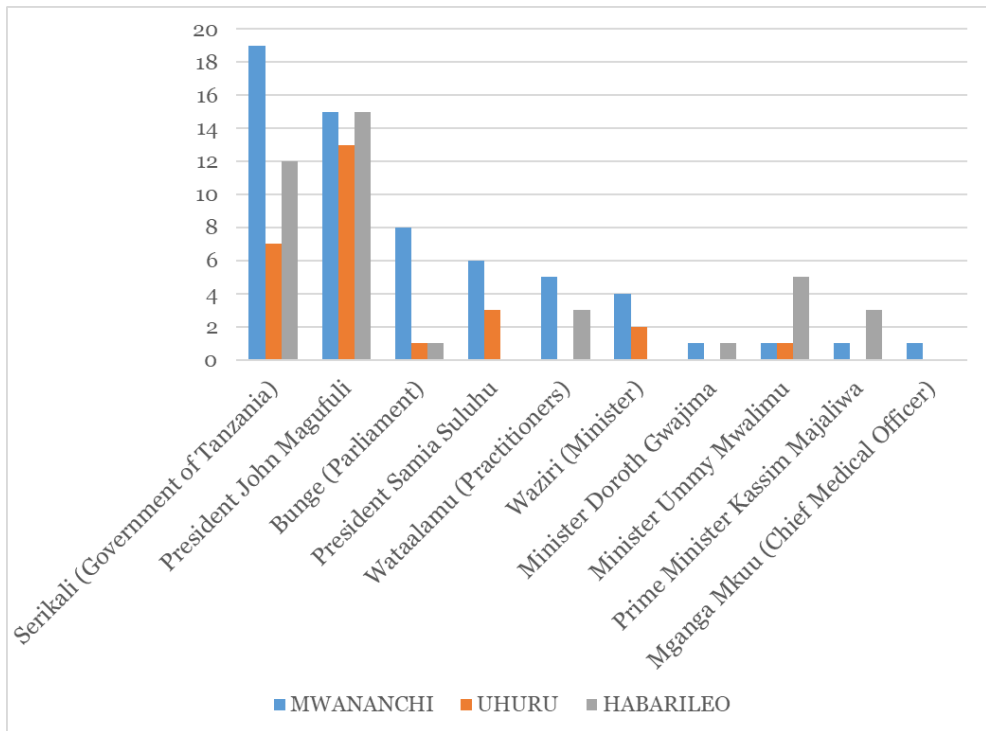
Figure 6: *Sources of information for the COVID-19 headlines in Swahili newspapers in Tanzania.*
Source: field data, author 2021

In the datasets gathered, 138 headlines (which constitutes 46.7 present) had referenced the sources of the information about COVID-19. Two main sources of information had been Government Officials and President John Pombe Magufuli. The Government Officials would also involve Ministers. The Parliament of Tanzania and President Samia Hassan Suluhu had been important sources of information as well. Medical practitioners and the Government Chief Medical Officer also participated in providing information about COVID-19 pandemic which had been shared by "MWANANCHI" newspaper. Individual Ministers of Health, namely, Minister Ummy Mwalimu and Minister Doroth Gwajima and the Prime Minister

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Majaliwa Kassim Majaliwa had not been the primary sources of information. Religious leaders (in this case Christians and Muslims) had also been sources of COVID-19 news which deal with the services they deliver. All this happened because COVID-19 turned to be a national issue and it was handled by the Office of the President and Prime Minister's Office.

The picture painted by the datasets from Swahili newspaper is a replica of the sourcing of COVID-19 news for Africa. Gabore (2020, 305) articulate that "in addition to being journalistic routine, framing shows prior beliefs and ideological preferences of third actors like government and influential groups such as stakeholders or social movements." The two main sources of COVID-19 news had been political leaders (i.e. both presidents of Tanzania; ministers in the cabinet of Tanzania) and the stakeholders (i.e. practitioners in health sector and Chief Medical Officer).

While journalists in Tanzanian Swahili newspapers gather datasets from required sources, this is not the case in three Western mass media (BBC, CNN and France 24). Gabore (2020, 309) found that "Western media used 13.7% Western non-official information sources, 45% African non-official information sources, and 36% African official channels." The framing of the COVID-19 in the West, therefore, is skewed towards information obtained from non-official persons. But this is not the case for the Chinese mass media (CGTN, China Daily and Xinhua), as Gabore (2020, 309) found that "Chinese media used 100% African and Chinese official information sources in the coverage of Africa's COVID-19 prevention measures."

Framing the acts and nouns around COVID-19

Gabore (2020) found that journalists in Western and Chinese mass media outlets frame COVID-19 news in Africa more into impact, source of conflict, and negativity. I want to compare his findings with the features that emerge in the texts produced by journalists employed in Swahili newspapers.

The first parameter used to measure this kind of framing concerns the choice of diction. In fact, framing that is associated with choice of an expression or phrase to foreground a given information (Bullock, Shulman 2021; D'Angelo 2002; Entman 1993). I will begin with the idioms assigned as names of the novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) which highlights the localization of the pandemic in Tanzania. Findings indicate four idioms that had been adopted by journalists in their presentation of news to the public in Tanzania (Figure 7). The foreign idiom *Corona* and an

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expression *virusi vya corona* 'coronavirus' have become a commonplace in the public in the country. They are used as common words in the Swahili newspapers. Furthermore, even a new idiom of *upumuaji* 'respiratory disorder' has been coined to circumvent any stigmatization based on the utility of the name *Corona*.
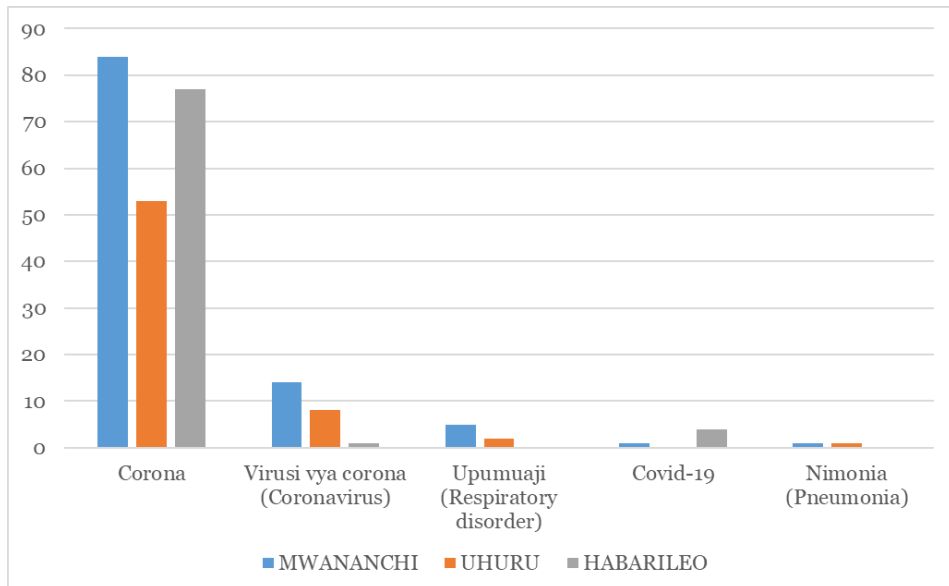

Figure 7: *The framing of the names of COVID-19 pandemic in Swahili newspapers in Tanzania.*
Source: field data, author

The grammar of Swahili, as an agglutinative language, allows the correspondence of sound and alphabetic representation. But in the headlines, I found the word *corona* that begin with a [c] but it is articulated as [k]. I expected the alphabetic representation as *korona* instead. Also, I found the name *COVID-19* being used in Swahili newspapers. This is strange because it is borrowed directly from English.

Moreover, framing as the main analytical tool in linguistics helps to look at lexical features of the key words used in the Swahili newspapers. In the headlines, journalists frame COVID-19 in terms of actions (encoded in verb categories) and outcomes (encoded in nominal class). Each of these two lexical frames (i.e., verbs and nouns) reveal fascinating results presented below.

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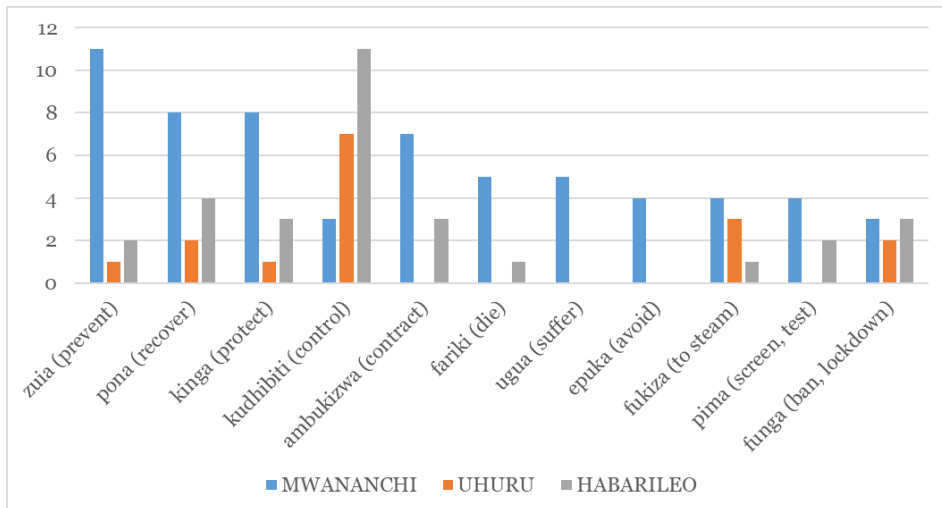
Figure 8: *Framing the verbs for COVID-19 crisis in Swahili newspapers.* Source: field data, author

Firstly, there are about eleven verbs that trended during the production of COVID-19 news articles (Figure 8). The choice of verbs reveals the representation of five important themes: (i) prevention and/or control – *zuia* 'prevent', *dhibiti* 'control', *kinga* 'protect', *epuka* 'avoid' and *funga* 'lockdown, ban'; (ii) screening (testing) – *pima* 'test'; (iii) suffering – *ambukizwa* 'contract' and *ugua* 'be sick'; (iv) treatment – *fukiza* 'to steam'; and (v) the outcome of the pandemic – *pona* 'recover' and *fariki* 'die'. As shown in Figure 8, the verbs of prevention are numerous, which means that journalists focused on prevention against COVID-19.

Secondly, apart from the specific idioms provided in Figure 7, there are about twelve other nouns which were frequently used in the news headlines (Figure 9). Since these nouns were also used to frame COVID-19 news in Swahili newspapers, it becomes plausible to argue that this is the way Tanzanians perceived the pandemic. This is true because nouns used serve primarily identificational purpose in that they reveal the name of the pandemic – *ugonjwa* 'disease' and *maradhi* 'sickness'. Other nouns also exhibit reference to the cases recorded in the country – *mambukizi* or *mambukizo* 'cases'. Furthermore, the fight against and prevention of the spread of the coronavirus is also covered in the headlines mainly by the nouns *udhibiti* 'prevention (of COVID-19)', *vita* 'fight, war (against COVID-19)', *chanjo* 'vaccines',

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karantini 'self-isolation' and *zuio* 'ban', while treatment is shown by *nyungu* 'local treatment by steaming', *tiba* 'local herbs' and *dawa* 'conventional medication'. The noun *hofu* 'anxiety, fear', which had been reported in other platforms (Mohlman, Basch 2021), is attested in Swahili newspapers as well.
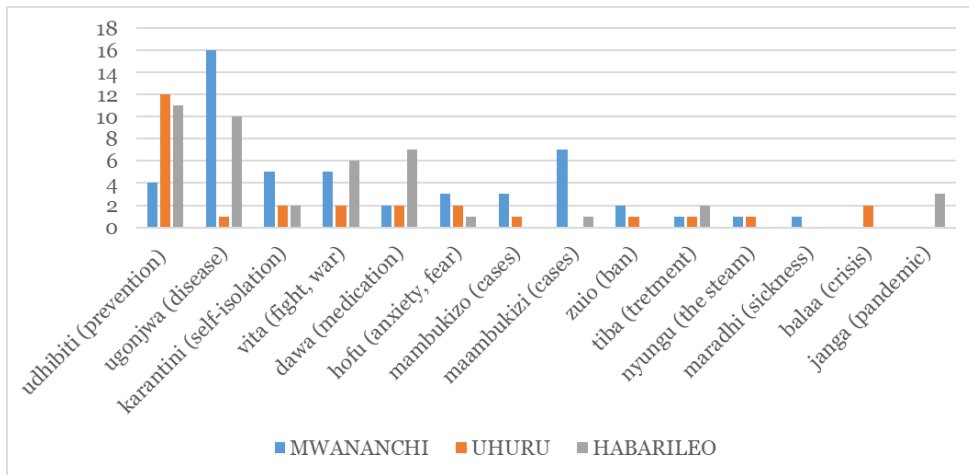
Figure 9: *Framing of COVID-19 information in Swahili nouns depicted in Swahili newspapers* Source: field data, author

It appears that there is similarity in key words framed in the mass media in Africa. Mutanga and Abayomi (2020, 7) found the "trending topics and words including lockdown, food, home, income, South African police service (saps), South African national defence force (SANDF), radiation, corona, safe, die, 5G, workout, vaccines, etc." In Tanzania, the trending words in Swahili newspapers headlines were *Serikali* 'Government', *Corona*, *ugonjwa* 'disease', *maambukizi* 'cases', *karantini* 'self-isolation', *upumuaji* 'respiratory' and *chanjo* 'vaccines'. But important keywords in Swahili, namely, *korona* (Corona) and *UVIKO* did not trend during the period from February to May 2020 and from February to May 2021.

COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the 11th March 2020 (Lone, Ahmad 2020). In Tanzanian context, we confirm that the pandemic is entrenched in the society based on evidence of the lexical terms which

have reference to the pandemic. "UHURU" newspapers began quickly using the label *balaa la corona* 'corona crisis' on the 1st April 2020. In "HABARILEO" newspaper, COVID-19 began to be represented as *janga la corona* 'corona pandemic' on the 7th May 2020.

The utility of these key words tends to substantiate the knowledge of the public on the COVID-19 information in Tanzania. The use of key words is a good indicator of the entrenchment of the pandemic in the society in question. This is confirmed by Mutanga and Abayomi (2020, 7) who found terms corona, safe, die, workout, vaccines, etc. "were among the terms that the South African populace formed perceptions and attitudes around based on their knowledge and awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic."

So far, I have discussed the key words through which Tanzanians construe COVID-19. Since the Swahili newspapers began containing these labels in 2020, it becomes clear that the pandemic got entrenched in the lexicon of the language as used by audience of Swahili newspapers. This evidence is against the proposition by Kiptinness and Okoye (2021) that Tanzanians assumed that the pandemic is a foreign disease.

Framing the contents of the news of COVID-19 in Tanzania

Two issues are dealt with in this section. On the one hand, I discuss the framing of COVID-19 into the socio-economic, political and religious issues. On the other hand, I discuss the presentation of COVID-19 as personal, national (local), regional or international news. Both frames help to understand entrenchment of the news of the pandemic in Tanzania. While describing the contents, I compare my findings with those presented by Gabore (2020) and, Kiptinness and Okoye (2021).

I want to argue against Kiptinness and Okoye (2021, 9) who suggest that COVID-19 in Tanzania is framed as global disease, as they conclude: "the Tanzanian government paid little attention to the pandemic, and this is well reflected in the framing of the news about the virus as a global crisis." Reading through the headlines written in Swahili, one finds the localization of the pandemic in the Swahili society of Tanzania.

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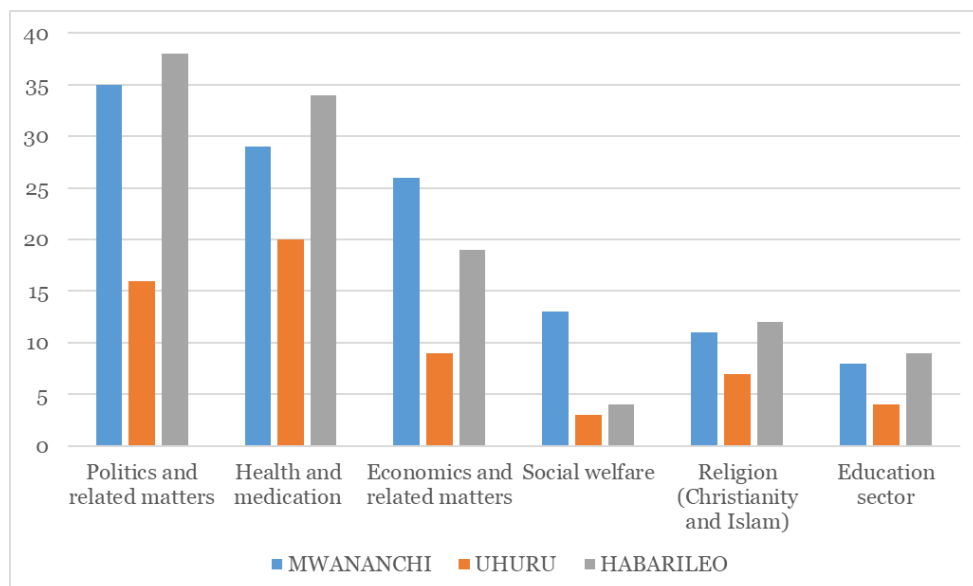
**Figure 10:** *Tokens of occurrence of the contents of the headlines in Swahili newspapers.*
Source: field data, author

The contents of the 297 headlines (122 "MWANANCHI" newspaper; 116 "HABARILEO" newspaper; "59" UHURU newspaper) reveal six categories: economy, education, health and medication, politics, religion, and social welfare (Figure 10). Most of the headlines (72 percent) describe issues related to politics (e.g., *Mshikemshike bungeni sakata la corona* 'COVID-19 saga in the Parliament' "MWANANCHI" April 21, 2020), health (*Tahadhari mpya ya sanitaiza* 'New precaution about facemasks' "MWANANCHI", February 24, 2021), and economics (*Corona yashusha faida ya TBL* 'COVID-19 reduced TBL profit' "MWANANCHI", April 29, 2021). The remaining headlines (only 28 percent) focus on religion (*Miongozo mipya 13 kutumika Katoliki* 'New 13 protocols to be used in Catholic Church' "MWANANCHI", March 4, 2021), social welfare (*Mghwira tunga wimbo wa corona akiwa karantini* 'Mghwira composed a new song while in self-isolation' "MWANANCHI", May 5, 2020), and education (*Serikali yatoa mwingozo wa corona kwa vyuo, shule* 'The Government issued protocols for colleges, schools' "MWANANCHI" May 29, 2020).

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A comparison with the findings presented by Kiptinness and Okoye (2021, 7) is required. In their study of Kenyan and Tanzanian newspapers, they found that much of the news is framed in social, economic and political areas. Less information is framed in treatment and medication. The same is true for the findings in Swahili newspapers except that health and medication is represented in more headlines as compared to Kiptinness and Okoye (2021). This has implications to growing seriousness of the Government of Tanzania in handling the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.
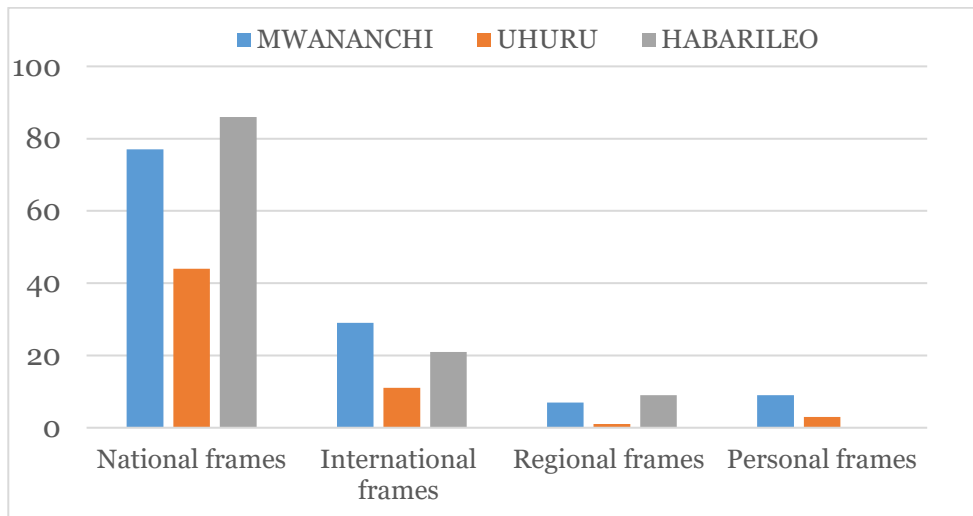
Figure 11: *Frequency of occurrence of personal, national, regional and international frames in Swahili newspapers.* Source: field data, author

The framing of the news in the headlines underlines the national status (63 percent) (e.g., *Kujifukiza kwapamba moto nchini* 'Steaming increased in the country' "MWANANCHI", May 3, 2020; *Wabunge wa Chadema wakimbia corona bungeni, wajikarantini Dodoma* 'CHADEMA Members of Parliament evade COVID-19 in the assembly, they undertake self-isolation in Dodoma' "MWANANCHI" May 2, 2020). Rather it underscores the least in framing of COVID-19 as an international (global) news (which stands at 24 percent today) (e.g. *Virusi vya corona vilivyobadili maisha China* 'Coronavirus changed life in China' "MWANANCHI" February 25, 2020), as has been claimed by Kiptinness and Okoye (2021, 8) (see Figure 11).

This means that the global COVID-19 pandemic has become a national problem now. The national status of the news framed further as personal story, which indicates that Tanzanians have begun sharing their predicaments experienced personally due to COVID-19 pandemic. For example, *Maalim Seif akiri kuugua corona* 'Maalim Seif pronounce to contract COVID-19' MWANANCHI, February 2021). Based on the datasets in this section, I am obliged to argue that the blame on the late President John Pombe Magufuli by Kiptiness and Okoye (2021) and Gruenbaum (2020) no longer holds water because Tanzanians have taken the pandemic serious.

The regional frames are the smallest in the datasets and concentrate on regional trade (e.g. *SADC yaja na mkakati wa ufanyaji biashara* 'SADC introduces strategies to conduct trade' "MWANANCHI" April 8, 2020) or fight to combat COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. *Kampuni A. Mashariki zinavyokabili corona* 'The way East Africa Community fights COVID-19' "MWANANCHI" Machi 22, 2020).

There is some similarity between my findings with the ones offered by Gabore (2020). First of all, Tanzanian journalists framed the impact of COVID-19 on the economy of Tanzania, mainly on trade, tourism and hospitality facilities. The same news is mentioned by Gabore (2020, 309): "Impact frame focused on the consequences of the pandemic by reporting confirmed cases, deaths, and socio-economic effects." The economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic is reported in other countries as well, e.g., Nigeria (Obi-Ani, Anikwenze, Isiani 2020) and Rwanda and South Africa (Zondi 2021).

The pandemic also reveals the conflict frame of the Western media, as had been the case for the national (local) media. Gabore (2020, 309) found that the Western media "selected and highlighted disagreements and incompatibilities between pressure caused by the pandemic and capacity of African health systems, ruling and opposition parties, COVID-19 response of African countries and the problem, and the need and supply of personal protective equipment." The same is found in the datasets presented in this paper.

Conclusion

The trending news in Tanzania had been about COVID-19 pandemic. The front pages covered the news more in March and April in 2020 during the first wave but less during the third wave of the outbreak in March and April 2021. One implication

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is that COVID-19 had ceased to be a burning news by 2021. Based on the framing theory, journalists in Tanzania utilize the front pages to deliver the required burning news, as had been the case all over the world (Bell, Coche 2020; Reisner 1992). The other implication is that journalists in Tanzania pay much attention to burning issues related to political matters rather than the pandemic outbreaks. But this does not rule out the abundance of coverage of the pandemic in Tanzania, which had not been seen to be the case by Kiptinness and Okoye (2020).

The pandemic had become part of the local diseases in the country. The front page headlines revealed that Tanzanian journalists frame the pandemic in the expressions understood easily by Tanzanians. This is the case of the utility of many names and verbs which surround the pandemic, e.g. adaptation of the idiom *corona* in Swahili texts and the coinage of the idiom *upumuaji* 'respiratory disorder'. Based on the datasets presented in this paper, I am obliged to revert the claim by Kiptinness and Okoye (2020) that Tanzania did not take the pandemic seriously as it was viewed as a global problem rather than a national turmoil. By May 2020, the pandemic had already been localized and Tanzanians speak of it as a local disease as well.

Two articles, namely, Gruenbaum (2020; 2021) blame the decision of the late President John Magufuli who declared that COVID-19 was an outcome of foreign economic war that spilled off to Tanzania as a result he advocated for traditional strategies to curb the crisis. Also, the articles appear to want to suggest that during the leadership of President Samia Suluhu COVID-19 will be controlled using the conventional measures and protocols approved by WHO. Based on the findings presented in this paper, trending news about the pandemic appeared frequently during the first wave in April 2020 and declined during the third wave in April 2021. In addition, although the White House of Tanzania is blamed to be at the core of preventing spread of information about the pandemic (Gruenbaum 2020), Tanzanians have taken up the pandemic seriously by coining terms that connote the prevalence of the pandemic in the country. Perhaps Kiptinness and Okoye (2020) should learn that the connotative strategies of communication are highly available in Swahili language in Tanzania rather than English.

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The "Nets and Anchors" on the Indian Community in Mwanza City (Tanzania): Ethnographic Challenges and Encounters

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ABSTRACT

The use of "nets and anchors" framework requires a researcher to get a broad perspective of life in the case-study area through everyday observations and conversations with its residents before attempting an in-depth perspective of life as it is narrated by the key respondents of community groups. This framework was adopted in a study conducted among the Indians living in Mwanza City, Tanzania during the period of COVID-19 pandemic. This paper discusses the challenges encountered when conducting ethnographic research on the socio-cultural practices of Indians in Mwanza. The paper points out that COVID-19 pandemic among other factors hindered the process of collecting data through participant observation and interviews on the Indian community in Mwanza City.

KEY WORDS: COVID-19, ethnography, interview, Indians, Mwanza, participant observation, research

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Introduction

The mid of August 2021 marked the beginning of the fieldwork for the PhD project proposal titled *An Ethnographic and Historical Study of Indians in Mwanza City, Tanzania*. It is the study which sought to establish a monograph of Indians in Mwanza by using a case study. The study is interdisciplinary. It uses both historical and ethnographic methods to explore the Indian community living in Mwanza from the period of African colonization to the recent times. Ethnographic part of the study will be used to show how Ismailis' cultural practices have been influenced by the urban setting of Mwanza and vice versa. Thus, there was a need to conduct ethnographic study with the aim of obtaining ethnographic data along with historical data that will lead to a successful completion of the project at hand. It was from this context that ethnographic data was sought.

Ethnography in general terms refers to both a method of data collection and analysis, and a piece of work resulting from such method. As a research method, it entails a combination of various tools used to investigate "other people's perceptions, opinions, subjective experience and their situational meanings" (Hughes et al. 2008, 352; Allen 2017). There are several such tools or methods as identified by Bradshaw (2017). Among the identified methods, "long term and immersive participant observation" is considered as the most effective method in conducting ethnographic research. The effectiveness of this method lies on its ability to help researchers "witness the values, dynamics, internal relationships, structures, and conflicts as they play out in communities" (Bradshaw 2010, 67).

A researcher must adopt convenient framework for utilizing ethnographic methods effectively. It is important to adopt a framework because a researcher gets a clear structure of collecting significant information in relation to the research topic. As far as ethnographic research is concerned, various frameworks have been invented by ethnographers in different times. It is therefore up on the researcher's decisions to adopt any framework that is relevant to his or her own research. Given the context of Mwanza City where multiplicity of social and economic groups converges, the study adopted a "nets and anchors" approach as a guiding framework for ethnographic fieldwork in Mwanza. This framework was introduced by Nicholas Hopkins and Sohair Mehanna in their famous work on Nubians in the early 1960s. While the framework proved to be useful, some challenges emerged leading to adjustment of research methods and the adopted framework.

This paper therefore seeks to uncover those challenges encountered during the initial stages of fieldwork which adopted the "nets and anchors" framework and how these challenges were addressed to ensure a successful collection of ethnographic data. The paper does not pretend to establish new principles of ethnographic research. It is rather seeking to make a reflection of the few challenges that are specifically related to the chosen study community and the time when the fieldwork was conducted. The paper proceeds by giving a general background to the "nets and anchors' framework and how it is applied in ethnographic research. It later shows how this framework was applied in Mwanza and discusses the challenges that the researcher encountered in the study community. Lastly it concludes the discussion by giving general observation and recommendation on the pertinent issues related to ethnographic research.

Background to the "Nets and Anchors"

As it has been noted above, the "nets and anchors" framework was first adopted in the works of Hopkins and Mehanna on the Nubian ethnological survey of the 1960s. It has its origin from Robert Fernea as an imaginary proposal that would help the research team conduct an intensive study of their study communities in Nubia (Hopkins, Mehanna 2010, 13). The most recent existing study which adopted this framework was that of Rebecca Bradshaw on the impact of archaeology on local communities in Sudan's Nile Valley. This approach, as it was originally used and later adopted by Bradshaw entails the researcher to have a wide view of the case study area by making a wide range of participant observation from the people in the study area before concentrating on the identified key informants within the study area (Hopkins, Mehanna 2017, 22; Bradshaw 2017, 69). In simpler terms the "nets" refers to the general residents in the study area while the "anchors" refers to the identified key informants in the study community. The nets can also be the totality of surveys conducted in the general field study area with a diverse community within which a studied community is found. The anchors in this context, refer to the intensive community studied in their specific localities.

This framework is useful in ethnographic research seeking to understand how particular groups of people are affected by a particular phenomenon at given space and time. The researcher may be exposed to diversity before considering the ways in which a group under study might assemble with respect to the phenomenon of interest (Bradshaw 2010, 69). It is believed that "each group has its own way of

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responding to a phenomenon and a similar phenomenon may be felt differently among members of different group at a given period and space" (Bradshaw 2010). This is what Bradshaw calls a net approach which uses participant observation to bring about various groups of people from which key respondents may be identified (Bradshaw 2010, 69).

The proponents of this framework vary slightly in applying this framework to their fieldworks. However, they all follow three successive stages in the fieldwork. The first stage involves familiarization with study community. It may be devoted to either participant observation or survey. The choice from these two methods is largely informed by the purpose of the researcher and the extent to which the researcher is familiar with study community. Generally, the difference between participant observation and survey depends on the purpose of research and the amount and type of data these two methods generate (Bajorek 2017). Yet, the intention is mainly to "cast a wide net across the study community" (Bradshaw 2010). Using either of the two methods researchers take time to familiarize with the study communities at this stage. The time spent at this stage is relatively short compared to the next stages. In some studies, it takes only a short period while in others it takes long period up to two months or more. At this stage the researcher may have a research assistant from the study community when doing participant observation: together, they must discuss the research topic; its aim and objectives, its data collection methods, and the fieldwork plan. This applies mostly to the researchers who are "outsiders" (Liamputtong 2010). During this stage the researcher goes around the entire area of the study community: study any person, family, and people, visit homes, and places of work, attend social events and collect preliminary data. It is possible to establish the study community profile and establish census.

The second stage starts immediately after sketching a study community thoroughly in the first stage. It may also take two weeks in a semi structured or unstructured interviews. Specific groups of people are targeted basing on gender, life experience and knowledge possessed regarding the study community. At this stage listening to speeches, public statements, and songs, reading books and magazines, textbooks and poems becomes important. The researcher must attend key social events, observe, and conduct informal discussions and conversations at this stage. By the end of this stage a researcher should have established how different groups are positioned in the study community (Bradshaw 2010, 79).

The final, third stage comes after participant observation. It starts with encounters with the key respondents after identifying and selecting the study's anchors. The anchors who represent various groups in various interests are given in-depth explanation of what the project is about at this stage. A researcher should get their verbal consent (Bradshaw 2010, 80). This stage involves in-depth interviews and conversation with the key informants. It may be private, one on one, open, and public settings. Note taking and recording, specifying places, time and people is important at this stage (Bradshaw 2010, 80).

Mwanza City and the Indians: The Study Area and Study Community

Mwanza is the second largest city in Tanzania with a population approximately more than one million. The city is located on the shores of Lake Victoria in northern Tanzania. It serves as port and an economic hub of the lake region (UN-Habitat 2018; McGranahan et al. 2020, 4). It is covered by granite rocks and has a gently undulating topography consisting of isolated hills and rock inselbergs. The city's soils are well drained; this is associated with the rock inselbergs, whose height is between 1100 and 1600m (UN-Habitat 2018). The popular name, "Rock City", is derived from these rocks and hills that characterize the city. Since its inception the city has attracted a multiplicity of ethnic and racial groups from different parts of the country and the world at large. Indians make up one of the significant groups in city.

The presence of Indians in the city is historic. They have been living in the city since the colonial period to date. Most of them are permanent residents occupying largely the central part of the town residential areas. They constitute a group of urban minorities in the city holding a significant part of the town's economy. They own wholesale and retail shops, restaurants, and industries (Mutebi 2020). Their social activities are well noticeable in the city. Their mosques and temples are very prominent. They are also noted for their contribution in the development of health and educational sector. This contribution regards particularly to the Hindu and Ismailis who have established medical centres and operate schools in Mwanza. They conduct festivals and social gatherings. A good example was the historic 2015 Unity Games which was held in Mwanza City in April 2015 where Jamat members from all over East Africa joined to participate in four-day Unity Games sports tournaments.

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Situating the Case Study in the "Nets and Anchors" Framework: Challenges and Encounters

As it has been noted above, the fieldwork in Mwanza began in the mid-August 2012. This was after acquiring a research permit from the office of the District Administrative Secretary. Responding to the prescribed stages of the "nets and anchors framework" I started with familiarization with the study community. This was the time to approach the research assistants who are very familiar with the Indian community. These research assistants were to help in the data collection process after a detailed discussion regarding the research projects, its aim, objectives, and data collection mechanisms (Liampttung 2010; Middleton, Cons 2014, 279). However, I had not yet obtained any research assistant. A friend whom I relied on was not living in the city by this time. Thus, I did not have any trusted person who is very familiar with the Indian community in the city. Yet, I grew up and studied in Mwanza and had been a resident for quite a long time. I knew where specifically Indians were found in the city. I relied on this general knowledge as an insider in the city to familiarize with the study community personally. Familiarization took a form of surveys and participant observation. A general survey of the city was conducted in four administrative wards: Pamba, Nyamagana, Mirongo and Igogo. These are the areas with many Indian residential houses and wholesale and retail shops. In these areas I walked around, taking general surroundings and hangout for one week as suggested by Meskell, 2005. By taking this approach, the Indian temples, shops, schools, restaurants, stores, residential houses were identified. I could talk to whoever was interested to talk to me and shared the general information regarding the research in one week time. The main intention was to sketch the general settlements and Indian cultural space in the city and identify respondents. Four schools: a secondary school, a primary school and two nursery schools which are owned by Indians, three temples: Aga Khan Ismaili Jamatkhana, Hindu temple, Shia Ithna-asheri Jamaat, two restaurants and various shops and homes were identified and visited regularly within one week.

At this stage informal conversations were held and noted with the people I met in all the above-mentioned places. The day's experience was noted, and a reflection was done in the evening and helped to establish some fieldnotes. Notes were used to establish general facts regarding the Indian presence, population, and activities in

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the city and the important informants who would assist me to proceed to the next stage of fieldwork. This task was generally successful with some noted challenges.

The greatest challenge encountered in this initial stage was an unpredictable response and sometimes neglect of Indians to talk to me. This was common especially to the Indian shop owners in both wholesale and retail shops I visited. Most of them were not ready to keep on talking to me when they realized I am not a customer as they might have expected. For instance, one old man owning a home medicine shop at Makoroboi, the busiest street in town, welcomed me generously when I visited the shop and bought toothpaste and soaps. When I visited the same place and showed my interest as a researcher, he showed non-cooperation. He just said he was busy and could not help me anything related to my research. In some shops, they only told their African servants to listen to me and did not want to hear anything unrelated to buying their products. I quickly realized that they mistrust Africans. They are always careful thinking that the government send people to spy them and close their shops on tax grounds.

I considered this as a challenge emanating from the researcher as an "outsider" as highlighted by Gelir (Gelir 2021, 227). Yet, I was able to identify respondents from my nets in the first stage. Informal conversations that I held with some Africans and few Indians in the first stage helped to identify an Indian ward councillor in Nyamagana ward who serves as a Deputy Mayor in the city. He has been serving in these positions since 2015. The conversation we had helped to identify key respondents among the Indian community including the Hindu Union Association Chairman, old men, and women in the city. I later conducted official visits in schools. I was able to meet and talk to two Indian teachers in two nursery schools. They became the most significant persons who helped me to meet the Indian community leaders. From one of them I was able to meet the Chairman and Secretary, and an ex-chairman elder of the Ismailis in Mwanza. A meeting with these leaders was held in the second week of my field week at the Ismailis Jamatkhana.

A formal conversation in form of group discussion was held with the chairman, secretary and one member of the council serving as the chairman of communication and development department of the council. I made a formal introduction and shared my research topic in detail. From this meeting I was able to establish a close relationship with the chairman of communication and development department. In accordance with the ethical guidelines of a good research, I shared with him the research objectives, its scope, and the proposed data collection mechanisms. The

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chairman of communication department became my research assistant in the study community henceforth. I was able to decide to focus with the Ismaili community at this stage which I may call the second stage. It was good to proceed in a semi structured approach with observation of the study community in accordance with Bradshaw. The intention was to explore the participant's thoughts and perceptions about the research topic. It certainly helped to reveal the information flow among the Ismailis. I could notice that none of the Ismaili community member was able to share information outside the formal channel. They are only ready to reveal information after the formal consent with the community leadership. They respect their organization and protect their community affairs. Thus, I had to seek consent from the chairman for conducting any interview.

In cooperation with and the help from my research assistant, some adult men and women were identified and visited. Semi structured interviews were held at homes and workplaces in Nyamagana, Pamba, Mirongo, Uhuru and Liberty streets. I was able to collect few old public speeches and statements, and associations records from the informants. The collected information was heard and read. It was possible to find information about migration stories, early families, and group initiatives in the city. During this stage, I had to attend social gatherings of Ismaili Indians. I expected to attend weddings, community festivals and other social gatherings which would take the remaining time with my nets in the town. However, this was not possible due to COVID-19 pandemic which I discuss below.

COVID-19 Challenges

COVID-19, a global pandemic that erupted at the end of 2019 has left the world in a new system of life. Since its eruption in 2019 many people have been affected with many reported deaths all over the world. The spread of the pandemic has prompted nation states, organizations, institutions, and individuals to adopt various control measures to prevent the spread of pandemic. Most of these control measures are very common everywhere. However, the degree of exercising them vary across continents, nations, regions, and localities. In Tanzania, various measures, as recommended by WHO were implemented. However, the government decided not to implement lockdown which sought to control people's movement. Lockdown was considered a threat to citizens as it would take them out of daily working and lack of necessities which are obtained on daily basis (Mfinanga et al. 2021, 1542-1543). Since then, all activities continued to operate daily, public gatherings and related

gatherings continued from national to local level. This was a general view that I had when reflecting on COVID-19 pandemic in Tanzania and Mwanza.

However, I encountered a different experience with the Indian community in the city. Experience from a semi structured interviews held among the Indian adult men and women indicated that there was no social gathering that was taking place since the outbreak of the pandemic. Community and religious festivals were suspended by the Ismaili Council (Informant 1 2021; Informant 2 2021). Likewise, picnics, weddings, family ceremonies and outings were also cancelled. This applied to both Hindu and Ismailis. Oral testimonies from some community members attested that many people have suffered from this pandemic, some elderly people have died especially in early 2021 (Informant 1 2021; Informant 3 2021; Informant 4 2021). The increasing number of COVID-19 cases and deaths prompted the Indian community to adopt strict measures to control the spread of COVID-19. Consequently, it was not possible to attend, observe and conduct discussion in any Indian community gatherings. These gatherings would be very significant in these early stages of fieldwork. It was from these community gatherings where discussions with Indians from different social groups about their lives, work, family, social relations among many issues relevant to the topic were sought. It would ease active participation and acquisition of similar experience as an insider in the study community (Jaimagal-Jones 2014). This was the time when open statement of the research was to be shared with a wide range of respondents and consequently account for the choice of the key informants who would later become the research "anchors" (Salmon 2004, 3).

However, COVID-19 did not completely restrict the efforts to seek informants and establish a base in the study community. Alternative approach and methods were sought from various research conducted during the pandemic and some established principles on how to conduct ethnographic during COVID-19 pandemic. These gave the insights of how to get in touch with the study community and establish the key respondents. The use of digital ethnography as discussed by Góralska and applied in the work of Arya and Henn has been alternatively used to keep in touch with the respondents. I had to rely on WhatsApp voice and video calls and chats with some respondents. I have been able to obtain various information including old magazines, family photos on various social occasions that had been taking place on the study community.

However, as noted by Góralska, digital ethnography is challenging. It "… usually has blurry boundaries, confusing research strategies that make up the 'being there', or a

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handful of novel ethical dilemmas" (Góralska 2020, 48). Generally, this method obscures the mode of participant observation in an ethnographic context (De Seta 2020, 93). Establishing a close relationship with diverse groups in the study area comes before. This relationship makes it easy to collect data (Ardévol, Gómez-Cruz 2013, 10). In quite a similar way I may admit that the use of digital ethnography as applied in the later stage has neither enabled this research to increase the number of informants nor develop a participant observation in its entirety. Yet, more approaches are still sought to be applied to ensure objectives of the study are fully met. As it has been pointed above, this is an interdisciplinary study. It applies both ethnographic and historical methods to achieve its objectives. Archival documents have been sought and utilized to supplement the ethnographic data.

Conclusion

Research methodology is an important part in a successful completion of data collection. Its success in ethnographic fieldwork relies heavily on the choice of convenient framework to simplify data collection methods. An ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Mwanza adopted the "nets and anchors" approach to gather reliable information on the socio-cultural practices of the Indian immigrants in Mwanza City. Various steps of this framework were followed accordingly. In adopting such steps various challenges were encountered. While familiarization with the study community through general survey proved effective in sketching the Indians' geographical set up, initial participant observation encountered the rigid and less cooperation from the identified informants. Likewise, COVID-19 hindered the use of participant observation on different levels. The Indians adopted measures which restricted physical and social contacts. Such measures made it impossible to access various public places and homes leading to the adoption different alternative techniques other than participant observation.

From the foregoing discussion, this paper establishes that the Indian immigrants' shared history, their established social structure, and group identity determined the level of successful use of the "nets and anchors" approach in various stage. They restricted the numbers of informants, and sometimes the kind of information to be accessed. They further led to the adoption of different strict COVID-19 measures among the Indians thus hindering access to the Indians' gatherings as an important component in identifying many "anchors". The challenges were therefore settled with flexibility through alternative techniques. It is therefore important for ethnographers

to consider that COVID-19 may have a far-reaching consequence. It has altered the community's ways of life thus calling for ethnographers to seek and find out new fieldwork methods and approaches.

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INFORMANT 2, 03.09.2021, Pamba Street, Mwanza
INFORMANT 3, 08.09.2021, Lumumba Street, Mwanza
INFORMANT 4, 09.09.2021, Uhuru Street, Mwanza

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Failure of *Ujamaa* in Modernising Wataturu Community in Igunga from the Early 1970s to the the Mid-1980s

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ABSTRACT

Tanzania's Rural Development Policy which encompassed, among other things, establishment of well-planned *Ujamaa* villages across the country, was a nation-wide agenda implemented immediately after the Arusha Declaration of 1967. The Arusha declaration marked the actual beginning of *Ujamaa,* a socio-economic policy based on egalitarian principles of traditional African societies practiced in Tanzania from 1967 to the mid-1980s. Contrary to government's intentions, the Wataturu negatively responded to this programme since it conflicted with their socio-cultural set-up. Scholarships on this subject converge on the failure and success of the programme, its ecological impact as well as land disputes and social unrest resulting from the implementation of the policy. Yet, little is known about the extent to which the socio-cultural life, perceptions, beliefs, and cattle economy determined the responses, participation and mobilization among the Wataturu (*brediga*) - Datooga of Igunga. This paper exploits ethno-historical accounts from Igunga district and archival materials collected as part of a PhD project to fill this gap. The paper establishes that modernisation through the resettlement scheme and establishment of *Ujamaa* villages were never a reality for the Wataturu who uphold their traditional socio-cultural set-up with great pride.

KEY WORDS: Modernisation, Tanzania, *Ujamaa*, Villagisation, Wataturu

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Background

A decade after attainment of her political independence, Tanzania embarked on a major transformational project under the 'Rural Development Policy' (Raikes 1975; Nyerere 1968, 106-144; Nyerere 1967). The policy was intended to transform the lives and living standards of rural people in the country. Together with the desire to modernise agriculture for better outputs and inculcate *Ujamaa* ideology, it was also the government's target to improve settlement patterns, housing and social services and sanitary services (NRC File No. SR. 4; Hall 1978). However, the approach taken in implementing the policy toward the desired goals was heterogeneous (Lawi 2007, 69-75). Different communities also perceived and responded to the policy differently. This explains why the legacy of *Ujamaa* can be easily noted in some societies such as the Matengo and Ngoni of Ruvuma (Mann 2017, 274-77). Yet, such legacy can hardly be noted among Wataturu. Unlike the rest of ethnic groups in Igunga district, the Wataturu community responded to the government's plan negatively. The Wataturu perceived the government's modernisation agenda as a threat to their culture, history, and freedom as a community. They felt that their mode of livelihood was adequate and relevant to them. They did not want any sort of contamination (Informant 1, 2021). This might have been because, among other things, the Rural Development Policy sought to ban or transform all cultural practices and traditions perceived to be bad. So, even though the policy was meant to eliminate all obstacles to national building (NRC File No. A. 3/9), its intended objectives were not timely achieved as expected in Igunga due to resistance from this community. The Wataturu, just like many other pastoral communities are characterized by very tight socio-cultural and economic formation. Thus, transforming their socio-cultural and economic systems meant infusing new practices into their culture. This explains why the implementation of the Rural Development Policy was perceived, by the Wataturu, as an effort to contaminate their well-established socio-cultural system.

Research on the implementation and the outcome of the Rural Development Programme under the *Ujamaa* Policy is quite enormous. Scholars such as Mhajida (2019), Blystad (2000b), Lane (1991) and Ndagala (1991) have offered a detailed discussions about the consequences of villagisation and the *Ujamaa Vijini* policy to the other subgroups of Datooga, focusing mainly on land, pastoral rights, and social marginalisation. In a closely related approach, Lawi (2007) analyses and examines the extent to which local cosmologies and ecological consciousness of the Iraqw people shaped their response and participation in the Operation *Vijiji*. Since the

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Iraqw people are ethnically different and were relatively conversant to societal integration and modernism compared to Wataturu, there is a need for further research on this subject. Moreover, the uniqueness of Wataturu compared to the rest of other subgroups of Datooga, and the context of minority from which they exist in Igunga district necessitate a need to reveal their response to *Ujamaa Vijijini* scheme. Equally important, the socio-economic and political significance of the *Ujamaa* period necessitates further inquiry to find out social and cultural antagonisms as well as belief confrontations which shaped the responses of different communities. In an attempt to reveal the experiences and memories, an elderly Taturu informant at Makomero village in Igunga district pointed out that

We never wanted villagisation and its entire arrangement. We did not like to be resettled and arranged! We are free people. We have our own ways of settling, housing, and surviving. We did not want to fight the government. As youths, we took our cows further to the interior where government people could not disturb us (Informant 2, 2021).

Building on the above excerpt and previous scholarships, this paper assesses the extent to which Wataturu's socio-cultural life, perception, beliefs, and cattle economy shaped their response to the *Ujamaa Vijijini* programme. The paper attempts to contribute more insights to the existing body of knowledge about the implementation and outcomes of rural development policy among Wataturu who have unfortunately not been given much attention compared to other sections of the Datooga ethnic group.

Wataturu of Igunga District: Brief History and Culture

Inaugurated on 20th July 1975, Igunga district is one of the seven districts which constitute the Tabora region found in central western Tanzania. The district is in the northern part of Tabora region. It covers an area of 6,912 square kilometers and it has an estimated population of 425,442 people. The district is bordered by Kishapu District to the North, Iramba District to the East, Uyui District to the South and Nzega District to the West. It has four divisions (Igunga, Simbo, Manonga and Igurubi), 35 wards, 119 villages and 758 hamlets (URT, Igunga District Profile, 2010). The Wataturu community forms an important and unique section of the population because of their rigidity to adopt 'modern lifestyle'. They actively participate in pastoralism, crop cultivation and other related socioeconomic and political activities

despite being a minority there. Most of them have established their settlements in Igunga, Nguvu Moja, Mbutu, Lugubu and Itumba wards in Igunga division. The history of the Wataturu in Igunga districts, particularly along the sides of the Wembere wetlands and nearby areas goes far back to an immemorial time (Setreus 1991; Itandala 1980; Tomikawa 1978). Likewise, their settlement in Igunga, in Loya area of Uyui district region, in Itigi district in Singida region as well as in Meatu and Maswa districts of Simiyu region is historical (TNA Singida District Book 1921; Mhajida 2019; Bihariová 2017; Ndagala 1990).

The Wataturu of Igunga are a section of the Datooga community (*emoojiga*) which is dispersed in different parts of the country. Scholars such as Mhajida, Bihariová, Blystad (2000a), Borgerhoff (1991, 1992), Setreus, Ndagala and Tomikawa have identified up to about 12 subgroups of the Datooga in different regions in Tanzania. This paper concentrates on a section of Datooga who belong to a subgroup known as Brediga, commonly identified as Wataturu. This community does not identify itself as Wataturu (or Taturu). The name Wataturu was given to them by their neighbouring ethnic groups such as Sukuma, Nyiramba and Nyamwezi (Itandala 1980). Nevertheless, throughout this paper the name "Wataturu" is used since it is well-known and is used by people living in proximity with this community. The name is also used in politics and governance. Other subgroups of the *emoojiga* of Datooga include Darorajega, Gisamijenga, Barabaiga, Iseimajega, Gidaghodiga, Bajuta, Bisiyeda, Salagwajega, Rotigenga (Rudageing), Bianjida (the Bajud), Daragwajega, Ghubiega, and Mangatiga (Itandala 1980, 2; Tomikawa 1978, 1). Oral narratives from the Wataturu show that the name *Brediga* is used to refer to those who felt tired and decided to settle down during the great migration of the Datooga (Informant 3, 2021). Oral sources also show that the Wataturu, when compared to the Barabaig who form the majority of the Datooga ethnic group, are more preservative, conservative, and resistant to changes, modern religion, and formal education (Ibid).

The Wataturu are identified and categorised as semi-nomadic people (Borgerhoff, Sieff and Merus 1989, 32-35; Borgerhoff 1992; Sieff 1999, 1-25). They are primarily pastoral but have recently started practicing crop cultivation due to the changing circumstances. As observed even today, the Wataturu live in isolated areas away from other ethnic groups. This, however, does not mean that they do not cooperate with their neighbouring communities. They are culturally unique from most of their Bantu speaking neighbours (Ibid). Because of their cultural uniqueness and a desire to live a sovereign cultural life, scholars such as Mhajida (2019) clearly point out that

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neighbouring communities and the government hold negative perceptions towards them. Culturally, the Wataturu are proud people who uphold their socio-cultural system with great pride. Evidence from personal observation during the field work and from eyewitness accounts by F. Daniel Ohmann, a Maryknoll Catholic Missionary, reveals the extent to which the Wataturu, by sweat and blood conserve culture and infuse modernity in their own ways (Informant 4 2021). They can be simply described as proud and independent people who for a long time have avoided cultural contamination as an effort to avoid bad luck and spiritual curses (Meyer, Ohmann 2009, 5).

Their dependence on pastoralism as the only mode of economy has resulted in conflicts and antagonism over space for production in Tanzania. Ideological and cultural differences between Wataturu and their neighbours on the one hand and the state on the other hand stir stereotypes and negative attitudes toward each other. According to Mhajida, government policies and development projects perceive pastoral societies as both threatening and primitive. This perception probably stems from the celebrated colonial anthropologist belief of 'cattle complex' among semi-pastoral and pastoral communities (Herskovits 1926; Mtetwa 1978). Their mode of economy has been regarded as a threat to ecology, sustainable resource use and crop cultivation (Parkipuny 1991; Mutsotso 2018; Mhajida 2019). Lane and Mhajida's research on Datoga discuss forceful transformation by resettling them to promote conservation, crop cultivation, sedentism and incorporate them into the large Tanzanian community.

Their settlement patterns and dwellings (the *gheda* or *ghorajega*) reveal the kind of community-hood that exists among them. These dwellings are not only for shelter, but they are a true identity of the culture and spiritual life of Wataturu. Tadao Umesao (1969) provides a detailed discussion of the cultural significance of the Datoga dwellings. Although Umesao focuses on the Datooga of northern Tanzania, commonly referred to as the Barabaig, his discussion is applicable to Wataturu of Igunga who share many cultural elements with their northern brothers. In the same vein, their settlement patterns and building style are tightly connected to the socio-economic organisation and social relations among them. A study by Joyce Elzear Nyoni (2008) and Umesao demonstrates the strong relationship between Datooga dwellings, settlement patterns and socio-cultural traditions/practices such initiation ceremonies, circumcision, spiritual events, and marriage. Henceforth, it can be argued that the Wataturu, just like many other ethnic groups, are strongly bound

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together by the socio-cultural and economic bonds. As such, the implementation of socialism and rural development project (1970s-1980s) and the compulsory resettlement for the establishment of *Ujamaa* (socialist) villages was an interruption to them.

Contextualizing Rural Development Policy in Tanzania

The Rural Development Policy in Tanzania was hatched from the Arusha Declaration which was proclaimed in February 1967. The proclamation of the Arusha Declaration officially introduced *Ujamaa* Policy in Tanzania (Nyerere 1967). The reasons and circumstances for the adoption of *Ujamaa* Policy have been widely discussed by many scholars.[1] *Ujamaa* and rural development were the central themes of the declaration summarized in the policy statement known as *Ujamaa Vijijini* (NRC File No. 8). Other themes included emphasis on social equality (as opposed to social inequalities and exploitation of one man by another), public control over the major means of production, development through self-reliance, democracy of socialism, and socialism as an ideology or faith (Tanu 1967; Kingunge 1973, 36-54). The implementation of the Rural Development Policy, according to President Julius Nyerere, was "a commitment to a particular quality life" (Nyerere 1967, 5). Quality life was, therefore, translated in terms of provision of social services such as education, water, and health services, having better modern housing, well planned settlement patterns in villages and self-sufficient economy. Therefore, different

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[1]   For more details see Andrew Coulson. 2013. Tanzania: Political Economy. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press; H. Kjekshus. 1977. "Tanzanian Villagisation Policy: Implementational Lessons and Ecological Dimensions." Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines, 11 (2): 269-282; Yusufu Q. Lawi. 2007. "Tanzania's Operation Vijiji and Local Ecological Consciousness: The Case of Eastern Iraqwland, 1974-1976." Journal of African History. 48 (1): 69-9; Juma V. Mwapachu. 1976. "Operation planned villages in rural Tanzania: A Revolutionary Strategy for development". The African review 6 (1): 1-16; Ngombale-Mwiru Kingunge. 1973. "The Arusha Declaration on Ujamaa na Kujitegemea and the Perspective of Building Socialism in Tanzania." In Socialism in Tanzania, edited by Cliffe, L. and J.S. Saul. Vol. 2 Policies, 53-61. Dar es Salaam: East African Publishing House; Ngombale-Mwiru Kingunge, 1973. "The Policy of Self-reliant." In Socialism in Tanzania, edited by Cliffe, L. and J.S. Saul. Vol. 2 Policies, 66-70. Dar es Salaam: East African Publishing House.

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communities had to adhere to the call by transforming themselves toward this desired end under the directive of the government.

Rural development was central in the implementation of *Ujamaa* policy. According to Nyerere, it was the only way through which agriculture, social services and better living conditions for the rural population could be achieved. The policy made it clear that the future of Tanzania lay on improvement of agriculture (Nyerere 1968; 1967). For this reason, rural development was regarded as the impetus to economic development. In the same vein, the sixteenth general assembly of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in 1972 declared that every citizen had to live in the *Ujamaa* village by 1976 (NRC File No. SR. 4). As a result of that declaration, the resettlement projects were implemented through compulsion in 1973. Operations and campaigns on resettlement, health and better housing were launched. These campaigns were actualized under the villagisation project aiming at establishing communal villages to ensure people have access to schools, health, water and other social services on one hand and bring about self-reliant economic development on the other hand (Hansard 1973).

The resettlement scheme in the 1970s was associated with both an establishment of newly planned villages and a removal of people from their former areas of settlement by force. Those who were reluctant to comply with the government's call were perceived as traitors and enemies of the state (NRC File No. D. 30/77; Hansard 1973; Lawi 2007, 69). The formulated *Ujamaa* villages were meant to exercise communal life. The emphasis was on communal production and ownership of the major means of production (Nyerere 1968). Thus, the implementation of socialism and rural development resulted in the establishment of nucleated communal villages where people lived and worked together as a community. According to Nyerere, these villages were units where people could "farm together; market together; and undertake provision of local services and small local requirements as a community" (Nyerere 1968, 107-143). To a pastoral community like that of the Wataturu, this meant communal ownership and caring of their cattle, something that they had already been practicing at the household level. However, agriculture was at the centre of the plan. That's why the TANU general Assembly of 1972 came out with the campaign *Siasa ni Kilimo* and others such as *Kilimo cha Kufa na Kupona* "cultivation for survival" (NRC, File No. A. 3/9.33). Therefore, the *Ujamaa* villages were primarily more for agriculturalists than for pastoralists like Wataturu. The

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intention was to ensure that people in villages socialize, develop a self-sufficient economy, and live a quality life.
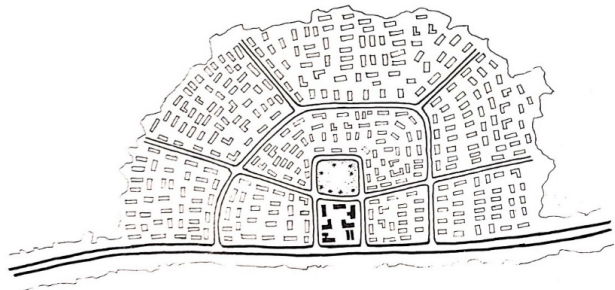
Figure 1: *Extracted from NRC File no. SR 4*

To ensure that rural areas were transformed to a reasonable standard, villages were planned to meet not only the socio-political needs of the policy but also the defined economic structures of the *Ujamaa* model. James Scott (1998) describes Tanzania's rural development policy as an advanced form of rural modernisation which intended to change the traditional unarranged settlement patterns to modern ones. As per the government's plan, the preferred structures of village settlement patterns embedded in rural transformation were two. First, planned villages with high settlement density. According to the *Ujamaa* Village Act of 1975, for a village to be registered, it was supposed to have a minimum number of 250 families (NRC File No. SR 4). For that case, village houses of different families were required to be close to each other streetwise. Land for agriculture and pastoralism was reserved away from village settlement area. Around homes, only a small piece of land was spared for gardening (Ayo 2020). This mode of village settlement was commonly termed as nucleated. The second mode was lined-up-villages. In this type of village structure, houses were lined up along the two sides of a road (NRC File No. SR 4; NRC File No. A. 90/4).

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The aim of creating villages with these two types of arrangement (the nucleated and lined up settlement) was to simplify the provision of services such as health services, school, and water. It was, therefore, emphasized by government village planners that each Ujamaa village had to adopt one of the two types. The two extracts below demonstrate how Ujamaa villages were structured. (See Figure 1)

This structure was mostly preferred in the formation of *Ujamaa* villages. It was this mode which each village was formed in throughout the time of implementing the resettlement project. In the Igunga district, villages of Isakamaliwa and Igurubi, which were not settled by Wataturu, appeared to have this structure although recently several changes can be observed. (See Figure 2)

MAKAZI YENYE NYUMBA ZILIZOJENGWA KIMSTARI

MAKAZI AMBAYO WATU WAMEJENGA KUFUATIA BARABARA PIA HUJULIKANA KAMA UKUAJI WA UTEPE HAUFAI KWA USALAMA WA HALI YA MAISHA. WATU WANAPASWA KUVUKA BARABARA ILI WAKUTANE NA RAFIKI NA NDUGU ZAO WATOTO NA WANYAMA HUHANGAIKA BARABARANI NA BARABARA HUWA NI MAHALA PA KUKUTANIA WANAKIJIJI NA MARA NYINGI AJALI ZA MAGARI NA WATU KUGONGWA NA MAGARI HUTOKEA.

Figure 2: *Extracted from NRC File no. SR 4*

Rural transformation in the period between the 1970s and 1980s therefore took a shape of large-scale resettlement and cooperative farming. Also, it launched a war against three enemies namely: ignorance, poverty, and diseases. Unexpectedly, implementation of *Ujamaa Vijini* which brought people together for cooperative production also made them vulnerable to communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, schistosomiasis, hookworm, and water-borne diseases such as dysentery (Hall 1978, 23-25). Thus, various campaigns intending to improve the

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health status and literacy level of the people settling in *Ujamaa* villages were launched. For instance, the Minister of Health and Community Development in his address to the National Assembly during the second meeting of 1970 identified strategies used by the government to discourage bad culture related to construction of houses, food consumption and maternal health (Hansard 1970). It was out of this context that, in 1973, the Institute of Adult Education, the Ministry of Education, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Health launched *MTU NI AFYA* (MAN IS HEALTH) campaigns (Hall 1978).

The *Mtu ni Afya* campaigns were conducted throughout the country, mainly targeting the rural population in *Ujamaa* villages (socialist villages), urging them to drink boiled water, dig latrines, eat nutritious food, dig wells, clean the surrounding and handle wastes properly. Also, the campaign advocated building of modern houses as opposed to the traditional ones. Although these houses were to be built by local materials, they had to be improved in a certain way such as by widening their windows and doors. Mud bricks also became necessary materials for house building (JMT 1973, 18-19; Hall 1978, 25). Thus, the campaign meant that people should abandon their traditional huts or *tembes,* 'mud' houses, and adopt modern styles such as *mapaa manne,* 'four slope- roofed houses,' or *mgongo wa tembo,* 'two slope-roofed houses'. Up to recent times, despite the ongoing architectural changes, this model of houses can easily be noticed in many of the former *Ujamaa* villages in Igunga and other areas in the region and the country at large.

Furthermore, the implementation of projects such as Rural Integrated Development Project (RIDEP) confirms the government's determination to transform rural settlements. Funded by the World Bank and the Tanzanian government, RIDEP aimed at ensuring that rural areas have roads, water and health services, and practice modern farming and livestock keeping methods (NRC File No. CD. 30/4). For instance, irrigation schemes, cattle dipping schemes, health centres, primary schools, water supply systems, road construction and cotton cultivation projects were implemented by the Tabora Rural Integrated Development Project (TRIDEP) in different wards including Lugubu, Itumba, Igunga, Igurubi and Mbutu in Igunga district (NRC File No. CD 30/4). It is evident that the implementation of socialism and rural development, as pointed in the preceding discussion was quite significant at improving the quality of life of the rural population. Despite its significance, the implementation of the rural development scheme interrupted the socio-cultural setting of traditional communities. For instance, as it will be explained further in this

work, the project threatened the socio-cultural life and shaped the day-to-day socio-economic activities of the Wataturu of Igunga. The implementation of a rural development project among the Wataturu community, just like in other nomadic groups and non-agricultural communities like the Tindiga, conflicted the sociocultural mode of life (NRC File D.3/254). The government's attempt to set a homogeneous motion toward quality rural life for the Wataturu through implementation of the rural development project proved to be a failure. The reasons for this, as will be discussed further, were related to the fact that the implemented schemes collided with the socio-cultural values and arrangements of such communities.

Implementing *Ujamaa Vijijini* Policy among Wataturu Community

The implementation of *Ujamaa Vijijini* policy among Wataturu of Igunga and those in the nearby areas such as Uyui, Iramba, Meatu and Maswa had three important motives. The first motive was to increase socialization and social cohesion between Wataturu and their neighbouring communities. This was based on a long-held belief that Wataturu (Datoga) were primitive people who exercise cultural motivated murder (NRC File No. UU5/113; Lane 1991, xvii; Blystad 2000b, 162-163; Mhajida 2019, 132). Thus, resettling them to Ujamaa villages intended to integrate them into the larger Tanzanian community. The aim was to make Wataturu abandon bad aspects of their traditional culture and adopt modern ways of life (Mhajida 2019, 132-3). Both political and legal efforts were proposed to ensure that all cultures which, according to the state, were defined as "bad cultural practices" are abandoned (NRC File No. UU5/113).

The second motive for the rural development project in the context of *Ujamaa Vijijini* policy was to inculcate a sense of sedentism (NRC File No. SR/L 30/1). The Wataturu of Igunga, just like other sections of Datoga in Mbulu and Singida, exercised semi-nomadic pastoralism. It was the government's intent to make them do away with nomadism. Undoubtedly, the motive behind was to ensure easier control and to make Wataturu participate and contribute to national building. Unlike in Singida and Mbulu, as pointed by Mhajida (2019, 132-136), in Igunga district no specific villages were established for the Wataturu community alone. Instead, the Wataturu were resettled together with other ethnic groups in villages like *Nguvumoja* and Mgazi. Likewise, the district authority did not spend many resources on creating a conducive environment or special project to make people attracted to the new settlements. This might be because there have been little inter-ethnic rivalry and

fighting in this district. Thus, Wataturu were not identified with stereotypical names such as 'Mang'ati' like other Datoga groups in Iramba and Mbulu, nonetheless the inter-community relations have not been very harmonious. Inter-ethnic tension, discrimination, despising, fighting, and killings shaped the day-to-day interaction between different sections of the population in Igunga. Due to this, Wataturu did not stay in those villages as it was planned by the government in Igunga district.

The Implementation of policy and other campaigns also intended to improve the quality of life by enabling Wataturu not only adopt modern livestock keeping but also build better houses and accept formal education for their children (Informant 5, 2021). It was for this reason that in 1977 Igunga and Itumba (which is now is broken into Lugubu and Itumba wards) were specifically selected to benefit from TRIDEP (NRC File No. LG 8046/65; NRC File No. CD 30/4). Researchers' interview with Wataturu elders at Mgongolo village revealed the legal and political strategies employed by the government to make people respond to the government efforts to modernise settlements, housing, and other health related matters. For instance, punishments and fines were exercised against anyone who refused to dig a latrine, clean the surroundings, or adhere to health guidelines as propagated through Mtu ni Afya initiatives. This means that compulsion characterised the efforts to modernise the Wataturu community. As it has already been explained by other scholars[2], compulsion resulted to an increase in tension between the district authorities and the Wataturu.

"The future was threatened", Wataturu Perception of Socialism and Rural Development

Narratives about the implementation of socialism and rural development (*Ujamaa Vijijni*) and other related campaigns, just like many other recent government initiatives, have remained untold among many Wataturu elders. Some memories and narratives are not openly stated, instead are avoided or spoken otherwise due to the fear of government authorities, perception or oath taken during traditional councils

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[2] See also Lawi (2007); Juma Marmo. 2018. "Operation Vijiji and its Aftermath: Land Nationalisation, Villagisation and Disputes in Mbulu District, North-Western Tanzania, 1961–2006." Afrika Zamani. 26: 109-132; Ergas, Z. 1980. "Why Did the Ujamaa Village Policy Fail? Towards a Global Analysis." The Journal of Modern African Studies 18 (3): 387-410.

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(*Grigwedga*) at different levels (Setreus 1991, 4). Because of this fact, actions, successes, failures and active or passive participation reflect the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the Wataturu community toward the implementation of Rural Development scheme. Interviews with several informants did not reveal any open reluctance to take part in *Ujamaa Vijijini* but the reactions and responses revealed the unwillingness of the Wataturu during implementation of the villagisation scheme. The response, as Lawi (2007) puts it, "was milder and often covert, but clearly profound and resilient" (Lawi 2007, 69). Oral testimony indicates that most of Wataturu families did not stay in the *Ujamaa* villages. Secret messages were relayed from family to family before resettlement, informing everyone about the alternative plan. Young members of different families moved with their livestock further to the interior (forest) where the government officials could not go after them (Informant 6, 2021).

Notwithstanding the use of coercion by the police and para-military groups, just as it was the case throughout the country (Ayo 2020; Mhajida 2019; Lal 2010; Lawi 2007), most of the Wataturu households resettled to different *Ujamaa* villages such as Mwanzugi, Mwashiku and Mgazi could not be found in the respective villages. Contrary to the Iraqw people in Mbulu district who either hid themselves or kept on oscillating from new to older places of residence as Lawi (2007) indicates, the Wataturu escaped and moved far away from both their previous places of residence and the newly established *Ujamaa* villages. They moved to the interior and settled along the Wembere plains in the areas between Itigi, Uyui and Igunga districts. Some of them have continued to reside in those areas up to the present time (Informant 2, 2021). In those areas, government influence was partial because there were no registered villages and required much more resources to reach. One of the requirements for registering a village was the presence of about 250 families (NRC, File No. D. 30/77). This means that Wataturu settlements did not qualify to be registered as *Ujamaa* villages according to The Villages and Ujamaa Villages (Registration, Designation and Administration) Act of 1975 (NRC, File No. D. 30/3 Vol.2). Although this can be perceived as a disadvantage to the Wataturu as they could not access important offered services, it was a golden chance to them. It helped them not only to run away from the hands of the government but also to isolate themselves from Swahililization of other neighbouring ethnic groups.

In examining the Wataturu's covert and overt responses as revealed by data collected through oral interviews, it is evident that three interrelated reasons

attributed to the failure of the project in the Wataturu community. First, the *Ujamaa Vijijini* project and its associated campaigns conflicted with the socio-cultural setup of the Wataturu. For instance, the project's village settlement patterns could not be easily adapted to the Wataturu cultural setup. Ethnological accounts do not show existence of village settlement throughout different emoojiga of the Datooga (Umesao, 1969b). This means that the Wataturu are traditionally not village-dwelling people. Instead, they just live in neighbourhood. Within a single neighbourhood (*gischoda),* homesteads (*hgeda*) are sparsely distributed in such a way that each *gheda* is separated from another by a reasonable distance, at least half a kilometer or more. Sometimes, it is quite usual to find several male relatives and their families living together as a single compound identified as *dostha* (patri-clan) (Setreus 1991, 4; Umesao 1969b, 57). Now, since the plots of land in the *Ujamaa* villages were designated for individual families (Ayo 2020; Marmo 2018), they could not support the traditional lifestyle of the Wataturu at all. Being unconducive for their socio-cultural setup, the resettlement scheme was perceived by the Wataturu as a threat to their sociocultural life. Under such a situation, the noble intention of the *Ujamaa Vijijini* and the embedded resettlement project could not surpass socio-cultural interests of this community.

Similarly, the nature of houses and plots in the *Ujamaa* villages was quite different from the traditional ones of the Wataturu (Informant 5, 2021). In the *Ujamaa* villages, clear housing patterns, plots for settlement, and land for agricultural and pastoral activities were set (NRC). This is to say, rural modernisation was not undercover in practice. It was due to the ongoing changes in the rural areas that made most of Wataturu in Igunga develop fear of losing their cultural identity and belief system. Speaking in words which did not directly reveal what worried them, one old man said; "we were worried of cattle death, curse, and bad luck. Our future was threatened" (Informant 5, 2021). This excerpt, although not explicit by itself, gives evidence that some socio-cultural challenges existed. To understand this, knowledge of the nature and cultural meaning of Wataturu dwellings is significant. Mulder (1991) and Umesao (1969b) have demonstrated how the style of Datoga dwellings and of their homesteads were in relation to cultural and spiritual matters. For instance, Umesao describes how the boma (*hiligwenda*), the gate fence (*doshta*) and the entire arrangement inside the fence have spiritual and socio-cultural significance. To describe this significance, Mulder pointed out that *doshta-the gate of much ritual significance to its linkage to the system of descent and clan organisation-through*

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which livestock enter and leave homestead. It is securely closed with thorn bushes between dusk and dawn to keep the stock safe against lions, leopards, and hyenas. Visiting men must leave their spears outside the doshta (Mulder 1991, 169).

In addition to that, oral accounts from different informants show that a newly married girl will not be allowed to pass through the *doshta* without wearing a leather skirt (*hanang'weanda*).[3] If the newly married girl is from another tribe, then she cannot be allowed to pass through the *doshta* unless she undergoes initiation by circumcision and wears a leather skirt. This implies how the Datoga dwellings have much spiritual significance to them. The implementation of socialism and rural development which, among other things campaigned for building of modern houses in linear arrangements, disrupted these cultural arrangements. It was out of such circumstances that Wataturu could not settle in Ujamaa villages.

Modernisation of the rural areas through *Mtu ni Afya* campaigns pushed Wataturu away from *Ujamaa* villages. Some practices of *Mtu ni Afya* had cultural and social implications on the Wataturu community. Notwithstanding the noble intention of protecting the community from diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria, practices such as digging latrines, and building modern houses with large windows (JMT, 1973; NRC, File No. D. 30/77.246) were a threat to the customs and the traditions of Wataturu. Thus, they had to escape from established villages. Wataturu did not stay in villages not because they wanted to avoid government influence but to avoid curses that would befall to the community if they contravened their traditions and customs. According to Blystad and Rekdal (2004), Wataturu believe that curses may cause illness, bad luck, cattle diseases, and even death; therefore, to avoid punishment from spirits, they had to evacuate the places with rural development campaigns.

It should also be noted that socialism and rural development as a modernisation strategy was coupled with uprooting of what was termed as bad cultural practices so that people could adopt new ways of life. Traditional ways, for instance traditional livestock keeping with large herds of cattle, food taboos, and female genital

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[3]   For more details regarding the history and cultural significance of the leather skirt see Emilia Bihariová. 2019. Is Leather Skirt Designed by Urameselgwa a Symbol of Datooga's Identiy? Ethnologia Actualis 19 (1): 14-35.

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mutilation just to name a few, had to be discarded. Wataturu opted to distance themselves from Ujamaa villages so as to preserve, protect and hide some of the practices which could not be easily conducted in the *Ujamaa* village. That is to say, the day-to-day life of individual Wataturu, just like that of many other *emoojiga* of the Datooga, is tightly connected to the socio-cultural set-up of their community.

Also, the implementation of socialism and rural development threatened the role and influence of the Wataturu over various matters of their community. Among the Wataturu of Igunga, as it is for the case of other subgroups of the Datooga, serious matters were commonly debated at traditional councils depending on age and sex. These traditional councils included the male council (*girgweageeda emeeda),* the clan council which consisted of male members of the clan (girgweageeda doshta), the neighbourhood council (*girgweageeda gischeuuda*), the youth council (*girgweageeda gharemanga*) and the married women's council (*girgweageeda gamemga)* (Group Informants, 2021).[4] Submitting themselves to *Ujamaa* villages meant to reduce or destroy this socio-political organisation. It should be recalled here that *Ujamaa* villages were not only for communal cooperation and production but also for political entity. They were fully structured and organised to handle both ideological and economic matters (JMT, 1975). On this ground, the rural modernisation embedded in socialism and rural development (*Ujamaa Vijijini* in Swahili language) disturbed not only the cultural aspects but also socio-political bases of the Wataturu. Hence, this explains their lack of readiness to settle in the *Ujamaa* Villages and participate a*s wajamaa*.

Conclusion

The rural modernisation project implemented during the period between 1970 and the mid-1980s in Tanzania employed several strategies and campaigns. These strategies relied upon modern, scientific and autocratic approaches to transform not only the ways of production, distribution and sharing of the benefit of labour but also

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[4] For more details about socio-political organisation of the Wataturu see Blystad, Astrid and Rekdal, Ole Bjørn. 2004. „Datooga". In. Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology. Edited by Carol. R. Ember, and Melvin Ember, 629-638. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers; Bihariova (2019); Setreus (1991); and George Klima. (1970). The Barabaig. East African cattle-herders. Illinois: Waveland Press.

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the socio-cultural and economic systems in accordance with the desire of the government. Compulsory villagisation and resettlement of the rural population in 1973 which went hand in hand with modernisation of agriculture, health, education, settlement pattern and cultural aspects of the rural environment, are acknowledged for being the major transformation attempts in the history of Tanzania. Despite the good intention of the government, the modernisation efforts threatened the survival of traditional socio-cultural and political systems which form the soft part of any society. It was from this ground that socialism and rural development policy did not yield similar outcomes throughout the country depending on the extent to which that community is tied to its socio-cultural systems. In its different sections, this paper shades light on responses to the modernisation efforts among the *Brediga* Datooga (here in referred to as Wataturu) of Igunga district in Tabora region, Tanzania. The paper revealed that efforts used to integrate, modernise and socialize Wataturu by making them Wajamaa when implementing Socialism and Rural Development Policy were compulsive. Nonetheless, the return was not as expected. The processes of modernising and integrating this community resulted in socio-cultural conflict between the implementers and the Wataturu community. Such conflict is revealed in the Wanyaturu's responses, actions and participation in *Ujamaa Vijijini*. As it has been explained above, the Taturu, to use F. Ohmann's words, are "traditions diehard" people (Meyer, Ohmann 2009, 72). Thus, their response to modernisation, inclusion and socialisation was an outcome of the desire to preserve their ancestral ways and protect the traditions, customs and beliefs against contamination. The paper reveals this as the socio-cultural ground underlying Wataturu's response to the rural development project. Ethno-historical methods which involved a combination of methods such as documentary review, extraction of information from archival materials, and oral sources, anthropological collections, field survey, and participant observation were used to understand Wataturu's perception towards *Ujamaa Vijijini* and some of their overt and covert responses. Using inter-disciplinary research methods, the paper not only exposes what happened in the period between 1970 and the 1980s but also informs about contemporary efforts and projects undertaken in this semi-pastoral Wataturu community group.

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INFORMANT 4, 10. 08. 2021 Lugubu Igunga

INFORMANT 5, 8. 07. 2021 Chagana Lugubu Igunga District

INFORMANT 6, 24. 07. 2021 Igunga Town

GROUP INFORMANTS, 8. 07. 2021 Mgongoro-Igunga District

Stephano L. AYO
Failure of *Ujamaa* in Modernising Wataturu Community in Igunga from Early 1970s to the Mid-1980s

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BOOK REVIEW

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The Conquest of the African Mind: History, Colonial Racism, and Education in Senegal and French West Africa

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The Conquest of the African Mind: History, Colonial Racism, and Education in Senegal and French West Africa (1910 – 1945) is a book written by Silvester Trnovec, a researcher in African History at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. In his writings, he directs his attention to West Sub-Saharan Africa, especially its modern history of the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition, he conducted archival research in Senegal, Tunisia, France, and the United Kingdom. Currently, he is working on the international research project *Fontes Historiae Africanae* (Sources on African History) under the auspices of *Union Académique Internationale* in Brussels.

The Conquest of the African Mind will take its readers to French West Africa (FWA), established in 1895. This new colony turned more than 12 million Africans of different ethnic origins into French subjects. As a part of their so-called "civilizing mission", France originally planned to incorporate all its citizens into French culture after assimilating. This attitude was changing over time, and substantial effort was made to educate at least a part of the population in a similar way that was usual in contemporary France. Those so-called assimilés played an important role in the administration of the colony. Since schools were probably the most important

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institutions where African peers could get in touch with the French culture and have a chance to incorporate themselves into it, the book focuses mostly on them. In my humble opinion, this area of study is probably one of the best ways how to understand the relations in the colony because the arguments made about these relations can be supported by archival research, something not so common in many different areas of African history.

The book is divided into four main chapters, accompanied by the conclusion and the introduction. In the introduction, the author outlines the whole concept of the book; he explains his methodology and the most relevant theoretical frameworks which can be applied to this type of study. On a few pages Trnovec explains everything important for the study, which is a sign that he is well-versed in this issue and he is capable of critically select the most important information, so he does not burden the reader with an excess of unnecessary information.

The first chapter named *Colonial Senegal and Public Schools in French West Africa* provides the reader with the most relevant information about the colony of FWA, such as the bureaucratic structure of the colony and its impact on the general public. In addition, Islam as a social factor is also discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, it focuses on the establishment of the public schools in the colony, which took place in 1903.

The Official History of French West Africa is the second chapter's name. It discusses how history of FWA was taught to its citizens. Most of the official materials issued by the French administration were instructions for the teachers, but there is valuable information about this process even in them. People in French colonies were taught about French history on a large scale; only the information that was believed that may lead to public unrest was omitted (such as French involvement in the slave trade). On the other hand, the history of the colony prior to the arrival of Europeans was only taught to a limited extent, and all great achievements and material evidence of existing civilizations were attributed to the white race or their close relatives. Furthermore, the time before the European arrival was depicted as barbaric, cruel, or brutal, and children in the schools were taught that only with the help of Europeans could African civilization live in peace and prosperity.

The third chapter, *Population and Primary Schools in Senegal*, describes the structure of the colonial schools in FWA and the hierarchy of schools, but more importantly, it discusses ethnic composition in the schools or the timetable of students. The author also touched on the topic of problems with the attendance of

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pupils. The chapter ends with the example of questions from the official exam from different regions which took place after the second year at regional school.

The *Colonial Mind* is the name of the fourth chapter. It discusses how a significant part of the FWA population became more or less assimilated into the French culture. The generation raised in French public schools did not have any memory of the continent before the colonization. For this reason, especially those accommodated in the schools' dormitories were under the significant influence of a different culture.

The *Conclusion* summarizes the most important findings of the book. Despite France's proclaimed, "civilizing mission", the reality in the colony was different. The colonial schools taught their pupils that they were inferior to French people and their culture, that their history before the French arrival was irrelevant. The ethnic differences among the pupils were marginalized; they were taught that differences among them are minimal and that there are just members of the backward black race. Because of the lack of schools and teachers and the resilience of FWA's citizens (only around 15% of children attended those schools), this new form of identity was never shared by the large number of people in FWA.

The book as a whole gives a very balanced impression. It is easy to read, and the Trnovec's style is very pleasant. Beyond its engaging content, the book includes a map and several interesting illustrations which charmingly complement the text. The argumentation is always supported by sufficient evidence, and the conclusion is driven from what seems to be logical. The author's knowledge of the region, its history, and its social aspects is notable. I strongly recommend this book to everybody interested in Africa's history, colonialism, nationalism, schooling, or human rights issues.

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