

# Voices from Tanzania

**2021 - 2024 REPORTS**

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## Foreword

It is with great pride that we as KAS Tanzania present herewith our new format „Voices from Tanzania“, a collection of brief research reports exploring diverse aspects of Tanzania's socio-political and economic landscape. This format reflects the collaborative efforts of our in-house German student researchers, who undertook their own small research journey incorporated into their 3-month long posting from their relevant home universities to our KAS Tanzania office - supported in their journey by many KAS partners and network contacts. We all would like to thank you for this support already now!

The research reports cover the last four years, from the post-COVID period until 2024. The compilations of reports delve into topics of both historical and contemporary relevance, discovering for example the philosophy of Ujamaa, the Standard Gauge Railway and its geopolitical importance, the leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan as Tanzania's first female head of state and many other. They also examine Tanzania's role in global diplomacy, its ties and (path-)dependencies with China, the ongoing impact of the brutal Russian attack on Ukraine, but also look at innovative approaches like using sports as a methodology for peace and social cohesion.

Whilst we are fully aware that this is a German-only perspective, these works are not only a testament to academic collaboration but also an invitation to deepen the dialogue on Tanzania's development journey and its interactions on the global stage. I am deeply grateful to all contributors and partners who made this publication possible, and I hope this compilation inspires further research and engagement with Tanzania's rich narratives. Especially I would like to thank all the German students who wrote independently and individually, under supervision of KAS, these reports, namely (Meike Krieger, Jan-Ole Voss, Daniel Fabian, Sabrina Carl, Emily Samira Axmann, Hannah Bösl, Alexis Gregoire, Ronja Koch, Tarun Ruschmeier). Thank you for your engagement and for your support to our office during your presence, I am convinced a bright future is waiting for you – either in Europe or in Africa or elsewhere. I wish you all a good reading!

**Dr. Tilmann Feltes**

Resident Representative KAS Tanzania

# China and Tanzania in the New Era

*A complicated relationship*



By *Jan-Ole Voss / Daniel Fabian*

## New and old friends

China's relationship with the United Republic of Tanzania has a long history, spanning back to the independence of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in the early 1960s. Zhou Enlai, Premier at that time, even visited Tanganyika in 1964, just some months before the unification of Tanganyika and Zanzibar which created modern Tanzania (Shangwe, p. 81). As China promptly recognized the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, while other countries were hesitant at first, it positioned itself as an unconditional friend to Tanzania. Relations were natural as Tanzania, like many other sub-Saharan nations, was led by a socialist revolutionary government. For young Tanzania, the relationship with China was important as it strengthened its position as an independent country, while China looked for recognition as well. Hence, the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the all-time governing party in Tanzania, have a long-standing mutual friendship. The good relations resulted in many development projects and other cooperation's, most famous the challenging Tanzania-Zambia (TAZARA) railway project that today stretches over 1800 kilometers. The first Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere visited China in 1968, and since then mutual visits between the two nations, especially of party officials has remained common (Shangwe, p. 83). Particularly since China's economic opening in the 70s the good inter-party and diplomatic relations were joined by more and more economic and investment cooperation. To this day African countries remain the most favorable towards China, many for very similar reasons as Tanzania (Benabdallah, p. 3).

One of the most famous projects of the 21st century is China's attempt to "rebuild" the ancient Silk Road that connected Asia and Europe. Under the umbrella of the One-Belt-One-Road (OBOR)<sup>1</sup> China has intensified investments in infrastructure and engagement with governments to revive this connection. China includes both maritime and land routes in the concept. While at the announcement by Xi Jinping in 2013 the focus was on central Asia (China Daily, 2013) the scope has steadily increased. East Africa may not be on the direct route between Asia and Europe, but it still is the target of a wide range of Chinese infrastructure projects incorporated into the OBOR. The often-massive investments conducted by China are expected to improve trade routes, secure markets, and improve diplomatic relations. However, their conditions are not always transparent or advantageous for China's partners. The best example of this is the Hambantota International Port in Sri Lanka that proved non-economical and was largely sold off to China Merchants Port Holdings. Furthermore, a 99-year lease was granted to them (BBC, 2017). This case reflects the main argument of the assumed "debt-trap" policy connected to Chinese investments in developing countries. In disagreement of this debatable view Chinese researchers and diplomats work hard to dispel such perceptions of China's actions (Were, p. 8). China nowadays tries everything to prevent such bad publicity (Bloomberg, 2021).

Besides the OBOR China also engages in other methods to supply development assistance. One framework employed by China is the South-South cooperation. Just recently foreign minister Wang Yi emphasized China's commitment to its southern partners (Xinhua 2, 2021). Within the South-South cooperation, China provides financial assistance as well as technical know-how. About 93% of the financial aid provided by China is bilateral, leaving just 7% for multilateral agreements (Carter 2017, p. 2). The private sector engagement in development assistance is difficult to quantify as the demarcation between state and private in China is very ambiguous. Another point of differentiation compared to Western countries, are Civil Society Organizations (CSO), these rarely exist in mainland China and thus rarely contribute to aid and knowledge transfer to developing countries (Carter, p. 6). In the following chapters, some economic aspects and Chinese sponsored infrastructure projects will be discussed. Thereafter Chinese cultural, political, and media influences in Tanzania are going to be unveiled

## Chinese involvements in Tanzania and its local impacts

Today China is the biggest investor in Tanzania, as well as the largest exporter of goods to Tanzania. The investment volume reached 7 billion USD in 2019, trade volume between China and Tanzania reached 3.9 billion USD. China ranks as Tanzania's fifth-largest export destination. However, it receives only 3.9% of Tanzania's total exports. Unfortunately, the relationship with this important investment and business partner is not at all equal. Tanzanian Ambassador to China Mbelwa Kairuki states that the main challenge is the huge trade imbalance between both economies, for every dollar exported to China, Tanzania receives 10 USD worth of imports from China (CAP, 2020). Hence, some African scholars criticize the current practice of cooperation with China. Arguing that China is gaining much more out of its investments than its partners (Kinyondo, pp. 159-160). This critique, combined with the aforementioned debt trap debate, has influenced Tanzanian political decisions in the past.

One of China's signature investments in Tanzania was supposed to play a key role in East Africa's connection to the OBOR, namely the Bagamoyo Port project. Announced during Xi Jinping's visit in 2013 this 10 billion USD project would have been the biggest port in East Africa and open up the region to global trade. Investors for the project included China Merchants Holdings International and Oman's State Government Reserve Fund. In January 2016 however the project was brought to a standstill by order of the late President John Pombe Magufuli as he halted further planning of the project due to his disapproval of the unfavorable 33-year guarantee and 99 years lease terms submitted by the port operator China Merchants Holdings International. A move that appeared quite unusual in the light of China's and Tanzania's long standing historical friendship. Magufuli stated that the agreement had "...tough conditions that can only be accepted by mad people,..." (ENR, 2019). He believed the deal to be unbeneficial to Tanzanian interests as the agreement would avail China full control of all cargo and logistics as well as give tax benefits to Chinese companies and prohibit Tanzania from building any other new port on its coastline between the regions of Tanga and Mtwara (ENR, 2019). The cancellation of this deal makes Tanzania one of the few developing countries that openly criticized China's investments and declined billion-dollar investments. Interestingly repercussions and responses from China have been very rare, almost nonexistent. Instead, China appears to have successfully persevered the conflict and revived project discussions with the current Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan who remains convinced of the benefit and necessity of the port project (Xinhua, 2021). It is however unclear if the project scope will be similar.

Another project sponsored by China is the new library for the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) which covers a floor area of 20,000 square meters. It was constructed by China IPPR Engineering International Co., Ltd. a state-owned enterprise (SOE), and Jiangsu Jiangdu Construction Group Co., Ltd. and finished in 2018 for a total sum of 41 million USD provided by China Aid. The opening ceremony was attended by late President Magufuli and China's ambassador to Tanzania Wang Ke (Xinhua 2, 2018). Adjacent to the library a new Confucius Institute has also been constructed. Further details on its role are provided in the following pages of this report. Unfortunately, large parts of the library still remain empty to date as UDSM lacks the number of books and resources required to equip the whole library to full capacity. Observations made of the library from personal visits indicate that most of the signs, floor plans, etc. within the library are only available in Chinese with some exceptions also present in English or as pictograms. The national language of Tanzania, Kiswahili, is only used on small paper signs deployed after the construction. This situation leaves the visitor rather puzzled and remains a firm reminder to all who visit of who paid for and built this new library.

## Exchanges and cooperation in the fields of culture, media and politics

Like in many other countries China also operates two Confucius Institutes (CI) in Tanzania. One at the University of Dar es Salaam, the economic center of the nation, and one at the University of Dodoma, the political capital. Both operate several branch offices at several other universities across the country. They provide language classes, cultural activities, and of scholarships (CI UDSM, CI UDOM). According to numbers from 2016 China awarded 120 scholarships to Tanzanian students on a yearly basis (Shangwe, p. 88). However, since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the number of Tanzanian students studying in China has decreased to zero following the Chinese Government's directive for all foreigners to leave the country. The CI's play a crucial role in finding appropriate candidates for scholarships and potential studies in China. Other activities include the public communication and dissemination of Chinese culture, for example via newspapers. Interesting to note is a regular recurring article on Chinese language and culture in the Tanzanian government newspaper "Daily News", which is financed by the CI at UDSM. Sometimes the Chinese embassy has similar features displayed in the same newspaper. Like President Xi expressed (*...the fundamental purpose...is to enhance China's soft power...*) the CI are inherently involved in China's soft power approach to spread a positive narrative of China (Peoples Daily, 2018)<sup>2</sup>.

As China has a history of early support for African revolutionary governments and parties there is some degree of fraternization between the CPC and African revolutionary parties. This also holds true for the Tanzanian case. Despite the failure of African socialism these connections still exist today and as mentioned above historic relations still play a central part in Chinese-Tanzanian relations. A noteworthy sign of ongoing cooperation is a dedicated cadre school north of Dar es Salaam. This school was financed by the CPC and opened in 2018. The opening ceremony was attended by late President Magufuli and Song Tao, the head of the International Department (ID) of the CPC (Benabdallah, p. 30, Xinhua, 2018). Besides CCM five more revolutionary parties from Sub-Sahara Africa are utilizing the facility. These are ANC, SWAPO, FRELIMO, MPLA, ZANU-PF3. Later Xi Jinping congratulated the opening of the school and highlighted the good relations between the CPC and the above mentioned parties. These kinds of party schools as well as the occasionally intertwined connections to foreign political parties are the essence of the ID's work (Benabdallah, p. 6). While in the past the focus was put on communist parties, the ID today works with everyone who is willing, even opposition parties. Another change from the earlier approach that mainly aimed at legitimacy gain is the new focus on promoting China's governance model as well as mentoring young leaders from Africa (Benabdallah, p. 29). Combined, this ensures that China finds a warm welcome anywhere in Africa, possibly even after regime and generation changes.

Another topic often discussed is China's media influence, propaganda, and "wolf warrior" diplomacy. In recent years China has expanded its traditional media and social media outreach globally (Madrid-Morales, p. 30, 40). Many embassies are also opening social media accounts and participating in their advertising for China. Especially after accusations of bad treatment of Africans in Guangzhou at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic some of these social media accounts across Africa got very active in trying to reduce the damage to China's image (Madrid-Morales, p. 43). However, especially regarding the traditional media, there is still a large gap in adoption between Chinese media and the established Western outlets like BBC (Bayes, p. 52).

Numerous English newspapers in Tanzania regularly feature Xinhua and People's Daily articles, especially on foreign affairs. Xinhua is the government's voice of China, People's Daily is the voice of the party. Regular reviewing of newspapers in Tanzania during 2021 showed that these Chinese government voices were often those that criticize western nations. Calling them out for colonial practices, moral corruption, and in the case of the USA even accusing them of warmongering. On the other hand, other articles praise the historic China-Tanzania relationship and argue that China aims for true multilateralism (The Citizen, 2021). Further articles often touch on the topics of Taiwan and the South Chinese Sea. The purpose of some Xinhua and People's Daily articles placed in Tanzanian newspapers is quite obvious. This is especially true when reading articles about Taiwan or the South Chinese Sea. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the so-called 'Mask Diplomacy' and 'Vaccine-Diplomacy' are also popular topics. Chinese vaccine deliveries to Tanzania or other countries are highlighted and advertised consciously to portray China as the reliable partner and friend it wants to appear as. Accompanying the media praise and promotion of the Chinese vaccine are misinformation from media and also official sources that brand the western made mRNA vaccines as unsafe (Bayes, p. 32; The Citizen 2, 2021).

### **An expectant but unknown future**

Most of China's influence in Tanzania seems to originate from the established economic ties as well as investments and assistance (Shangwe, p. 100). As the world's second-biggest economy and largest exporter of goods this might be not a big surprise. As in many other countries around the globe, this economic influence is being expanded on by political means and the use of old and new media.

The Chinese-Tanzanian relationship remains interesting, despite long-standing good relations and a Tanzanian dependency on Chinese imports the former president risked confrontation over disadvantageous investments. Chinese reactions to this have been under the radar of the public. With the new president, Tanzania intensifies cooperation with China again. However, at the current state China is politically and economically less invested in Tanzania than in many other East-African nations. This is largely due to former president Magufuli who actively choose non-Chinese contractors for many infrastructure projects across the country. However, the fast-growing population makes it necessary for Tanzania to speed up its development drastically. Many remaining important infrastructure expansions require large investments which China is happy to make.

Like traditional development assistance providers who expect certain norms and rules regarding democracy, human rights, and freedom, China expects certain "returns" on their investments as well. For instance receiving some sort of diplomatic support on the disputed non-recognition of Taiwan, what Taiwan derisively calls a "diplomatic money game". On China's side, this is however viewed as crucially to ensure the survival of the system. For Tanzania which is left in an underdeveloped state with a nearly exclusively first sector economy, every investment is crucial. Not everyone has the luxury to ask what strings may or may not be attached. As China promises fast and massive investments and development without talking about values and morals first it is an extremely attractive partner.



# TANZANIA AND THE UKRAINE WAR



2

By *Sabrina Carl*

## 1. Background/Explanation of the Situation

In spring 2021, the whole world observed the first Russian troops marched along the Ukrainian border. This action triggered the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which has been simmering since 2014 and extends far beyond the borders of the former Soviet states. (Hamburg Statista, 2022) At that time, Russia denied any plans to attack and the accusation of being more active than usual in the border region between Russia and Ukraine.

In December 2021, Russia published a draft called "security agreement" with the US and NATO. It claimed the withdrawal of all NATO troops from the Eastern European countries that have joined since 1999, as well a halt on the admission of the successor states of the Soviet Union, which was dissolved in 1991. The US and other NATO states rejected this demand as a basis for negotiations. A recurring point of contention between Russia and NATO is Russia's claim that NATO partners made a binding commitment to the Soviet Union or Russia in the 1990s not to expand NATO further eastward. NATO denies that.

Some observers, meanwhile, argued that Putin was not just talking about NATO expansion plans. Either he would have been way more concerned with rule of law reforms, and the establishment of a functioning democracy in Ukraine poses a political risk to the authoritarian regime in Moscow. However, Ukraine's western orientation means a loss of Russian influence as well. (bpb, 2022) Beginning in 2022, the conflict escalated at the end of February, with troops sent by Putin attacking Ukraine's cities and territories of the night of February 24. (Hamburg Statista, 2022)

In Putin's speech shortly before the invasion, he justified the attack by defending those who are supposedly being abused and murdered by the Kiev regime. The Russian army would aim for a "demilitarization" of the Ukrainian territories and fight against the so called "genocide" of Russians. The international community was shocked by said action and statement against a sovereign country, condemned Putin's actions and the violation of international law in the strongest terms, and imposed harsh sanctions against Russia. (lpb, 2022)

In response, an emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly was held and included several severe sanctions against Russia. The General Assembly condemned Russia's attack on Ukraine by 141 votes to 5 - only Belarus, Eritrea, North Korea, Russia, and Syria rejected the decision, while 35 countries abstained, including Tanzania and many other African countries. (bpb, 2022) It was emphasized that Tanzania wanted to remain neutral, and that a unilateral positioning would not open up opportunities for bilateral relations, including with Russia. The country's decision was controversially discussed in the media. Some even condemned the abstention of complicity with Russia as immoral. Others say that the war in Ukraine is far away and that Tanzania should not get involved, and Europe generally shows no interest in the conflicts in Africa as well.

Nevertheless, the question why Tanzania, in particular, abstained is still a large and open field. Therefore, this paper tries to find out what might have led to this decision. The paper attempts to give an overview of the relationship between Tanzania and Russia and to discover relatives between their relationship and Tanzania's decision. The paper begins to investigate the history between these two countries and which influence the USSR had on African countries, even before Tanganyika gained its independence in 1961. (Burton 2021, p. 115)

## 2. Relationship between Tanzania and Russia

To understand Tanzania's decision to abstain, we need to take a look at the relationship between these two countries. However, this did not begin with the various economic agreements since Tanganyika's independence in 1961, but it started even earlier. (Tanzanian Embassy, 2022)

Russia's influence, or rather the former Soviet Union, with its then economic and social model, had a huge impact throughout the Global South at the beginning of the 20th century. (bpb, 2017) For that reason, the following chapter examines the impact of the USSR in Africa with a look on the independence movement in Tanzania under the leadership of the first president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere. This time had an enormous effect on the following decades in Tanzania and on other African countries as well. (Burton 2021, p. 115)

In recent years, Russia has been serving Tanzania more as an arms supplier, after its influence decreased on the African continent by the time of USSR's collapse. Nowadays, it seems more like a process of rebuilding its power and relations. However, the economic and political link between the two countries has always remained, although in a somewhat weakened form by now. (Internationale Politik, 2021)

### 2.1 Ideological exchange between Russia and the Global South in the past

The Influence of the USSR began already in the 1917s when the Bolsheviks took power from the provisional Government and proclaimed a socialist revolution. This was also called the "Russian Revolution", which left hardly any country in the world untouched. It sparked the first global political mass movement that included people of all ethnicities and cultures. It radicalized a generation of socialists, and it inspired artists around the world so that waves of protests and strikes went around the world. So did it also not stop in front of the African borders.

Since then, in the European colonial states in Asia and Africa national liberation fighters radicalized and saw themselves as part of a global movement. With the Russian Communists, many of them shared a messianic belief in a turn to global justice. Through the Bolsheviks, Russia became the center of rebellion against the global hegemony of the West. (bpb, 2017)

Prior to Tanganyika's Independence in 1961, the Soviet Union and its close ties to some African states played an important role in the anti-colonial movement. Many African countries gained more and more desire to finally be an independent country. (Eckert, 2007)

As soon as Tanganyika became independent from the British Empire, it immediately established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and China as well. Unlike Western countries, Russia and China did not hesitate to recognize new independent states. Until its collapse in 1990, the USSR had an important Partner, providing academic scholarships and financial resources in return for its political support on geopolitical issues. Even today, some of the academic and cultural connections are still visible. Tanzania's first president, Julius Nyerere, even used these relationships to support national liberation movements and promote socialism, which also inspired other African countries. So that Tanzania became a domicile and host for several liberation movements from Southern Africa during Apartheid times.

However, Nyerere never officially visited Russia and the media voices promised that he would not accept Russia as the dominant power in Africa. Nevertheless, he used the Russian principles of socialism when he raised Tanzania's political system and Russia was strongly involved in the economic development. Nyerere managed to unite the country and secure its independence. For that, he used a single-party system, whereby repression and censorship were used to maintain control over the country. (SAIIA, 2021)

To summarize the last page briefly: Russia, with its revolutionary movement, which started around 1917, had since then a great influence on many Third World countries, which at that time were under a colonial power. The Russian ideologies of socialism and communism have inspired the politics and economy of many of these countries, especially Tanzania. (bpb, 2017)

After the collapse of the USSR, the partnership between Russia and the Global South weakened until Russia took its chance again at the beginning of the 21st century. The country supported different actions in Tanzanian politics and picked up some economical agreements. (SAIIA, 2022) The extent of Russia's political influence on Tanzania in the immediate aftermath of its independence and the current political exchange will be examined in the next chapter.

## 2.2 Political Influence

As exposed in the previous chapter, Russia's influence on Tanzania's liberation movement and ideologies used to be enormous. The following chapter will dig deeper into the two countries' political relationship, as this already begun with Tanzania's independence movement and still continues today. (Internationale Politik, 2020) Both nations opened diplomatic missions in each other's national capitals, namely Moscow in Russia, and Dar es Salaam in the-then Tanganyika. Over many years remarkable and distinguished progress in these bilateral relations, mainly in political and social-cultural aspects was observed.

Political ties between the USSR and Tanzania were strengthened mainly because the USSR had a great influence on the South-Eastern African liberation movements from the 1960s to the 1980s and directed its own contribution to them. Cultural relations also developed at this time, when Kiswahili was established as a foreign language at Russian universities, including in recent years the Moscow Swahili Community (Chama Cha Kiswahili Cha Moscow-CHAKIMO), the Moscow radio station Kiswahili and the Kiswahili newspaper "Urusi LEO" (The Citizen, 2019)

Another example of political cooperation between the former USSR and Tanzania was the liberation movement of Zanzibar and the other islands belonging to Tanzania in the late 1950s and early 1960s. (Balezin, 2020) At that time, the Soviet Union was interested in spreading its communist ideas there as well. For this purpose, the USSR communicated with Zanzibar Students in England through the British Communist Party and provided many educational scholarships to them. At the end of the Zanzibar Revolution in 1964, USSR was one of the first countries to recognize the revolution and to provide military aid.

The influence of Russian socialism accounted for about one-third of the world population in the early 1980s. At the time, this ideology had a huge impact on many post-colonial states, including Tanzania. In the course of decolonization, the traditional sources of authority and the political legitimacy of agrarian societies throughout the global South collapsed. For its postcolonial elites, the one-party state offered a reproducible, non-Western model path to modern statehood.

The cadre principle demanded the highest discipline and ideological fidelity of party members. In some of the multi-ethnic countries of the global South, authoritarian socialism was probably associated with maintaining the political stability necessary for nation-building. It was not only Nyerere who used the socialist rhetoric and organizational power of their Lenin-inspired mass parties to contain ethnic conflicts and thus guarantee territorial integrity. Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia, for example, also used them. This is just one of many examples of how Russia's political principles spread across the African continent. (bpb, 2017)

Today, Interparliamentary cooperation is an important path in partnerships between Russia and the African continent. The Russia–Africa Summit's Sochi Declaration emphasized the importance of cooperation between 'the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and National Parliaments of African States, as well as setting up bilateral friendship groups among them'. These connections between Russia's Federal Assembly and African parliaments have continued from the Soviet era until today's modern Russia. In July 2019, the first parliamentary conference on 'Russia–Africa' took place, and in February 2020 prospects for a visa-free regime were discussed. Russia also promotes inter-party cooperation since these connections are an important step in rising a legislative base for international cooperation and synchronizing legislation on potentially sensitive topics such as nuclear and defense issues between these countries.

Today's political relations between Russia and Tanzania focus on cooperation in the energy sector, as well as increased commercial and military cooperation. Other areas of high-level engagement include IT, peacekeeping and conflict resolution, agriculture and tourism. In particular, Russia's military involvement has increased steadily in recent years. Since Tanzania itself does not possess nuclear weapons, Russia has also optimized its military cooperation there as well. Both nations benefit from this partnership. Whether this relationship is well balanced, is another question. However, this is not the only area in which Russia has great influence today. Russia's traces can also be found in the Tanzanian economy, with a trend moving upwards. (SAIIA 2021)

### **2.3 Economic relations**

Economic relations between Russia and Tanzania, or in the early days of the country, between Tanganyika and the USSR, were already established in 1961, right after Tanganyika's independence. Together, they concluded their first trade agreement on 14 August of the same year. Under this agreement, the countries supported each other's export and import trade. In addition, the USSR has actively revived the development of the Tanzanian economy, focusing mainly on the construction industry, the agricultural sector, and the conduct of geological exploration of solid minerals, petroleum, etc. (Patturi, 2018)

Another holdover from the era of Soviet–Africa cooperation is the connection with Russian educational institutions. The educational exchange between Tanzania and Russia in particular has shaped the relationship so strongly to this day that many Tanzanians still have a positive attitude toward Russia. One of the oldest institutions dealing with the promotion of relations between Russia and Africa is the Institute of African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Institute was founded in 1959 and has also established links with other academic institutions on the continent. The Institute was one of the co-organizers of the Russia-Africa Summit and currently coordinates scientific cooperation within the newly established Russia-Africa Partnership Forum. To date, the Institute is very active and has even co-organized two conferences on Tanzania-Russia

cooperation. This institute is a repository of information on the Soviet Union's presence on the African continent and can serve as a bridge between past and present Russian initiatives. (SAIIA, 2021)

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, these relations ended abruptly. The price of maintaining them was utterly untenable for post-Soviet Russia, which then struggled to cope with its own catastrophic political, economic, and societal challenges. More than two decades later, Russia's activities in Africa were negligible, apart from occasional appearances by arms dealers. (Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, 2019)

After the collapse of the USSR, other nations began to invest in Tanzania, with China being one of the largest investors until today. (SAIIA 2007) When Russia's economy and domestic politics finally seemed to be stabilizing, it began to regain a foothold in Africa. In the mid-2000s, it expanded its activity and influence by increasing its participation in African peacekeeping operations and its participation in the International Anti-Piracy Task Force. Since then, the manifestation of Russian influence and presence in Africa has grown exponentially. Using all the instruments of a political, economic, military, security, diplomatic and informational nature, Russia has tried to rebuild its old relations and develop new ones. (Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, 2019)

In recent years, Russia's relations with Tanzania have gained new momentum. In line with Tanzania's current foreign policy, the focus has shifted to economic cooperation on trade and investment issues. Since the 2000s, the number of Russian investors and companies has increased sharply, as has the number of Russian representatives of Tanzanian companies. An important event in recent relations between Tanzania and Russia was in September 2010, when an expert meeting between the two countries on the use of debt in their relations took place in Moscow.

Therefore, Russia would finance development schemes in Tanzania, which led to the agreement that both parties would draft an intergovernmental contract. Within the process of restoring Russia's position as one of Tanzania's investment partners, a bilateral meeting was held in April 2016, including the following motto: "Russia and Tanzania: Advancing towards each other". This event brought a number of representatives from big Russian companies to Tanzania. In fact, Russian investors are very active in Tanzania again, which is also increasing numerous job accessibilities for Tanzanians. (The Citizen, 2019)

In addition to the increasing economic activity between Russia and Tanzania, Russia's military support to African countries is enormous, especially when it comes to nuclear weapons. Nuclear cooperation is also one of Russia's latest strengths in Tanzania and other African countries such as Zambia. It has opened the door to Russia's continued commitment, as Russia is a world leader in nuclear technology. (SAIIA, 2021) However, these weapons are not the only area of Russia's military engagement, the supply of weapons of all kinds has increased not only in Tanzania, but also in other African countries for example in Cameroon, Congo, Uganda, and Angola. This has saved Russia's latest influence over the African continent which should not be underestimated. But in general, Russia's economic influence in Tanzania is comparably low to others such as China, Europe, Turkey, Egypt and the Gulf States. (EURACTIV, 2018)

## 2.4 Current Situation – Return of foreign investors

Since Tanzania's new president Samia Suluhu took office in March 2021, the relationship between the country and foreign investors has changed again. To fulfil the investigation why Russia's relationship to Tanzania might have had an impact on Tanzania's decision in the UN-Resolution, it is important to look at the recent events and how the country is seeing foreign investors. (Export Manager, 2022)

One example of the Relations between Tanzania and Russia is that the Russians are now using Tanzania as a holiday destination more than ever before. In 2021, Russian tourists were with around 85,000 people the most popular foreign visitors to Tanzania. Most of them were found on Zanzibar. Thus, not only various economic agreements between the two countries are reviving, but also tourism, from which both countries definitely benefit. (Further Africa, 2022) The previous chapter also dealt with the issue of arms supplies, recognizing that Russia is a significant supplier of arms to Africa. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Africa accounted for 18% of all Russian arms exports between 2016 and 2020. Defense relations between Russia and Tanzania are growing as well. (SAIIA, 2021)

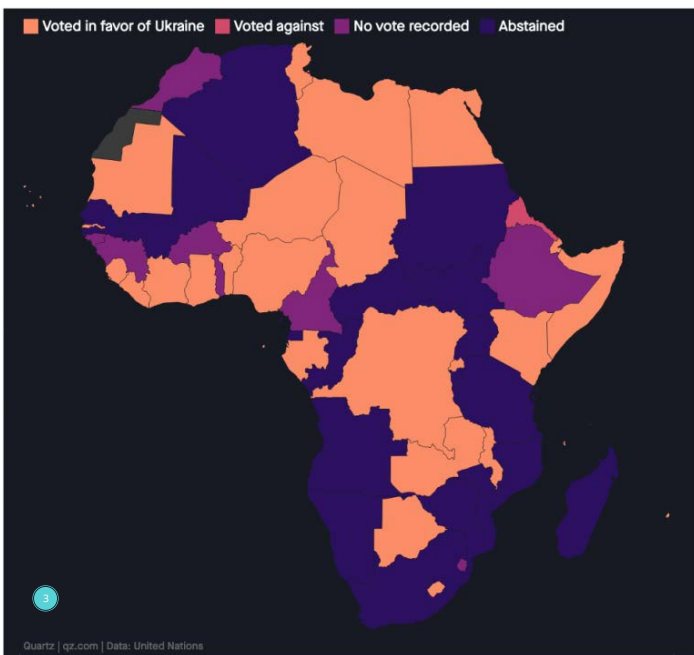
President Samia is seeking to improve the government's relations with foreign investors in general. They suffered significantly under their predecessor Magufuli and were very tense. Several ministers with an economical portfolio have already been appointed since Samia's presidency, and the government seems willing to improve existing dispute resolution mechanisms to attract new foreign investors. She is even appealing to the donor community and foreign investors to fund projects ranging from improving public administration to transport infrastructure to LNG projects made possible by Tanzania's enormous offshore gas reserves. (Export Manager, 2022)

Now that the current government has made it much easier for Russian investors in Tanzania, this is a good time for Russia to strengthen its presence in the country. As a result, many Russians business groups and individuals are enquiring for investment opportunities in Tanzania. This provides good prospects for a steady increase in trade between the two countries. Moreover, Russia's commitment to strengthen bilateral trade relations benefits the people of both countries. Tanzania is also socially welcoming Russia because many Tanzanians studied in Russia and master the Russian language, which eliminates barriers of communication as well. In the future, even more scholarships will be available for Tanzania in Russia to promote the networking process in this area. (AffAfrica, 2022)

Past chapters have shown that Russia had a great influence on Tanzania even before independence, including Zanzibar in 1964. In conclusion, relations between the two countries were very deep until the collapse of the USSR, so it was not too difficult for Russia to implement its plan to regain a foothold. Both countries, Russia and Tanzania, benefit from this cooperation in various areas, be it economic or political. Alongside China, Russia is now once again an important cooperation partner for Tanzania. (SAIIA, 2007)

### 3. Other African Countries who abstained

Last chapters points may have an impact on the election decisions in the UN resolution against Russia not only in Tanzania but in other African countries as well. Tanzania is not the only country that abstained at the UN-Resolution. Twenty-eight out of a total of 54 African countries have done the same, which is just over 51% of the African continent. In the following chapter, the decision of the other African countries is examined and linked to the fact that Russia has great influence not only in Tanzania but also in many other African countries. (Brookings, 2022) The question now is whether there is a connection between Russia's general influence on the African continent and the abstention from said election. The next chapter examines this relationship in more detail and attempts to establish a link between the above points.



The resolution, dated for the first of March, found broad support across the U.N., but African countries were divided in a range of almost fifty to fifty percent. This is a strong contrast to the 81 % of non African countries that voted in favor of this resolution. Of the 35 countries that abstained, almost half were Africans, with only one African country, Eritrea, voting against. The following graphic shows which country on the African continent has made which decision. The declarations of African Heads of State and Government have illustrated these divisions perfectly. For example, Kenyan Ambassador Martin Kimani strongly condemned Russia's actions, sharply criticized the invasion, and "reaffirmed Kenya's respect for the territorial integrity of

Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders." South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, on the other hand, stressed that the resolution "does not emphasize the call for meaningful engagement" between Russia and Ukraine and "does not provide the encouragement and international support that the parties need to continue their efforts." (Brookings, 2022)

The assumption that has emerged from previous studies of Russia's influence in Tanzania is that Russia generally has a great influence on many African countries. One example is South Africa, which also abstained and is part of the BRICS. This is the bloc of the major emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, committing to the principles of respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty. These five countries have declared their willingness to abide by these principles in the face of current territorial and geopolitical tensions and are under immense scrutiny in their response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. After they refused to condemn Russia and their decision to maintain a neutral position while calling for dialogue between the two parties, their stance was interpreted as implicit support for Russia. However, South Africans' membership in BRICS is an important instrument of its foreign policy. (SAIIA, 2022)

In recent years, South Africa wanted to regain a solid foreign policy role as a bridge builder. The aim was to act as an important player for an effective African Union, to be a partner of the West with democratic and human rights principles, and at the same time to cultivate exchanges with China and Russia as a member of the BRICS. Strong party members and President Ramaphosa himself maintain close ties with Russia.



This relationship begun already in early days, when the former USSR supported South Africa's liberation struggle. (SWP 2022) Whether South Africa's decision now correlates with its membership in the BRICS and its relationship with Russia can only be guessed. However, Russia's influence is growing, especially in the military sphere, while China has a significant economic presence. (Reuters, 2019)

It looks like that Russia knows what the African countries need at the moment: access to markets, political support and general influence. Indeed, that may have an influence on why half of the African continent did not want to complicate the relationship between them and Russia and therefore abstained from such crucial decisions as the resolution. (SAIIA, 2022) Russia seems to know what African countries need right now: market access, political support, and general influence. Exactly that can be given from Russia's side, without exactly clarifying, what it wants in return. Indeed, it may have an impact on why half of the African continent did not want to complicate its relations between them and Russia and therefore abstained from decisions as important as the resolution. (SAIIA, 2022)

In addition to Russia's large investments in Africa, China rises its power to be more evident rapidly as well. From multi-billion-dollar investments in oil and minerals to the influx of tens of thousands of traders, China's economic and political reach is redefining Africa's ties with the international community. (SAIIA, 2007) Although the Soviet Union and China have been asymmetrical rivals in Africa since the 1960s, their current relationship has improved. Now the two nations are coordinating with each other to challenge Western norms, undermine the unilateral sanctions initiated by the US, and support non interference in the internal affairs of the states. (SAIIA, 2021)

The Ukraine war further tightened relations between the two countries, so voices claim that if you speak against Russia, you would also speak against China. Since China's historical influence in Tanzania seems to be much greater than Russia's, a triangular relationship between the countries can be carefully assumed. (Br24, 2022) For this assumption, the relationship between China and the former USSR has examined to this day as well as the relationship between China and Tanzania at present.

#### **4. Excursus: The relation between Russia, China and Tanzania**

Since 1949, the two socialist countries developed a close relationship. The former Soviet Union helped China rebuild its country after the civil war and Japanese occupation. A Close military cooperation was developed and Soviet engineers helped to build nuclear factories. (Bpb, 2019) There was also an enormous political and ideological exchange and influence in almost the same years as Russia's influence in Africa begun. The aspects of the Russian Revolution were particularly prominent in colonial Asia as well. In China, communists' parties had been created on the Leninist model with Soviet support. When Mao Zedong, the official founder of the People's Republic of China, won the Chinese Civil War in 1949 and brought tens of thousands of Soviet specialists into the country. This action can be seen as a recreation of the Chinese state after the Soviet model in the largest development aid program in world history. Many Chinese received their education in the USSR and after their return, they adapted the economic system, the educational, health, and legal systems, the mass media, and Chinese architecture and painting to the Soviet model. Another example from that time was Mao's chief of security, the action of Kang Sheng. He was a former Communist agent who had studied the methods of Stalin's security apparatus in Moscow in the 1930s and founded the Chinese Ministry of Security Gong'anbu. In doing so, he created the Chinese Laogai penal camp system and initiated Stalinist purges within the CCP. (Bpb, 2017)

After Stalin died in 1953, the Soviet-Chinese friendship collapsed, and in the 1960s military disputes occurred on the Soviet-Chinese border, which led to an animosity between the two nations in the late 1970s. By the mid-1980s, however, these tensions subsided, and the border issue was finally resolved by current Russian President Vladimir Putin. (LSE, 2017) Today's relations between these two countries are more dependent on overlapping economic and geopolitical interests. Moreover, both regimes are authoritarian, and there is a common political enemy, the West, which tightens the relations between Russia and China today. Nevertheless, both are interested in promoting authoritarian systems in the immediate neighborhood, but also beyond. In conclusion, the asymmetry in the Russia-China relationship is currently increasing and becoming more evident. Russia now lacks alternative export markets for its raw materials, whose exports to China have increased massively. (Tagesschau, 2022) Regarding the Ukraine war, China more or less speaks a language that meets international standards and stresses its neutrality at the UN stage. But however, towards its own population China speaks way more positive and clearly pro-Russian content visible. (Bpb, 2022)

Russia is a major exporter of raw materials from which China is increasingly profiting. Russia also supplies arms and the necessary military know-how to China, but on the other hand, it is increasingly dependent on imports of industrial goods, which it can no longer buy from the West due to the current situation. To sum up, the asymmetry in relations between Russia and China is growing and becoming more apparent. Russia currently lacks alternative export markets for its raw materials, whose exports to China have increased massively. (Tagesschau, 2022) Concerning the Ukraine war, China more or less speaks a language that meets international standards and emphasizes its neutrality on the UN stage. However, China speaks much more positive and pro-Russian content visibly to its population. (Bpb, 2022)

But how big is Chinas influence in Tanzania?

Already shortly after the independence of Tanganyika, the cooperation between the two countries began. Nyerere pursued a policy of African socialism and urgently needed support from abroad after the final withdrawal of the British colonial rulers. On the other hand, China was looking for international recognition and also sought to provide an ideological counterweight to the to create the former USSR. For this purpose, allies with similar ideological ideas were sought among the young African states. Tanzania was present one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations and cooperation have been agreed. (KAS Tanzania Länderbericht, 2018)

Today, China is the biggest investor in Tanzania and also the largest exporter of goods to Tanzania. We are talking about an investment Volume of 7 billion USD in 2019 and China is Tanzania's fifth largest export destination. However, this relationship seems not be equal. There is a huge trade imbalance between both economies is due to the fact that for every dollar exported to China, Tanzania receives 10 USD worth of imports from China. Besides that, the current practice of cooperation between the two countries is criticized a lot. Voices say that China is gaining much more out of its investments than its partners. Chinas influence is enormous, but Tanzania is trying to get as much profit out as possible. (CAP, 2020)

Another thing China and Tanzania had in common in 2022 was their decision in the UN-Resolution, both abstained and voted with that action in the publics eyes in Russia's favor. (SCMP, 2022) To sum up from this chapter, China has not only enjoyed good relations with Russia since the beginning of its own history, but also with Tanzania and other African countries. All three countries benefit and influence

each other more or less and their relationship could be seen as a triangle, especially regarding the UN Resolution. However, the fact that China's foreign activities could have influenced Tanzania's and perhaps other African countries' decision to abstain can only be presumed. China's influence in Tanzania is once again great, while Russia and Tanzania benefit from it on the one hand, but it is also manipulated by China in its political and economic decisions. Since China has also benefited significantly from its relationship with Russia, especially since the Ukraine war, it is only in its interest to maintain good relations with Russia now

## 5. Conclusion

Russia's influence on African countries begun already even before Tanzania got its independence. Its ideologies of socialism and communism have inspired the politics and economy of many third world countries, especially Tanzania. Even after the collapse of the USSR, Russia is now gaining back its foothold within different areas, such as military cooperation, but also in different political agreements. As both countries do highly profit from this cooperation's, it is understandable that Tanzania probably does not want to raise its voice against Russia, as their Relationships already started that early. However, Tanzania is not the only African country, who abstained to give any statement to the current Situation. After some investigation it showed, that Russia is not just only getting its foot back into Tanzania, but also in other African countries as well.

Besides Russia, there is another big Investor taking place in African countries, whereby its investments in Tanzania are enormous by now. China invests in several multi-Billion Dollar projects in Tanzania and besides that has a good relation to Russia as well, so that some voices claim, that if someone raises its word against Russia, this goes against China as well.

Bringing these points together, it is obvious that Tanzania could not raise its voice against both of its biggest Partners since risking to lose their trust and will to cooperate as Tanzania is highly profiting from that. No matter what, to keep its good relations to the West and European partners as well, Tanzania could also not vote against said Resolution. In conclusion, Russia and China may have had an influence of Tanzania's decision in the UN Resolution.

And maintain Tanzania's good relations and partners in near future without being criticized too much from both sides, it was the only right way to stay neutral like many other African countries as well.



## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, the use of social media as a medium for communication and interaction has grown worldwide, including in Tanzania. Different stakeholders benefit from the new platforms. Nonetheless, everyone benefits from improved communication and organization. As new platforms enable access regardless of location, socioeconomic position, language, religion, or other factors, new opportunities to reach out to the masses, especially in Tanzania's case, the Tanzanian populace, emerge. This could pose risks in terms of cybercrime and information traceability in order to reach out to the entire community.

Social media serves as a globalization driver, bringing cultures and people closer together and facilitating simple communication between citizens all over the world. Tanzania's population and democracy are experiencing new impacts, as well as new access to new political ideologies. As a result, the following examines the impact of social media on politics and political debate.

## 2. The Immediacy of Social Media in Tanzania

Although the emergence of social media in Tanzania cannot be pinpointed to a certain period, it can be dated to the late 1990s and early 2000s. Because of technological advancements, the media landscape changed with its entrance. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram were news breakers long before traditional media like television, radio, and newspapers could grasp the concept. Next to the globally most successful social media pages, national social media platforms got implemented in the digital landscape. Such as the Jamii Forum, Michuzi blog, Mabadiliko forum, Milard Ayo blog and others. Other sites with added social media features include newspaper sites such as the Citizen, the Daily News and This Day (Stelzner, 2014). Beside technical innovations also heavy infrastructural investments in Tanzanian Infrastructure provoked a booming of social media and digital use. For example, in regard to fibre optic technology has made Internet service affordable and speedy in Tanzania. (Mtweve, 2014; BongoToday, 2014; Tanzaniainvest, 2014).

In numbers: In 2019, the data shows that Tanzania has a 46% internet penetration rate, which is significantly higher than the estimated African average penetration rate of 24.4 percent in 2018. In 2018, half of the 42 million mobile voice subscriptions registered accessed internet services, with over 95 percent of them accessing internet via mobile phone. (Lihiru, 2021). With the use of internet, the use of social media platforms increased. The most popular platforms in Tanzania are Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and Twitter, also Clubhouse and Tiktok are noting an increasing number of users during the last year. In December 2021 there were 5,223,000 Facebook users in the country, which accounts for about 8.5 percent of the entire population (Internet World Stats, 2021). Tanzania lags behind other African countries in terms of social media penetration, including Nigeria (15.1%) and Kenya (19%). (Internet World Stats, 2021). As the use of digital media and social media grows around the world, numbers change dramatically over time, and Tanzania is no exception.

### 3. Social Media Actors

Despite Tanzania's low social media penetration, social media has become an important tool for civic dialogue in recent years. It serves as a playground for civil society interaction, as well as increased political activity. In order to understand social media and its political relevance, we will look at two important actors on social media: government actors and individual civic actors.

#### a. Government

Over the past years, the digital political climate has evolved and developed. The government's interaction with social media has been rich in its variety. From individual social media use by heads of state to the government itself deciding on social media measurements.

During the last election period, the presence of parties and politicians on social media became larger and more competitive. Here, the media is being used to engage voters, commercialize oneself, and influence the mass media. Political parties, like CCM, Chadema, CUF to ACT-Wazalendo, have all used social media to promote their agendas to the voters and foster civic dialogue. (The Citizen, 2020). Nowadays, social media is highly integrated into the civic dialogue, so politicians have to speak out on the platforms in order to have an impact and use the benefit to speak directly to the public.

Regulations on social media have been changed during the different administrations. Especially while main political events are happening, for instance, elections, measurements on social media have been more restrictive.

For example, during elections in October 2020, the government was accused of blocking major social media platforms, including Twitter and WhatsApp, and filtering text messages containing the name of the major opposition presidential candidate and other key phrases (Cross, 2021). Though, social media platforms have been controlled earlier. Between 2015 and May 2020, at least 19 people were arrested for "insulting" the President on Facebook or within WhatsApp groups. (Cross, 2021). Especially for opposition parties, social media has become an insecure communication tool. For example, in 2015, 191 Chadema volunteers were arrested on suspicion of sharing "inaccurate" results over WhatsApp, and eight Chadema officials were charged with cybercrime. (The Citizen, 2015).

#### b. Society

The use of social media varies in Tanzanian society, from an economic use to a platform of civic dialogue and entertainment. But regarding politics, it provides opportunities for opinion sharing, information seeking, and getting oneself active in politics.

As a Tanzanian activist and leader of Cyber Lounge, stated, social media gives society a platform to criticize. Where newspapers are observed by the government, social media is more anonymous, which motivates voices that have been quiet in public before. Due to social media, the formation of groups around certain interests is possible. Though she states that becoming active and mobilizing users is difficult, many are interested in sharing their opinions, but when it comes to standing for them on the streets, it looks different. Furthermore, the activist sees the importance of social media in problematizing social issues while having the opportunity to listen to voices from all over Tanzania. It gives communities a voice that they have never had before.

The use of social media is especially in the urban sectors really high. As social media platforms are also used as a platform of information and discussion, rural areas lack in participation and solution about latest news.(Lihiru, 2021). This can have a bigger impact as it first seems. Regarding the COVID-pandemic information platforms and here especially social media turned out as an important way for health communication. Information about it dangers, incubation, treatment and symptoms. Not just in the civic dialogue also in important health questions and economic success rural areas are left behind. (Lihiru, 2021).

Also from the government, the division of society has been accelerated in the past years. For example, in 2018, a law was passed that required bloggers and content creators to register with the government and pay fees. With poorer people being barred from creating online content, the conversation about and in Tanzania is at risk of becoming an echo chamber for the upper class. (Dark, 2018).

As social media is not a filtered source and just follows a few regulations, there is also a high danger of false information spreading. Most of the news stories are retrieved from political stories, entertainment, and sports. ***Another impact of social media on society is due to its increasing consideration as a source for newspapers and columns in providing news stories. (Charles, Nyoni, 2019).*** As a result, information is being spread based on facts obtained from social media, and the risk of false information is increasing due to the ever-expanding range of social media-based information. Measures against this have been taken. For example, Facebook partnered with Pesa Check, an independent fact-checking organization in Tanzania, in order to review and evaluate the accuracy of content shared online. (The Citizen, 2020). Africawide, the platform AfricaCheck ([www.africacheck.org](http://www.africacheck.org)), which partners with the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (KAS) media programme, is another non-partisan organisation that exists to promote accuracy and honesty in public debate and the media in Africa. AfricaCheck raises the quality of information available to society across the continent.

#### **4. Dangers**

In addition to the opportunities that are given and gateways to new ways of communication, dangers increase as well. Starting with the previously mentioned restrictions on free speech on social media platforms, private communications can be easily observed and controlled by the government, indicating a danger in the power that the government is given. restrictions on political freedom can increase and threaten equal participation in democracy of the parties and opinions. Furthermore, restrictions can increase the social split between the poor and the wealthy, thereby ignoring grievances.

Another danger is cybercrime, which is increasing due to increasing digitalization. Since 2009, cybercrime has increased in East Africa when high-speed fibre optic cables enabled faster broadband connections. Almost all crime, about 80%, involves some element of cybercrime. Phones and platforms are being used to communicate with victims. Cybercrime touches almost every area of life. Cybercrime includes false, deceptive, misleading or inaccurate information or content intended to defame, threaten, abuse, or insult. ***(Cross, 2021).***

Concluding, with the danger of false information, which increases in social media due to unfiltered platforms. These spread even faster as newspapers, other news portals, and the media have started to rely more on social media as an information platform.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, social media offers opportunities for participation, political content, and citizen inclusion. It provides a space where politicians can interact closer to civic dialogue, and, due to interaction, citizens are able to form their own political interests and opinions. Form groups of interests and problematize society's problems. But social media has to be regarded with caution. False information leads to a mistaken formation of opinion. Government parties and actors can limit content so that only the parts of the story that the government is interested in are shown to the public. Not all voices are allowed to speak equally. This is questioning the use of social media as a useful tool for a democracy like Tanzania's, where not all citizens can take part in the civic dialogue due to income and access.



# The EU-Project together for peace and its innovative engagement measures



5

By *Emily Samira Axmann*

With the aim of fostering political dialogue, the project together for peace was established in Zanzibar. Co-funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ) the project is being implemented by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Tanzania and their local partners, the Zanzibar Female Lawyers Association (ZAFELA). The project's primary aim lies in contributing to better conflict resolution and dialogue between political parties and their supporters in Zanzibar. Together for peace specifically organizes joint workshops and activities with different participants in order to establish a sense of common purpose and institutionalized communication platforms. In alliance to the Zanzibar government goals of strengthening good governance, accountability and the rule of law this project operates with an approach that puts an emphasis on improving more trustful relationships between politics and the general public. These aims are mainly implemented through round-table discussions between political parties, NGO's and religious leaders but also through regular dialogues on the radio, press conferences and assessment meetings with experts. In addition to that, the project reaches out to the wider community in order to ensure that political leaders are engaged in a regular cross-party dialogue with civil society.

Through innovative engagement measures such as football tournaments these objectives are being met which brings us to the approach of sports for development short S4D. Sport is recognized as a powerful tool to spur development and peace, as it transcends both geographical borders and social differences. It has proven to be effective for enhancing economic development, but equally social inclusion, peace, tolerance and respect. It operates as an accelerator for women and youth empowerment, while also transforming lives of individuals and communities. The Sport for Development approach integrates value-based learning into sports and shows an outreach in all social, ethnical and religious affiliations. The trainings and events are aimed at working towards a viable, sustainable and socially acceptable platform to address social issues and create a value-based intervention on Peace Promotion through the use of sport. The events in the project employ sports as a mainstream appeal to activate a target group that has the energy and catalytic abilities to spread the learnt interventions on amongst the rest of the community. The exercise sessions and events are aimed to raise awareness on the topic of Peace Promotion and on how to use sport as tool for social change.

In the past week on January 26th 2023, the EU-Project team participated in the two-day internal refresher training in preparation for the kick-off to the Innovative engagement events in the following month which entail conflict resolution soccer activities in 5 different regions across Zanzibar. The refresher training aimed at training sports coaches and sports practitioners to lead and plan structured sports for development events with women and youth wings of different political parties, religious leaders and civil society. In total more than 250 participants will participate in the 5 regional workshops and the final tournament. The core focus of this training, was to make coaches more aware of dynamics in group facilitation and the interaction between participants. As an outcome of this specific training but more importantly this whole project, we hope to empower political actors to engage in a trust-building dialogue with each other as well as with civil society and community leaders. Another important outcome is the empowerment of joint solution finding and with sports for development and the upcoming events we are looking forward to further implement these goals and monitor progress



# THE CONCEPT OF UJAMAA AND ITS IMPACT ON POSTCOLONIAL TANZANIA



By *Hannah Boesl*

## The Beginnings

After the Independence of Tanganyika in 1961 and the unification with Zanzibar in 1964, many eyes lay on the country's new President, Julius Nyerere, or Mwalimu (the Teacher) as he was called. It was with him, that Ujamaa became a word known by the world and a reality for the people. Ujamaa has been the subject of discussion when debating Tanzania's postcolonial past ever since. *Ujamaa, a Swahili word that can be translated with „familyhood“, which mainly refers to a set of values, was introduced by Julius Nyerere in the late 1950s and first defined in his essay “Ujamaa – the Basis for African Socialism”* (Nyerere 1962). With the Arusha Declaration in 1967, Ujamaa became the government policy of the single-ruling-party TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) and the official development strategy which ended only in the late 1970s due to its economic failure. However, as many scholars (Fouéré 2014; Karume & Kilimwiko 2020; Pratt 1999) argue, Ujamaa is not only a matter of the past, but its legacy affects the present. To further understand the impact of Ujamaa on the present, this article will first examine the past, starting with the key ideas of Ujamaa itself, while taking its relation to African socialism into account.

## African Socialism and Ujamaa

Even though Julius Nyerere describes Ujamaa as “the Basis of African Socialism” the term Ujamaa is often used as an equivalent to African Socialism in public discourse, however in Tanzanian peculiarity (Nyerere 1962, emphasis mine). African Socialism refers to a socialist doctrine that spread around many African countries and its leaders such as Senegal (Leopold Senghor), Ghana (Kwame Nkrumah), Kenya (Tom Mboya), and lastly Tanzania (Julius Nyerere) at the end of French and British colonial rule in the 1950s and 1960s (Drew 2017). The country's leaders identified what can be described as the main ideas of African socialism such as economic development, social control, and African identity to achieve the envisioned development and establishment of a precolonial communal idea. It is notable, however, that there is no clear definition of the term and that African socialism is interpreted differently in each country

Nyerere's interpretation of African Socialism is reflected in the idea of Ujamaa whose key features he outlines in his essay (1962). To begin with, he highlights the importance of communitarian values whose existence he links to a precolonial past of individuals living, working, and supporting each other within a community (Nyerere 1962; Jennings 2017). This communitarian set of values thus also includes the idea of communal ownership, extending to the communal ownership of land. Secondly, the essay highlights the value of egalitarianism and equality, referring to the past when differences in wealth did not matter since wealth was acquired, possessed, and distributed within the whole community equally. Thirdly the idea of participation, hence in contributing to building the nation is emphasized as Nyerere writes that “if every man and woman in the country takes up the challenge and works to the limit of his or her ability for the good of the whole society, Tanganyika will prosper; and that prosperity will be shared by all her people.” (Nyerere 1962: 8). Communitarianism, egalitarianism, and participation thus are key elements of the ideology of Ujamaa. Considering these elements in Nyerere's own words allows us to better understand the ideas behind Ujamaa and with it his very understanding of Socialism. The translation of Ujamaa as “familyhood” then reveals its meaning which transcends the idea of the nuclear family, as Nyerere writes in his concluding remarks: “Our recognition of the family to which we all belong must be extended yet further– beyond the tribe, the community, the nation, or even the continent–to embrace the whole society of mankind. This is the only logical conclusion for true socialism.” (ibid.: 11).

According to Nyerere Socialism refers to an “attitude of mind” (ibid.: 4). When mentioning true socialism, however, it is important to differentiate Ujamaa as Nyerere’s understanding of socialism from European socialism. The latter is based upon the idea that socialism develops through a proletarian revolution within a capitalist state, having a major focus on the class struggle (Rodney 1972). *Ujamaa however, does not seek to establish socialism through class struggle and revolution but instead aims at re-establishing precolonial communal values of the „traditional“ African society with the community at its core*, focusing on egalitarianism and socialist equality (Bjierk 2010; Jennings 2017). Despite this, both ideologies share the common goal of development, though exercised differently in reality.

### **The Arusha Declaration (1967) – Development and Self-reliance**

Ujamaa was declared the official economic development strategy with the Arusha Declaration in February 1967. This policy document evolved around the idea that development can be achieved only through self-reliance (*kujitegemea*), thus autonomy from foreign support and investment should be achieved (Fouéré 2014). The Arusha Declaration generally defined socialism as the “absence of exploitation”, the “people’s ownership of means of production”, and the “existence of democracy within a one-party state” (Karume & Kilimwiko 2020: 43). The latter had been subject to *Nyerere’s thoughts on democracy and the party system, arguing that one party would be more democratic than a multiparty system when there is a general agreement over the principles of equality, freedom, and unity* (Boesen et. al 1977). With a single-party TANU in control of the country, the nationalization of major parts of the economy and private enterprises was initiated. To achieve the aspired economic equality, a cooperative organization of production and distribution, especially within the rural sector, was key (ibid.). This path of development toward a self-reliant nation, therefore, depended on its peasants.

Before introducing the rural socialism that entailed the movement of many people into communal villages, it is important to explore the meanings of “development” and “self-reliance”, since the terms are often used very broadly. Scholars have therefore raised awareness, that developmentalism can be neither regarded as a neutral nor universal category and that its historical and ideological context should always be taken into consideration (Lal 2012). It has been criticized that a static approach to developmentalism using euro-american parameters as well as the centrality of the state as starting points, would fail to acknowledge the dynamic, heterogeneous, and often dialectic processes of state building and development itself (ibid.). With all that in mind, the term self-reliance has a connotation of its own in the context of Ujamaa and its meanings are equally heterogeneous depending on the interlocutor. In the local context, self-reliance has been described as the ability to provide for oneself and the family – meaning the nuclear family - by depending on agriculture and own labor (ibid.). This shows that understandings of terms differ depending on the context and are not necessarily linked to the national policy of Ujamaa, promoting the vision of the extended family and using the term self-reliance when speaking about national autonomy and economic development. What differentiated Ujamaa, however, from other countries' paths of “development” was its agrarian focus

## Ujamaa in the Villages

After the publication of the Arusha Declaration, a paper on “Ujamaa vijijini”, literally meaning “Ujamaa in the villages” and conventionally translated as “rural socialism” marked the beginning of a phase of villagization and was again based upon the idea of development through “working and living together” (Schneider 2004: 349). According to Nyerere (1962), the land was a gift from God entrusted to the whole community. Consequently, in his understanding and ideology of Ujamaa, the individual had neither the right of ownership of land nor the right to exploit the labor of others (Tetzlaff 2018). The villagization program, therefore, aspired to the collective organization of production and economic equality as well as the participation of its members in decision-making processes regarding village life. Hence, the aims of villagization were following the key principles of Ujamaa, which was now becoming a concrete reality. Nyerere himself had pleaded for voluntarism in participation in the program, believing that people could not be developed, but had to develop themselves and that development would be more effective if people were persuaded. Despite this, *the villagization program initially was announced to be voluntary, but soon became coercive after the expected success failed to appear. James Scott (1998) describes the program thus as the state’s attempt to reorganize communities to obtain control.*



Starting in 1968, the movement of people into so-called Ujamaa Villages advanced in 1973, when it became compulsory (Schneider 2004). *By 1979 almost 90% of the country’s population lived in Ujamaa villages (Karume & Kilimwiko 2020).* There were two types of Ujamaa villages. Some were created near or instead of established villages (vijiji vya zamani) others required the movement of people to new villages and often unfertile soil (vijiji vidogo vidogo). *Intimidation was used frequently and people’s old homes were burnt to prevent them from returning, which made the cruel character of the villagization program visible (ibid.).* Given the violence, the unsuitable sites for settlements, and the deficient planning process, the implementation of Ujamaa was widely resented by the rural population (ibid.). Considering the economic decline regarding the low and regressive production of all crops and the high expenses for the villagization program itself, Ujamaa failed, leaving the rural population poorer than before (ibid.). However, other factors such as the collapse of World commodity prices, the rising oil prices, and the heavy drought may also have influenced Tanzania’s economic decline in the mid and late 1970s (Pratt 1999)

### Julius Nyerere (1922-1999)

When discussing the failure of Ujamaa and its coercive reality of villagization, one important figure often remains hidden. Julius Nyerere, representing the ideology and policy of Ujamaa, “typically recedes into the background taken over by anonymous ‘officials,’ ‘campaigns’ without authors or initiators. The effect is the tendency for Nyerere to emerge from these narratives as a tragically failing hero, whose attractive and hopeful visions were derailed or subverted (Schneider 2004: 346).



Before becoming a known political figure, Nyerere studied in Edinburgh, Scotland, where his readings about classical liberalism, British socialism, and pan-African anti-colonialism shaped his fundamental beliefs grounded on human dignity and equality (Pratt 1999). During his presidency (1964-1985) the former schoolteacher had thus focused on building a just society and an independent nation, aspiring to unite the different powers after the long period of colonial rule. This vision became interwoven with the creation of an ideology of Ujamaa with its key ideas of community, participation, and equality. After the failure of Ujamaa and Nyerere's voluntary resignation as president in 1985, he continued to remain an important political figure as Leader of TANU until 1990 (Fouéré 2014). While his active role in the implementation of Ujamaa as a policy is unquestionable, given the evidence of his initiatives and writings, the portrayal of his persona seems more complex and often contradictory (ibid.).

Nyerere himself has often been described as a humble, idealistic, honest, wise, and charismatic leader, who came from a poor rural area and modestly lived his life until he died. Upon his death in 1999, World leaders like Bill Clinton described him as “a pioneering leader for freedom and self-government in Africa” (Clinton as cited in Brennan 2014: 459). How this freedom looked under his government is yet to be contested. *Being respected as an Intellectual, African leader and actor in the international sphere, though to be treated with caution, critics have not only addressed the cruel reality of the villagization program, but also the authoritarian character of his rule and dealings with the opposition (Brennan 2014).* While Nyerere stressed the importance of consensus and political debate, it has been stated that he “in practice served as Tanzania's lone authorized critic” (ibid.: 460). Hence, the other side of the coin of humility appears when being used as a “political weapon to control debate, court international support, and silence opposition.” (ibid.: 459).



Over the past twenty years, Nyerere's memory has been kept alive, changing with the historical landscape (Fouéré 2014). In Tanzania, he is remembered not only as Mwalimu (the Teacher) but more importantly as Baba wa taifa (Father of the Nation). This portrayal places him next to other important African leaders like Nelson Mandela, who played an important role in the process of nation-building in South Africa. Despite Ujamaa's failure, Nyerere's achievement of creating a common sense of national belonging and unity, which has led Tanzania to be a country of stability and peace in a wider region of instability, is yet to be acknowledged (Ibhawoh & Dibua 2003). Nevertheless, it also has led to a glorification of his person (Fouéré 2014). The process of remembering Nyerere and his ideology Ujamaa is, however, not a matter of the past, but one of the present.

### **Ujamaa in the present age**

In the present, Ujamaa is sometimes connected with the golden days by older people and those having experienced the negative impacts of the neoliberal reforms and idealizing the past (ibid.). Younger generations can hardly remember this past but are the ones affected by it. This leads to the question about the legacy of Ujamaa in Tanzania today. Based on a "national silence on socialism" the term seems to have been erased (Askew 2006 as cited in Fouéré 2014: 10). Despite this, when observing China's relationship with Africa it appears, for example, that socialist values and terms like self-reliance and hard work are reintroduced to emphasize continuity and solidarity in China-Africa Relations (Lee 2009; Lal 2012). Those moral values and principles are often disconnected from their historical context, creating a sense of continuity from socialism to post-socialism (Fouéré 2014). In Tanzania the decontextualization of socialist values of Ujamaa allows political parties to "capitalize on the past to build political legitimacy, renew national consciousness, and strive to impose the state's hegemony on common citizens" (ibid.:10). The construction of the positive memory of Nyerere is part of this ongoing process of claiming legitimacy and imagining the nation, used to "produce alternative representations of good leadership and good governance in a demoralized political space" (ibid.: 13). The values associated with Nyerere and Ujamaa are thus part of the political language and discourse in Tanzania today, as a development strategy however, Ujamaa, clearly belongs to the past.

Tanzania has in fact never officially abandoned Socialism, de facto only Ujamaa. According to the Constitution: "The United Republic is a democratic, secular and socialist state which adheres to multi-party democracy." (1977: 11) (Chapter 1, Part I: 3.1., emphasis mine). Though the single-party element which Nyerere had implemented has been abolished on paper, the Opposition Party CHADEMA (Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo – Party of Democracy and Progress) was politically banned under former President Magufuli (2016). During his presidency (2015-2021), nationalist economic policies have furthermore stifled the private sector and foreign direct investment (FDI) (Harris 2021). With Magufuli's intolerance towards the opposition, nationalist policies and focus on self-reliance, socialist ideas, and policies seem to persist in Tanzania. It is yet to be seen if the lifting of the ban on political parties in January 2023 by current President Hassan will be followed by decisions creating the necessary political and economic space which is needed for the country to successfully compete in a global economy

## Conclusion

This article has aimed at giving an insight into Tanzania's postcolonial past and present by further exploring the key ideas of Ujamaa, its implementation, and coercive realities, especially in the years of villagization in the 1970's. It sought to highlight the complex yet contradicting portrayal of Tanzania's first President Julius Nyerere and his importance in the nation-building process. In doing so, it has shown, that Nyerere and the principles associated with him and his policy of Ujamaa are often idealized and abstracted from their historical context, used in the political space to claim political legitimacy, create continuity, and contribute to national consciousness (Fouéré 2014). Although abandoned as official economic policy, certain values of Ujamaa, thus, still seem to play a role in the country's current political discourse and in Tanzania's interpretation of socialism. The article has furthermore drawn attention to the fact, that Socialism is a matter of the present, especially when considering it is an integral part of Tanzania's constitution. Despite this, Tanzania has changed as a country in a globalized world, having pragmatically developed free-market and capitalist tendencies as well. On its path, it is yet to be awaited, in which direction the East African country is heading. To move forward, it is necessary, however, to understand the concept of Ujamaa better and its legacy - which is still affecting the present

# Tanzania's Economic Diplomacy

*Balancing EU, China, and EAC Relations*



By *Alexis Gregoire*

## Introduction

With one of the highest birth rates in the world, ranked 10th richest country in Africa by overall GDP in 2023<sup>1</sup>, one of the most stable and peaceful countries in its region, and with a recent change of status to a middle-income country, the Republic of Tanzania has seen a rapid growth (3rd fastest growing economy in Africa, behind Ivory coast and Rwanda)<sup>2</sup>. Studying the success and evolution of countries with global potential and impact provides insightful information about how a developing country manages its international relations. As a result, an expanded perspective on the dynamics of economic involvement and strategic decision-making in a complex and interconnected world can be gained through comprehending Tanzania's diplomatic strategy.

The United Republic of Tanzania is establishing this year 2023, in its current revision of the foreign policy, a foreign policy centered on economic diplomacy to safeguard the fundamental national interest as a sovereign state in light of the economic and sociopolitical transition that has taken place on the domestic and international stage. The strategy is expressed through active international involvement, which essentially relies on the pursuit of economic goals, while simultaneously solidifying the fundamental tenets of Tanzania's conventional foreign policy and safeguarding prior accomplishments<sup>3</sup>.

Forging international partnerships, redefining bilateral diplomacy and strengthening multilateral diplomacy are all strategies that the United Republic of Tanzania aims to undertake to achieve its goals in economic diplomacy. This paper intends to shed light on Tanzania's relations with the European Union, the Eastern African Community as well as China in an attempt to have a larger understanding of its foreign policies and trade relations, from past, present to future.

## Background

Tanzania's colonial heritage, independence, and changing political and socio-economic philosophies have all influenced the historical setting of its international relations and economic alliances. Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's first president after achieving independence from Britain in 1961, promoted a non-aligned foreign policy, allowing the country to interact with both Western and Eastern nations throughout the Cold War. A fervent advocate of Pan-Africanism, Nyerere also supported liberation struggles all across the continent and promoted unity and collaboration among African states.

Tanzania adopted market-oriented policies and economic reforms in the 1980s as a response to its economic problems after its socialist experiment under Nyerere. As a result, there was an improvement in ties with Western nations and international financial organisations. Additionally, Tanzania actively participated in the revitalization of the East African Community, placing a strong emphasis on intra-African commerce, regional integration, peace keeping (for instance the overthrowing of Ugandan Dictator in 1979), and collaboration.

Tanzania's main trading partners today are China (\$4,960 million total trade), India (\$2,313 million), the European Union (EU) (\$1,542 million) followed by Kenya, South Africa and the U.S. in 6th position with \$367 million. Germany's exports to Tanzania lays around 204 million \$. Neighbouring countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and East African Community (EAC) countries make up a smaller, but still significant part of Tanzania trading relationship.

## **EU-Tanzania relations**

Since Tanzania's independence in 1964, there have been ties between Tanzania and the European Union (EU). A foundation for collaboration between the EU and ACP nations, such as Tanzania, was established by the first Lomé Convention in 1975. Since then, a number of agreements and collaborations have been formed to solve Tanzania's development issues, advance good governance, and stimulate economic growth. The Cotonou Agreement, signed in 2000, signalled a dramatic move towards a more thoroughgoing and strategic relationship with an emphasis on regional integration, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development. The EU still supports several programmes aiming at enhancing infrastructure, education, health, and agriculture, among other things, in Tanzania today-besides its controversial annual budget support.

## **Benefits of EU trade and investment for Tanzania's economy**

Tanzania's trade ties with the European Union (EU) have played a significant role in both import and export activities. Notably, the Netherlands stands out as the primary recipient of EU FDI with a substantial share of 54%, followed by the United Kingdom at 14.5%. Over the 2015-2018 period, the Netherlands consistently dominated with 66% of all EU FDI to Tanzania, with Germany at 17.7% and the UK at 13.2%. Diverse industries, such as mining, financial services, energy, agriculture, and ICT, attract EU businesses, contributing significantly to Tanzania's economy through tax and royalty payments. Additionally, Italy plays a vital role in the tourism sector, particularly in Zanzibar.

The EU supplied various key products, including Tractors, Petroleum, Bituminous oil, human and animal blood, and motor vehicles for goods transportation. Despite Brexit, Tanzania's trade relations with the UK continue under the existing trade agreement from the UK's EU membership. However, adjustments were made to accommodate separate dealings with the EU27 and the UK. Throughout this period, the EU27 maintained its significance as an essential market for Tanzania's exports, receiving 12.3% of the country's total exports. Major exports to the EU included Tobacco, Fish fillets, Manganese ores, Coffee, and Precious metal ores. Interestingly, the shift from the EU28 to the EU27, following Brexit, did not lead to substantial changes in the structure of Tanzania's exports. <sup>8</sup> The EU remains a crucial trade partner for Tanzania, promoting economic exchange and cooperation between the two regions, contributing to Tanzania's economic growth and development goals. In comparison, the EU is Kenya's second largest trading partner, and Kenya's most important export market.

## **Potential and drawbacks from the European Partnership Agreement**

The EU and the EAC Partner States concluded the negotiations of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in 2014, but the agreement never entered into force because some EAC Partner States, including Tanzania, did not sign it<sup>9</sup>. The impact of the EPA between the EU and EAC on Tanzania has been a topic of various discussions. At the time, in 2014, Tanzania already benefited from preferential access as a Least Developed Country (LDC) under the Everything But Arms (EBA) programme without having to reciprocate with market access and didn't see the advantages it might gain in signing the agreement.

In a media interview<sup>10</sup> conducted at the time with former president, Benjamin William Mkapa, multiple concerns around the EPA agreement were raised which are still valid today and contribute to the continuous refusal to sign the agreement<sup>11</sup>. In contemplating the ratification of the EPA, Tanzania would be subjecting its local sectors to fierce competition from EU imports, potentially jeopardizing established industries and hindering the growth of new ones.

Moreover, the EPA might impede the region's ambitions for industrialization by permitting duty-free entry of EU goods into the EAC market. Additionally, the agreement restricts the use of export tariffs, which are valuable tools for promoting value-added processing and diversity. Furthermore, adopting the EPA could lead to significant tariff revenue losses for the EAC, raising doubts about the EU's promised development assistance.

Concerns about the unequal impact the EPA has had on the EAC countries that did sign it are also part of the discussions

### **Challenges in maintaining a balanced economic relationship with the EU**

Tanzania and the EU face several obstacles in their collaboration, including discrepancies in development funding, trade restrictions, and market access, which can weaken their economic connections. Differences in governance, environmental regulations, and human rights standards, along with migration, security, and regional integration challenges, necessitate good communication, compromise, and meaningful dialogues that respect sovereignty and benefit both parties, instead of causing conflict.

The East African Community (EAC) has set lofty targets for industrialization, envisioning a surge in manufacturing's contribution to GDP from 8.7% in 2012 to an impressive 25.0% by 2032, driven by its abundant natural resources. Tanzania, in alignment with its government's agenda, is marching vigorously towards industrialization and export promotion. The EU eagerly anticipates Tanzania's signature on the EU-EAC trade deal, as it holds the potential to bolster Tanzania's industrial aspirations by facilitating broader market access for its products. With a clear understanding of industrialization's role in fostering structural transformation and creating quality employment opportunities, Tanzania has committed itself to achieving semi-industrialized status by 2025, focusing on elevating tech-related goods production in its GDP and amplifying the number of exporting enterprises. This steadfast determination underscores Tanzania's unswerving dedication to fostering economic growth and development in the region.

### **Aid from the EU and its impact on Tanzania's development**

OECD data shows that the EU and its Member States were the largest donors to Africa, contributing approximately €20 billion per year in development aid<sup>15</sup>. The effectiveness of development assistance for Africa has sparked debate. Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade and economist Dambisa Moyo question if long-term financial transfers strengthen African economies or exacerbate poverty. Conversely, proponents see development aid as a moral imperative to address historical injustices, citing Asia's success in poverty reduction through capitalist reforms without heavy reliance on charity. Africa's potential, they argue, lies in the rise of mobile and internet technology, fostering a new generation of entrepreneurs. This approach suggests a shift towards fostering entrepreneurship and capitalist principles, moving beyond aid as the sole solution.

Tanzania, with its new status gained in 2020, faces a 5 to 6 year window to transition from concessional lending to market-based financing. Policymakers are urged to focus on openness, international trade, and FDI, aligning with President Samia Suluhu's non-alignment policy, to drive economic growth.

## Conclusion

EU investments and aid are essential for meeting both short-term and long-term demands in Tanzania. However, the EU alone cannot close Africa's funding shortfall, emphasizing the necessity of a strategy that includes key allies like China and the US<sup>17</sup>. Remittances, often surpassing all other international aid, are crucial for economic development in the Global South, improving the livelihoods of receiving households and promoting economic growth and poverty reduction in recipient nations

## China-Tanzania cooperation

China's remarkable growth over the past decades, propelling it to its current status as a global power, has not gone unnoticed. By studying China's ascent and engaging in collaborative endeavours with the East Asian giant, Tanzania and other developing nations seek to tap into China's expertise and emulate its path to progress. Inspiration in China's achievements is particularly found in the realms of science, technology, skilled labour, and human resources. As the world witnesses intensifying geopolitical and geo-economic competition, these partnerships represent a strategic move to foster growth, self-reliance, and resilience in an ever-changing global landscape where China tends to become more attractive than the West.

## Evolution of China's Economic Engagement with Africa

The historical socialist ideological connections that fostered Sino-African development have played a significant role in shaping China's approach to overseas assistance. Leveraging aid as a political instrument, China garnered diplomatic recognition from Africa while vying for support against the backdrop of the Cold War, competing with the likes of the US and the Soviet Union

The People's Republic of China's (PRC) economic engagements with African nations have undergone three distinctive phases. Phase One, spanning from the 1950s to the late 1970s, was characterized by ideology-driven development aid, aimed at fostering anti-colonial and anti-imperial solidarity. Back then, China actively supported Africa's liberation struggle, training freedom fighters for countries such as Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa. This also saw the TAZARA project come to light in Tanzania as a counter-project to infrastructure projects in colonial southern Africa. In Phase Two, which extended from the 1980s to the early 2000s, Chinese migrant entrepreneurship (individual and private ventures) emerged as a prominent feature. Finally, Phase Three, from the mid-2000s to the present, witnessed a blend of state-led initiatives alongside market-driven strategies in their engagement with African countries. These phases delineate the evolution of China's approach to economic cooperation in Africa over time, reflecting shifts in political ideologies and economic strategies.<sup>20</sup> The construction of the Tanzania Zimbabwe railway, aptly known as the "freedom railway," exemplified China's commitment to assisting African nations in achieving and safeguarding their national independence and fostering economic development.

## Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)

The establishment in 2000 of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) signifies a transformation in Sino-African collaboration, moving beyond purely ideological foundations. FOCAC's principles now encompass mutual respect for sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, and equality, providing a robust framework for advancing bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation between China and Africa<sup>21</sup>.

## Implications of China's Investments and Loans on Tanzania's Development

China avoids the baggage of colonialism and highlights its cooperation as ideologically driven. They focus on financing hard infrastructural projects, unlike traditional donor countries that prioritize soft infrastructures and democracy promotion. China's loans to Africa often come with fewer conditions related to domestic matters, whereas traditional donor countries usually demand governance improvements. Additionally, Chinese firms are seen as more competitive due to economic efficiency, cost-effective labor, and willingness to invest in politically risky areas.

Tanzania's debt situation exhibits a commendably restrained portion requiring immediate repayment, with short-term debt representing merely 12% of its overall debt burden. Given the elevated risks associated with short-term debt this offers the Tanzanian government a favorable position, considering the potential troubles that countries with substantial short-term debt might encounter when struggling to generate sufficient revenue or secure additional funding to meet their obligations promptly.

In January 2021, the Tanzanian President John Magufuli asked Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to cancel three overdue interest-free loan debts. During the global COVID pandemic, China made several announcements about global Chinese debt relief, particularly towards African countries. Although they lacked specific details regarding the countries or the amount of loan forgiveness, analysts believe that since 2000, China has regularly forgiven loans, particularly when accused of debt trap diplomacy by the West, that are nearing their end but have a small balance. It is important to clarify that this action does not constitute a complete loan cancellation; instead, it involves the cancellation of the remaining unpaid portion of interest-free loans that have reached maturity. For instance, if a loan was supposed to be fully paid off over 20 years but still has an outstanding balance, China cancels that outstanding amount.

Chinese investments have been crucial in funding important infrastructure projects like energy and transport hubs, which may boost Tanzania's economic development and connectivity. Additionally, by generating employment opportunities and luring foreign direct investment, these projects help Tanzania achieve its industrialisation goals and raise the country's competitiveness on the world market. However, there are worries about the possible debt load brought on by these loans, which might strain the economy and affect the stability of the financial system. Tanzania must carefully manage its debt, negotiate favourable terms, and give top priority to initiatives that support its development goals.

Additionally, while Chinese investments may promote economic development, they can harm social and environmental standards in industries like mining and agriculture. Tanzania's natural resources and ecosystem must be safeguarded by ensuring ethical and sustainable resource extraction practices. To guarantee that the rewards of these investments are shared fairly among Tanzanians, a balance must also be struck between local engagement and skill development. Geopolitical factors are also relevant; China's engagement may have an impact on Tanzania's diplomatic ties and international reputation.

Since the mid-2000s, the Chinese government has taken on a more assertive role in steering its foreign investment endeavours. In May 2023, China exported \$673M and imported \$24.1M from Tanzania, resulting in a positive trade balance of \$649M.<sup>26</sup> Accumulating substantial foreign exchange reserves through export-driven development has endowed China with the means to bolster the global expansion of its businesses. Learning from the experiences of other East Asian nations,



China has harnessed foreign investment as a catalyst for accelerating domestic industrial restructuring, leveraging access to raw materials, international markets, and cost-effective labour while relocating surplus production capacity. Notably, China's engagements in East Africa have also been shaped by strategic considerations, driven by its aspirations to cultivate political alliances and extend soft power on the international stage. This orchestrated approach reflects China's evolving approach to foreign investment and its pursuit of strategic objectives in the global arena.

### **Balancing economic benefits from China while safeguarding national interests**

In the realm of Sino-African cooperation, it is imperative to place a strong emphasis on achieving win-win outcomes, ensuring mutual benefits and fostering local content development. Firstly, Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa remains limited<sup>28</sup>, often accompanied by the importation of Chinese labor instead of promoting local employment opportunities. Secondly, concerns about debt trap diplomacy raise alarm bells regarding potential economic control and fears of recolonization. Thirdly, recognizing that self-interest is inherent in international cooperation highlights the imperative of transparency and citizen involvement.

Transparency and accountability must take center stage in agreements with China, subjecting them to thorough scrutiny to guarantee fair deals concerning natural resources. To optimize economic advantages and drive sustainable development in Tanzania, a meticulously formulated agenda and strategy for engaging with China is of paramount importance. Corruption issues demand immediate attention, necessitating the fortification of governance mechanisms to safeguard against misusing funds and loans from China and other partners. An unwavering focus on developing local content, technology transfer, and negotiation skills will serve as the catalyst for harnessing the maximum benefits of cooperation, propelling Tanzania towards profound socioeconomic transformation.

### **Conclusion**

Many people attribute China's interest in Africa to commercial motives, particularly China's growing domestic demand for industrial raw materials, such as minerals, wood, and leather, and China's need to increase export markets for its manufactured goods, signalling a change from third world solidarity to profit-focused capitalism in line with its Belt-and-Road-Strategy. Others categorize contemporary China's stakes in Africa as multi-pronged, embodying political, economic, ideological, and security objectives. It is also clear that China strategically utilizes its assistance to secure backing for its foreign policy goals, effectively garnering support from African nations multiple times.

Tanzania must improve its negotiating skills if it wants to avoid making unfavourable agreements with China over aid and trade treaties. For agreements to be fair, equitable, and mutually beneficial, it is essential to comprehend China's goals, cultural quirks, and negotiation tactics. By cultivating strong relationships, emphasizing win-win solutions, and adopting a patient approach, Tanzania can enhance its capacity to negotiate effectively, securing better deals and advancing its development objectives while safeguarding its national interests.

## **East African Community (EAC) and Tanzania**

The EAC aims to achieve prosperity, competitiveness, security, stability and political unification in East Africa. Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, The Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi are the member nations. They want to establish a federation that will strengthen and advance economic, political, social, and cultural integration. Through higher security, more competitiveness, value addition, trade, and investment, people's quality of life will be improved.

The EAC has acknowledged that regional peace, stability, and security are necessary for economic integration to flourish. Therefore, it concentrates its efforts on small arms and light weapons control, conflict resolution, crisis prevention, and the advancement of good governance. However, the EAC secretariat's poor institutional structures, particularly the absence of a Directorate for Peace and Security and the ineffective application of regional standards and policies inside member nations, are impeding these efforts.

It is shown that while China is indirectly promoting or facilitating the EAC's integration by financing and building infrastructure projects (i.e., ports, hydro-electric power plants, telecommunications, roads and railway), its current trade policies vis-à-vis the bloc significantly threaten to derail the integration efforts. To successfully mitigate such a blowback, the EAC and its partner states will need to adopt unified policies in dealing with Beijing, both for infrastructure development projects and trade relations. In this regard, the EAC could learn from China's relationship with ASEAN. But to succeed, the EAC should be given a more prominent role to play in coordinating relations with the Asian giant. Not only will that help streamline interactions between the two parties and foster transparency, it will also ensure cooperation and coordination within the East African bloc. Moreover, the East African regional body could also work better with Chinese financial institutions dealing with regional infrastructure development in the region to ensure more transparency and accountability in order to avoid financial burdens arising from unsustainable projects and corrupt deals.

## **The significance of the EAC for regional integration and intra-African trade**

Numerous studies have been conducted on the economic impacts of regional integration in East Africa, especially within the East African Community (EAC). Traditional trade theories have been challenged by contemporary trading patterns, which has resulted in a trend towards intra-industry trade, in which nations trade items that are comparable but somewhat different. The theory that economies of scale and imperfect competition may drive trade, regardless of comparative advantage, was formalised by Paul Krugman's work.

The establishment of the Customs Union (CU) and Single Customs Territory (SCT) inside the EAC has greatly increased markets, reduced trade expenses, and promoted intra-industry trade. Trade volumes have increased as a result, helping nations like Tanzania. According to studies, the EAC-CU's success increased bilateral commerce between member nations by 213%, which improved welfare and strengthened stability. It is estimated that real GDP grew by about 0.45% as a result of this accomplishment. Tanzania's strong participation in the EAC has boosted intra-regional commerce and industrialisation, creating chances for the region's economy to flourish and for collaboration

### **Tanzania's role in fostering economic cooperation within the EAC**

Tanzania's trade relations with its East African Community (EAC) counterparts have shown promising potential since the establishment of the EAC in 2000. The subsequent development of the EAC-CU in 2005 and EAC-SCT in 2014 aimed to expand the market for Tanzanian exports and reduce trade costs for imports and exports within the region. As a result, Tanzanian exports to EAC markets increased significantly, reaching a peak of approximately 16% by 2015, before stabilizing around 10% in 2017. However, total imports from the EAC markets experienced a decline, falling to about 2% in 2015 and rebounding slightly to 4% in 2017. Despite the growth in intra-regional trade, Tanzania still conducts a significant portion of its trade with countries outside the EAC. Approximately 70% of exports are destined for the rest of the world, and 20% are with other African countries, highlighting the importance of global trade linkages for Tanzania's economy. An intriguing observation is the sharp decline in Tanzanian exports to and imports from EAC markets after 2015, which coincided with the creation of the EAC-SCT and a new government in Tanzania. This raises concerns about policy coherence and potential non-tariff barriers that may be affecting trade flows within the region.

Further analysis of Tanzania's trade patterns within the EAC reveals fluctuations in exports and imports shares with specific partner states like Kenya and Uganda. On the other hand, there is a consistent high export share to Rwanda and Burundi, with relatively low imports from these nations. Understanding these trade patterns can help Tanzania's policymakers formulate effective strategies to promote regional integration, reduce barriers, and foster sustainable trade growth within the EAC, ultimately contributing to Tanzania's economic development and regional cooperation.

### **Challenges and opportunities in strengthening ties within the EAC**

One significant concern is the existence of protectionist and discriminatory strategies within regional integration agreements, potentially limiting Tanzania's access to markets and causing unfair competition. Moreover, the influence of politics on regional integration is evident, leading to conflicting interests and a lack of policy coherence among member states. This may hinder effective collaboration and cooperation within the regional bloc.

Another important challenge lies in harmonizing foreign policy predispositions of individual member states within the regional bloc. These policies are shaped by diverse ideologies, interests, and rivalries, making it difficult to create a unified and comprehensive approach to regional integration. Additionally, the observation that integration in the Arab world faces difficulties due to political instability, disunity, and external manipulation serves as a reminder for Tanzania to address internal political and stability issues that may affect its own integration efforts, especially if it looks at integrating Somalia too, marking an important shift for the EAC.

The dilemmas faced by the European Union in its external relations also provide valuable insights for Tanzania. Striking a balance between individual state sovereignty and collective impact in foreign policy is crucial to successful regional integration. Furthermore, the macro-economic challenges associated with free movement of capital in the East African Community, such as among member states and slow implementation of agreed plans, require careful consideration and proactive solutions.

## Conclusion

All in all, EAC markets constitute only a small portion of Tanzania's overall commerce, accounting for around 10% of exports and 5% of imports on average. To tap into the EAC's enormous resources and prospects, Tanzania must focus on reducing trade diversion, raising productivity, and enhancing trade facilitation measures to expand export diversification and improve competitiveness in regional markets and beyond. For Tanzania's future economic performance and long-term viability within the EAC, addressing non-tariff obstacles and policy incoherence is essential to avoid past mistakes that led to the first EAC's collapse.

## Final Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper aimed to understand better Tanzania's economic diplomacy through the analysis of its policies and trade treaties, as well as the strategic decision process behind its international cooperations and partners. In the context of strong economic diplomacy, Tanzania must adopt a balanced and pragmatic approach to navigate the relationships between the East African Community (EAC), China, and the European Union (EU). Firstly, Tanzania should prioritize regional integration and cooperation within the EAC to enhance intra-regional trade and economic growth. By fostering closer ties and pursuing shared development goals with neighboring EAC member states, Tanzania can strengthen its position as a regional player and leverage collective bargaining power when engaging with external partners like China and the EU.

Tanzania should situate itself within the 21st century global economy with its new drivers, promoting a rules-based system in order to mitigate Great Power tensions, and recognise that all foreign economic policy is ultimately also domestic. Challenges arising from different regulatory frameworks and standards across the EU, China and the EAC raise the prospect of a fragmented global trading system, indicating complex strategic decisions and navigation of Tanzania's economy.

Finally, in dealing with China and the EU, Tanzania should adopt a nuanced and strategic value-based approach. While China's investments and economic support have played a significant role in Tanzania's development, it is crucial to ensure that such engagements adhere to sustainable development principles, respect environmental standards, and safeguard local industries. Similarly, engaging with the EU should focus on mutually beneficial partnerships that promote trade diversification, technology transfer, and capacity building. By maintaining a balanced stance, Tanzania can optimize the advantages of its relationships with both China and the EU, while safeguarding its national interests and preserving its sovereignty.

# Women's empowerment and gender equality

Focusing On Samia Suluhu Hassan As Tanzania's  
First Female President



10

By *Ronja Koch*

## 1. Introduction and Background

In recent years, the global conversation around gender equality and women's empowerment has gained unprecedented momentum. One powerful emblem of this process in Tanzania is the remarkable journey of Samia Suluhu Hassan. After President Magufuli's sudden death, she became Tanzania's first female president, taking office on March 19, 2021. (Africa Renewal, 2021)

This milestone not only signifies a monumental shift in the traditionally male-dominated sector of politics but also highlights the ongoing struggle for gender parity and women's rights. Samia Suluhu Hassan's ascent to the presidency serves as an inspirational example of breaking gender barriers and setting a precedent for women's leadership in the country's highest office. (Africa Renewal, 2021)

This paper seeks to examine the specific initiatives and reforms implemented by President Samia to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in Tanzania, with a special focus on the achievements and challenges embodied by her tenure as Tanzania's first female president. Additionally, it analyzes the obstacles encountered in the implementation of these initiatives, while also considering the transformative impact of her presidency on traditional gender roles and expectations within Tanzanian society.

## 2. Changes for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality

### 2.1. Definitions

To comprehend the roles of women, it is essential to examine the concept of women's empowerment and gender equality.

#### 2.1.1. Gender equality

The aim of gender equality is a society with equal opportunities, rights, and responsibilities in all aspects of life for both women and men (e.g. freely exercise their human rights, make choices, access resources and services, and engage in public life without being constrained by laws, policies, gender norms, or stereotypes). (United Nations Development Programme, 2023, p.6)

#### 2.1.2. Women empowerment

In situations where gender inequality exists, it is typically women who are marginalized, particularly in decision-making and access to economic and social resources. Therefore, a key aspect of advancing gender equality is empowering women. Broadly speaking, it denotes the process through which women acquire influence and equivalent opportunities to pursue personal, societal, and economic aspirations. This involves their active engagement in all areas of society under the same conditions as men. (FINCA International, 2023)

#### 2.1.3. Challenging Gender Disparities

Tanzania's population in 2022 is around 61.7 million, with a slight majority of women, according to the National Bureau of Statistics. Despite their numerical superiority, women in Tanzania experience marginalization when compared to men. (Msafiri, 2023, p.1) In 2022, Tanzania's Gender Inequality Index stood at 0.72, indicating that women were 28 percent less likely to have equal opportunities as men in the country. Furthermore, Tanzania ranked 13th out of 36 countries in the sub-Saharan Africa region. Nevertheless, it still scored low in the category of political empowerment. (Statista, 2023) In addition, gender inequalities are still evident in the experience of violence and unequal distribution of salaries or land (BAMF - Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2021, p. 18). According to the report from FINCA International (2023) one billion women worldwide have no access to formal banking services, two-thirds of the world's illiterate population are women, and approximately 2.7 billion women worldwide face legal restrictions that limit their job choices to a greater extent than men.

## 2.2. Legal Framework

### 2.2.1. Legal Framework Within Tanzania

Despite persistent gender inequalities affecting women, Tanzania has established multiple legal frameworks mandating the integration of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Both the 1977 Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania and the 1984 Zanzibar Constitution explicitly demand a focus on gender equality and women's empowerment. Moreover, the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 and Zanzibar Development Vision 2050 emphasize the importance of incorporating gender equality and women's empowerment into their objectives. The government's key priorities, as outlined in the Third National Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP III) 2021/22 to 2025/26 and the Zanzibar Development Plan (ZADep) 2021-2026, include the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women (United Nations Development Programme, 2023, p.7)

Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar have established dedicated ministries, such as the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups and the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare, Gender, and Children, respectively, to address gender-related issues. These ministries are responsible for formulating policies, strategies, and action plans for gender equality and women's empowerment, which are to be implemented in collaboration with various sectors. Furthermore, these ministries are tasked with overseeing the execution of national policies aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women. They receive assistance from gender focal points or committees that are established in all Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs), regional secretariats, councils, and institutions. These commitments reflect Tanzania's dedication to gender equality and enshrines the principles of gender parity at the highest legal level. (United Nations Development Programme, 2023, p.7)

Additionally, the Tanzania Women Parliamentarians Group (TWPG) is an organization devoted to enhancing the active involvement of female Members of Parliament (MP) in parliamentary proceedings (e.g. to advocate for and oversee the integration of gender equality into parliamentary affairs). TWPG has identified inheritance laws, marriage laws, sexual and reproductive health rights, and the issue of human trafficking involving women and children as the primary areas requiring legislative reforms and policy attention. (Parline: the IPU's Open Data Platform, 2023b)

### 2.2.2. International Legal Commitments

On global stage, Tanzania has ratified numerous international agreements, among others the "United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women", the "Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa", and the "Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development". (Afrobarometer, 2023 September)

## 2.3 Transformation in Political and Social Dimensions

Tanzania has made significant progress in advancing gender equality, as evidenced by its notable improvement in the Global Gender Gap Index. In 2023, the nation ascended to the 48th position out of 146 countries, marking a substantial leap from its 82nd place ranking in 2021. This advancement underscores President Samia Suluhu Hassan's dedication to addressing gender disparities and fostering a more equitable society. (Afrobarometer, 2023 September, p.1)

### 2.3.1. Political Dimension

As per the Elections Regulation of 2010, as stipulated in Article 86A and further enshrined in Articles 66 and 78 of the Constitution, it is a statutory requirement that the National Assembly includes a minimum of 30% women members. To ensure this representation, special seats for women are allocated based on the proportional number of seats awarded to each political party in parliament. Each political party participating in parliamentary elections is permitted to nominate and submit a list of eligible women candidates to the Commission for consideration in the allocation of MP for Women Special Seats. (Parline: the IPU's Open Data Platform, 2023a)

In the realm of political representation, Tanzanian women have made substantial strides. A historic moment in Tanzanian politics unfolded with the appointment of President Samia Suluhu Hassan in March 2021 as first female President and Head of State, following the passing of President John Pombe Magufuli. President Hassan also held the position of the first female Vice President in the country since 2015. Additionally, the Tanzanian Parliament is fortunate to have Hon. Tulia Ackson as the female Speaker since her election in February 2022. Notably, two out of the three branches of the United Republic of Tanzania, namely the Executive and Parliament, are currently led by women, offering significant potential for women's influence in state decision-making. (Msafiri, 2023, p. 3) Moreover, on May 15, 2021, Nanelwa J. Mwiambi became the first woman to assume the role of National Assembly Clerk in Tanzania. She was appointed by President Samia to replace Mr. Stephen Kigaigai. (Parline: the IPU's Open Data Platform, 2023a)

In terms of female representation, the Tanzanian cabinet currently includes women in 34.6% of ministerial positions. This places Tanzania in comparison to its neighbours: Rwanda, with 50%; Uganda, with 38.7%; and Kenya, with 33.3%. Furthermore, within the Tanzanian Parliament, women currently hold 36.9% of the seats, providing a basis for comparison with the figures in Rwanda (61%), Uganda (34%), and Kenya (22%). Important to note that while Tanzania has made significant progress, there is still work to be done to achieve gender equality in leadership, especially when compared. (Msafiri, 2023, to Rwanda p. 3) It's also worth highlighting the significant improvements made in recent years. When compared to 2020, the proportion of women in ministerial level positions has experienced a substantial increase, rising from 18.2%. (World Bank, n.d.) Furthermore, a shift in gender representation can be observed when comparing the number of female candidates in the 2015 General Elections in Tanzania to the present day under the leadership of Mama Samia. In 2015, only 19.2% of nominated parliamentary candidates were women. (Tanzania FES, 2020, p.6)

### 2.3.2. Social Dimension

#### 2.3.2.1. Income

Tanzania's economy heavily relies on farming and the informal job sector, with agriculture employing 60.9% of individuals aged 15 and above, while the informal sector accounts for 29.0%, and the formal sector for 10.1%. Particularly, women are more inclined to work in the informal sector compared to men. Additionally, about 14.3% hold paid employment, with a higher percentage of men than women in this category. This gender gap underscores the need for specific policies to encourage women's involvement in productive work and ensure fair wages. (JAMII, 2023 p.1)

Under the leadership of Samia Suluhu Hassan, there is a commitment to champion the implementation of the Economic Justice and Rights action coalition, serving as a catalyst for women's empowerment. (JAMII, 2023 p.1) The government has introduced a range of initiatives in



recent years to advance economic justice and rights, with a strong focus on empowering women and providing decent work opportunities. A notable effort is the "Building a Better Tomorrow" program launched in 2022, which imparts innovative agricultural knowledge to over 800 individuals, mainly in crop, fisheries, and livestock production. Furthermore, more than 4,400 women in Zanzibar have been empowered in horticulture and the blue economy. The government has also introduced the iSOKO Digital Trading Portal, benefiting over 4,320 women traders in regional commerce and business tools. Entrepreneurship training has reached over 2.2 million women, and financial support, totalling Tsh. 748 billion, has been extended to 1.3 million women entrepreneurs. The government's commitment extends to promoting women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), encouraging girls' participation in STEM, and establishing Women's Economic Empowerment Forums at various levels. (JAMII, 2023., p.4)

### **2.3.2.2. Education**

Tanzania has made significant progress towards achieving gender parity in secondary school enrolment. From 2014 to 2020, the Gender Parity Index increased from 0.96 to 1.10, marking a substantial rise in girls' participation in secondary education. Notably, gender parity has already been achieved in primary schools, with girls slightly outnumbering boys in both primary and secondary education. This remarkable advancement can be attributed to the successful implementation of pivotal policies, such as Universal Primary Education and the provision of free education, as well as the establishment of public secondary schools across the nation. (Msafiri, 2023, p.2) These measures have significantly broadened educational access and empowerment opportunities for girls. A notable stride under the leadership of President Samia Suluhu has been the decision to allow pregnant girls and teenage mothers to return to school. This decision underscores the government's unwavering dedication to providing support for girls and young women. (Katare Mbashiru, 2023) She also advocates for contraception and family planning, in contrast to her predecessor. (Cosmo WDR, 2023)

Despite these accomplishments, it's essential to acknowledge that challenges still exist. Approximately one-fifth of girls are unable to complete lower-secondary education, and four out of ten girls do not finish upper-secondary education. Furthermore, nearly one-quarter of adolescent girls who marry between the ages of 15 and 19 have experienced sexual or physical abuse from their partners at least once in their lives. Recognizing that investing in girls' education is an investment in prosperity, it serves as a potent tool for breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality. (Katare Mbashiru, 2023)

In line with these accomplishments, President Samia Suluhu Hassan stated at the beginning of 2023, "The government is following up, and we will make our contribution by setting policies and putting strategies in place, including increasing the education budget. We want to ensure that we do not leave anyone behind." (Mosenda, 2023) On the International Day of the Girl in October 2023, Minister Prof Mkenda emphasized that the government plans to conduct a study to identify the main challenges leading to girls dropping out of school, with the aim of formulating recommendations for permanent solutions, in alignment with the President's earlier statement this year (Katare Mbashiru, 2023)

### 2.3.2.3. Public Sentiment on Gender Equality

According to the Afrobarometer questionnaire for Tanzania Round 9 (2022), Tanzanian citizens have generally shown approval for the government's initiatives aimed at fostering equal rights and opportunities for women, with an impressive 83% expressing their satisfaction. However, a significant majority (75%) also believes that the government should further intensify its efforts to advance gender equality (Afrobarometer, 2023 September)

### 2.4 Challenge in Implementing Gender Equality Measures

Despite the commendable progress, Tanzania still grapples with persistent gender disparities and obstacles. As highlighted by the findings of a national assessment of the country's statistical system's capacity to generate reliable gender statistics, several significant challenges have come to the forefront:

- Constraints in policy and financial support.
- The absence of a comprehensive data gap analysis and a standardized set of national gender indicators.
- Insufficiency of detailed data categorized by essential variables such as gender, location, age group, wealth status, ethnicity, and more.
- A lack of in-depth thematic analysis and capacity-building needs for data producers.
- Limited accessibility of data for users, as well as restricted interaction between data users and producers.

Addressing these challenges is crucial for further advancing gender equality and ensuring that the nation's policies and initiatives effectively serve all of its citizens. (UN Women – Africa, 2019)

## 3. Cultural Change and Challenges in Tanzanian Society

### 3.1 Gender roles and expectations in Tanzanian societies

In Tanzania, despite constitutional provisions for gender equality, there are persistent gender-specific disparities. These disparities are rooted in social norms that exacerbate risk factors such as high rates of early marriage and childbirth, coupled with low levels of economic independence and education for women. Furthermore, women in Tanzania often have lower levels of agency and decision-making power due to their limited participation in employment, lower earnings, significant age gaps between husbands and wives, and the practice of polygamy. (World Bank, 2022) These structural challenges contribute to a range of issues, including violence, political underrepresentation, unequal land access, and wage gaps faced by women. Gender-based violence, encompassing domestic violence and rape, remains prevalent but often goes unreported due to the social stigma associated with such cases and the complexities involved in reporting. While legal provisions for life imprisonment exist, reporting issues often lead to delays and dismissals tainted by corruption. Domestic violence is inadequately defined, which perpetuates its ongoing prevalence. (BAMF - Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2021, p.18/19)

### 3.2 Samia Suluhu Hassan's Impact on Traditional Gender Roles

Samia's presidency in Tanzania signifies a notable departure from traditional gender roles and expectations. Her elevation to the highest office in the country challenges the deeply ingrained stereotypes that have long marginalized women from high-level political positions. Her leadership serves as a source of inspiration, demonstrating that women are just as capable as men in assuming leadership roles, thereby shifting societal expectations. (The Citizen, 2023)

The presence of a female president also presents an opportunity to create an environment conducive to fostering women's leadership in decision-making spaces. This may encourage more women to participate in politics, further challenging the conventional male-dominated landscape. (The Citizen, 2023)

Female parliamentarians, known for advocating issues such as equal pay, reproductive rights, and gender-based violence, play a crucial role in advancing gender equality and women's rights. Samia's presidency can pave the way for more women to enter politics, champion these pivotal issues, and prioritize social concerns such as childcare and education, which can contribute to human capital development and inclusive economic growth. (The Citizen, 2023)

President Samia has shown trust to women, which for a long time was lost. (Cosmo WDR, 2023)

### 3.3 Challenges for female candidates

Aminata Toure (CCM) pointed out, "There is a lot of bullying, cyber bullying, bullying in all ways. They even go an extra mile to send people to threaten you. People just don't have a limit to that" (Cosmo WDR, 2023)

Yet, challenges persist. Female candidates, like Samia, often grapple with underrepresentation in media coverage and contend with gender stereotyping when they are featured. Verbal attacks, emanating from both opposition parties and sometimes even within their own parties, are aimed at discouraging women from pursuing political office, thus creating a hostile political environment. Moreover, women in politics frequently face financial constraints, as they receive less support from their political parties and often have to finance their campaigns independently. (National Democratic Institute, n.d., p 18.)

One female party member shared her experience, saying "I had an opportunity to travel to attend an important party event which was attended by top leaders. However, my rivals started spreading rumours that I got the chance to participate in the respective event because I have love affairs with a top leader who has been ensuring that I get such opportunities." (National Democratic Institute, n.d., p.18)

Survey results indicate that a significant majority of Tanzanians support equal rights in employment and political leadership. However, while most respondents believe that a woman aspiring to hold political office can enhance her standing within the community, a substantial number also anticipate that she may face criticism, harassment, and potential familial challenges (Afrobarometer, 2023 May)

### 3.4 Potential for Lasting Changes in Social Attitudes Towards Women in Leadership

The potential for lasting changes in social attitudes towards women in leadership is both promising and challenging. In many societies, barriers such as property ownership and cultural norms have historically hindered women's pursuit of political positions. The lack of property ownership makes it difficult for women to access the financial resources necessary for a successful political campaign. Additionally, deeply ingrained cultural beliefs often dictate that women's primary role is within the home, taking care of families and children, rather than participating in politics. Consequently, women's rights organizations advocate for increased societal awareness, improved childcare facilities, higher wages, and gender quotas in both politics and the business sector. These efforts represent vital steps towards reshaping public perceptions of women in leadership roles. (Cosmo WDR, 2023)

Mara Warwick, the World Bank Country Director, remarked: "It is encouraging to see the commitment of policymakers to end violence against women and children in Tanzania. However, as our studies show, existing efforts such as the National Plans of Action need to be supported by sustainable funding for their implementation. Also, laws that continue to undermine the rights of women and girls to be free from violence and discrimination need to be urgently reformed, such as the Law of Marriage Act whose repeal is still pending." (World Bank, 2022)

For instance, Tanzania's President, Hassan, is expected to secure a second term in 2025, potentially leading to more reforms that empower women in the nation. As these initiatives gain momentum and women continue to break through these barriers, there is hope that these changes will foster enduring shifts in societal attitudes towards women in leadership. (Cosmo WDR, 2023)

## 4. Conclusion

In recent history, Tanzania has witnessed a significant shift in its political landscape as Samia Suluhu Hassan assumed the presidency, marking the first time a woman has held this position. This historic milestone has brought about notable changes in the traditional gender roles and expectations within Tanzanian society.

The presidency of Samia serves as an inspiring model for women and young girls throughout Tanzania. Her leadership demonstrates that women have the potential to aspire to the highest echelons of political power. This serves as a catalyst for shifting societal expectations regarding women in leadership roles. Samia's presidency is a testament to the potential of women in leadership and may create an environment conducive to increasing women's involvement in decision-making spaces. This, in turn, challenges the conventional, male-dominated landscape of politics. Female parliamentarians, who are statistically more inclined to champion issues such as equal pay, reproductive rights, and gender-based violence, are vital advocates for gender equality and women's rights. The presidency of Samia paves the way for more women to enter politics and advocate for these pivotal issues. The presence of Samia in the presidency could facilitate the development and implementation of policies addressing these critical concerns, benefiting society. Her unique perspective as a woman in a position of power enables her to intimately understand the struggles related to women's empowerment and gender equality, as she is personally affected by these issues, and can provide insights and advocacy that resonate with the experiences of women.

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Nevertheless, a valid critique of gender policies in Tanzania is that some, like the special seats for women in the National Assembly, may be seen as superficial measures, offering symbolic rather than substantial change. While these seats aim to increase female representation, they may not guarantee meaningful participation and risk being perceived as tokenism. They should not replace the need for addressing deeper structural issues, including gender bias, unequal resource access, and cultural barriers that limit women's involvement in politics. A comprehensive approach is necessary to promote gender equity in other facets of society, and the true impact of such policies should be assessed in their ability to address these deeper-rooted challenges.

In summary, while Samia Suluhu Hassan's presidency is undoubtedly a significant step forward for gender equality in Tanzania, it should be viewed as a catalyst for change rather than a final destination. Addressing the structural and cultural barriers that hinder women's full participation in society remains an ongoing challenge. Her presidency should be a call to action for continued efforts to promote gender equality, and its long-term impact should be evaluated in the context of comprehensive and sustained progress.

# Standard Gauge Railway

*Tanzania's path to regional hegemony?*



By *Tarun Ruschmeier*

## Introduction

Traveling from station to station along the Tazara line, which connects the Tanzanian port city of Dar es Salaam with the Zambian town of Kapiri Mposhi, one witnesses the bustling vibrant economies it has helped create. With its various stops in smaller, previously isolated towns, local markets have become connected, opening up new opportunities for trade, specialization, and growth. The impact of the Tazara cannot be understated, symbolizing independence, and serving as a catalyst for economic transformation.

Primarily a geopolitical project, the Tazara line emerged from Zambia's leader Kenneth Kaunda's predicament in the late 1960s. Sitting on vast amounts of natural resource wealth, Zambia's traditional trade routes were limited to settler-ruled Rhodesia. As a newly liberated and independent country, Zambia needed an alternative solution to export its copper. The Tazara trade route, while not necessarily cheaper or faster, was free and liberated geopolitically advantageous—hence the birth of the Tazara or Uhuru Rail.

After Western institutions and the Soviet Union rejected the railway proposal due to a lack of return on investment, China stepped in. Offering a generous loan of \$400 million over 30 years interest-free, China made it clear that their participation was not for monetary gain. China, having recently freed itself from various imperial pressures, saw this as an opportunity to gain geopolitical leverage. Clearly, this was a geopolitical project for China as well.

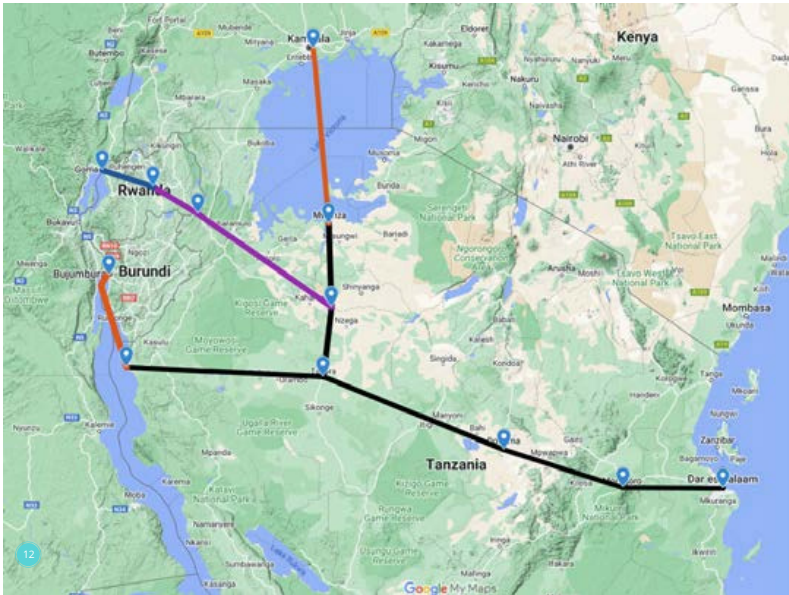
Over time, the Tazara has significantly shaped Zambian-Tanzanian relations. With Zambia's economy still heavily reliant on mineral exports and critical imports from Dar es Salaam, Zambia has grown economically reliant on Tanzania, granting Tanzania crucial geopolitical advantages in the region.

In this historical context, on April 12, 2017, a new railway project was planned. Starting from the port of Dar es Salaam, this new railway aims to enhance trade along the central corridor, connecting Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and the DR Congo. The 2000km electrified Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) is intended to replace an old meter gauge, enabling quicker and cheaper transportation and logistics within Tanzania and between landlocked countries and the port of Dar es Salaam.

The project is planned and will be owned and operated by the Tanzania Railway Corporation, as part of two broader initiatives: the East African Railway Master Plan by the East African Community, which seeks to increase regional connectivity<sup>4</sup>, and the Africa Integrated Railway Network Project by the African Union, aiming to foster physical and economic integration across the continent. These larger initiatives view the Tanzanian SGR as a key project, providing significant institutional and financial support.

The SGR will be constructed in six phases. Phase 1, connecting Dar es Salaam with Morogoro, has been operational since June 2024, reducing transit time between these cities from 4-5 hours to 1 hour 40 minutes. Phase 2, connecting Morogoro with Makutupora near the capital Dodoma, is expected to commence operations by the end of July 2024. Phases 3 and 4, connecting Makutupora with Tabora and Tabora with Isaka respectively, have started construction in 2022 and 2023, with operations beginning in 2025. Phases 5 and 6, connecting Isaka with Mwanza and Tabora with Kigoma, commenced in 2021 and 2022, with significant progress already made, especially in Phase 5.

Two major operators are constructing this project. The first four phases are being built by Yapi Merkezi, a Turkish construction company, while the last two phases are managed by Chinese companies—the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation and the China Railway Construction Company. Additional support comes from various companies, including Deutsche Bahn Engineering and Consulting and Portuguese Moto Engil Africa. The SGR directly links the port of Dar es Salaam to Rwanda through an extension from Isaka. Extensions through Kigoma will connect to Burundi and then to the DR Congo, while the connection from Mwanza allows direct ferry transport to Port Bell, near Uganda's capital, Kampala.



This research paper will investigate the question: How will the construction of the Tanzanian Standard Gauge Railway change Tanzania's geopolitical position in the region? It will be shown that the SGR will make Tanzania significantly more attractive for hinterland countries to trade through compared to Kenya, thus challenging Kenya's current geopolitical hegemony. Additionally, through diverse international financing, Tanzania reduces the risk of foreign dependence and debt trap diplomacy, further strengthening its geopolitical position relative to Kenya.

### Part 1: Regional Hegemony

*"Nothing is more usual, among states which have made some advances in commerce, than to look on the progress of their neighbours with a suspicious eye, to consider all trading states as their rivals, and to suppose that it is impossible for any of them to flourish, but at their expense"* by David Hume.

For countries in which the economic situation is the most salient, it is certain that the relation to each other is primarily defined by exactly that - trade. East Africa narrowly defined to Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania can be categorized in two groups. The groups which have access to the ocean and countries that do not. In the modern economy the prevalence of shipping as main form of trading is almost universal and by far the cheapest medium. This means that Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, which are all landlocked, are dependent on trading through either Tanzania or Kenya to be able to import and export goods on the global market<sup>11</sup>. The balance of power between Kenya and Tanzania in accessing this hinterland trade is exactly the fact that is being altered by the establishment of the Tanzanian Standard Gauge Railway.



## Historic Regional Relationships

Kenya and Tanzania have long had a tense and competitive relationship. As the two largest economies and populations in East Africa, they have always been set apart from one another and have naturally been in a competitive relationship. The collapse of the East African Community, founded in 1967, is indicative of this. Ten years after the first EAC was established, it broke up because two of the founding members (Kenya and Tanzania) were too ideologically different. Tanzania's Nyerere championed an idea of Ujamaa and African socialism, while Kenya under Kenyatta was strongly focused on capitalist development. These structural differences proved too great in a Cold War era and the EAC became dysfunctional in 1977. These rivalries diminished over time, allowing the second East African Community to emerge, but have resurfaced in the last 10 years.

In 2014, Kenya banned Tanzanian safari tour operators from entering Kenyan protected areas; in response, Tanzania restricted Kenyan Airways' ability to operate in Tanzania - the dispute was settled in 2015. In 2020, there was a reciprocal ban on each other's flights in each other's airspace - the dispute was again settled shortly afterwards, but not before large amounts of trade were blocked by trucks stranded at the recently closed borders. Earlier this year, Kenya decided not to allow Tanzania Airways to fly cargo to Kenya, leading to an immediate escalation with Tanzania banning all Kenya Airways flights. Again, a solution to the conflict was found, but all these conflicts are indicative of a relationship based on competition<sup>13</sup>. The most important aspect of the Kenyan-Tanzanian rivalry is trade.

The ports of Mombasa and Dar es Salaam are two incredibly important parts of each country's economy and both raise significant amounts of governments revenue but also give large amounts of leverage over hinterland countries. For this reason controlling the Northern and Central Trade Corridor stand in constant competition. The Northern Corridor stretches from the port of Mombasa all the way to Uganda and then south to Rwanda and Burundi, whilst the Central Corridor starts at the port of Dar es Salaam and stretches straight through the country connecting to Burundi and Rwanda over land and to Uganda over the Lake Victoria. Tanzania's Standard Gauge Railway tries to significantly improve the attractiveness of the central corridor whilst Kenya's own Standard Gauge Railway tries to do the same and again stands representative of the ongoing competition.

Kenya's relationship with its neighbours is mixed. Kenya's relationship with Uganda has always felt somewhat out of balance, and Uganda has been trying to free itself from this. Since the vast majority of Uganda's trade currently passes through Kenya, the level of dependency is quite high, and Uganda fears this. They see themselves as being in Kenya's backyard, restricted in their own actions. The 2014 oil incident is a case in point. In January 2014, Kenya decided to ban direct oil imports from Uganda, meaning that oil had to be imported into Kenya and then reimported to Uganda, massively increasing costs. This angered Uganda so much that it took the matter to the East African Court of Justice. It was not until June 2024 that these issues were resolved, after it appeared that Uganda would start importing much more oil through the port of Dar es Salaam<sup>16</sup>. The strained relationship has a long history, with Kenya accused of meddling in the 1980s by funding opposition groups, a fear that still haunts the Ugandan leadership.

The relationship between Kenya and Rwanda is very strong, with the Rwanda Development Board proudly proclaiming Kenya as its top investor and trading partner. Despite some recent controversy over critical comments made by Kenyan minister Kipchumba Murkomen, which caused some outrage in Rwanda, the relationship is very strong and prosperous<sup>19</sup>. Importantly, however, Rwanda has no land border with Kenya and would still be forced to trade through Uganda and then Kenya if it wanted to access the northern corridor, making its relationship with Uganda closer in terms of deciding which trade routes to use.

Although relations between Rwanda and Tanzania were strained during the Kikwete regime<sup>20</sup>, this seems to be a thing of the past and the current regime is much more committed to bilateral growth. The focus on economic cooperation has seen Rwanda and Tanzania grow closer over time, with 80% of all trade now passing through the port of Dar es Salaam. Other initiatives to facilitate cross-border trade are further evidence of the increasingly close relationship<sup>21</sup>. The story is similar with Uganda. Despite their shared history of war, Tanzania and Uganda have recently been cooperating much more closely. Uganda's decision to route its oil pipeline through Tanzania rather than through Kenya further cemented their growing economic ties. The ferry link between Mwanza (Tanzania) and Port Bell (Uganda) also allows for direct bilateral trade, making their economic relationship independent of that between Uganda and Rwanda.

Relations between Uganda and Rwanda have always been tense. Most recently, they were on opposite sides of the Second Congo War (1998-2003). Although several memoranda of understanding have been signed since then, the backdrop of the previous difficult period remains. An important development is the escalation in 2019, with both countries accusing each other of espionage, political crises and other things that may have been triggered by the Rwandan killing of a Ugandan policeman or Uganda's support for rebel groups in Rwanda, but regardless, tensions escalated massively and from one day to the next the borders, including trade lines, between the two countries were closed.

### **Problems with Northern Corridor**

Kenya operates the port of Mombasa, which is one of the largest and most important ports in Africa; to complement this port, Kenya had also planned to build the port of Lamu, but given its proximity to Somalia and al-Shabab territory, it is questionable whether this port will be used to any significant extent in the future. For this reason, the northern corridor is mainly conceived as starting from the port of Mombasa, although there have been some questionable reports about this port recently.

For example, the Port of Mombasa appears to charge fees that no other port (including the Port of Dar es Salaam) charges, including container cleaning fees, container management fees and equipment management fees. In addition, the port of Mombasa has a very short period of time in which containers must be returned to the port before charges are incurred, and this very short period of time results in high demurrage charges in most cases. In addition, government ownership of the port is seen as slow and inefficient, making change difficult<sup>27</sup>. These facts have affected the port's standing. The World Bank, which ranks ports globally, recently downgraded the port of Mombasa from 293 to 326 in the world, noting a 326% increase in arrival times, which further hurts the port's attractiveness; in comparison, the port of Dar es Salaam has improved its arrival times and now ranks 312, higher than Mombasa. As all trade through the corridor ends in the port to access the open sea, the attractiveness of the port is key to the attractiveness of the corridor.

The Kenyan SGR, which would link Mombasa, Nairobi, Kampala and Kigali (and later the DRC), looked like a more than promising project that would significantly increase the attractiveness of the Northern Corridors. The problem was twofold: first, the Rwanda-Uganda tensions of 2019 massively reduced Kigali's interest, as all trade would necessarily have to pass through Uganda before ending up in Mombasa. Closed borders and hardened diplomatic relations made this unlikely - thus shortening the SGR to Kampala. After observing the excessive debt Kenya had taken on from China to fund its project, Uganda also became reluctant to join the SGR and decided not to build the SGR from Kampala to the Ugandan/Kenyan border. Further suspensions of funding from the Chinese side meant that the SGR simply never reached other countries and so will not bring any of the increased trade that Kenya had hoped for.

Kenya as a trade route is also perceived as less stable and therefore more volatile. Uganda decided to route its oil pipeline through Tanga rather than Lamu because Tanga was perceived as more stable and less threatened by al-Shabab terrorism<sup>3132</sup>. But other factors of instability remain. Memories of the 1970s, when Kenya threatened to block trade, or the mass political unrest in 2007 that massively disrupted trade, act as barriers that traders operating from Rwanda and Uganda consider before deciding which trade corridor to use. Given Kenya's history of using its dependence to extract regional concessions<sup>35</sup>, Rwanda and Uganda are likely to be more inclined to move away from Kenya.

This shift away from Kenya can be seen in the extreme acts of desperation that Kenya has undergone. Recently, following reports of massive trade growth in Dar es Salaam, the Kenyan port authorities decided to massively reduce the fees charged at the port of Mombasa<sup>36</sup>. While this will certainly make the port more attractive, it is uncertain whether it will actually benefit Kenya, since the biggest benefit of having trade pass through your country is the fees you can collect on it at the port. Further despair at having invested billions in Kenya's SGR without seeing any additional trade has led Kenya to offer Uganda large land concessions for dry ports at Navaisha, in the hope that this will sweeten the deal enough for Uganda to reconsider taking on the project. It is uncertain whether this will be enough, and perhaps the extension of the line to Kampala will materialise in the near future, but it is clear that these issues have severely shaken Kenya's regional positioning.

### **Attractiveness of Central Corridor through SGR**

After the Magufuli regime abandoned plans to rebuild a larger port at Bagamoyo, the port of Dar es Salaam is Tanzania's main trading centre. While the Port of Dar es Salaam faces a number of problems, including instability due to changing ownership and major congestion, it is also clear that the port has made significant improvements. The World Bank notes that the port has made significant improvements to reduce waiting times and increase capacity, reducing arrival and turnaround times by more than 50%, making it comparatively more attractive. The 2022 Tanzanian government has also pushed for various measures to make the port more attractive, including reducing port usage fees and removing non-tariff barriers. While long queues and problems still persist, recent investments in optimisation suggest a positive long-term trajectory.

Tanzania's SGR is likely to be quite important once it is finally built in 2025. According to a World Bank report, transport currently accounts for 50% of the cost of goods exported or imported by Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. In particular, long road journeys with heavy congestion and the recent rise in fuel prices make the traditional transport system less attractive. The promise of the SGR is significant: the cost of a container from Dar es Salaam to Kampala will fall from \$4,500 to \$1,600, and the cost of a trip from Dar es Salaam to

Kigali will fall by 73%. And all this with a massive reduction in transport time. The time aspect is particularly important for perishable goods, but also because it allows producers to better match current world market prices<sup>41</sup>. It should also be noted that the actual distance between Kigali and Dar es Salaam is also significantly shorter than the distance between Kigali and Mombasa.

For Rwanda in particular, the geopolitical aspects should be noted: trading through Tanzania allows it to 1) reduce the number of border crossings and thus save money again, but 2) also allows it to avoid trading through Uganda. Especially in times of high tensions, the second aspect makes Rwanda much more independent and thus also provides it with a strong incentive to use the Tanzanian SGR. For Uganda, the closer relationship with Tanzania in the 2010s is another manifestation of the increased focus on trade with Tanzania.

One important comparative analysis is the temporality of the projects. While for Rwanda the Tanzanian SGR will always be significantly cheaper, for Burundi the Tanzanian SGR is the only option, but for Uganda the relative price and speed difference between a connected Kenyan or Tanzanian SGR is limited. Apart from all the negatives mentioned in the previous section, the most important difference is when these projects will be implemented. The Tanzanian SGR has already opened and commissioned significant parts of its construction on time, giving hope that the target date of 2025 for full operation will be met. Freight traffic between Uganda's Port Bell and Tanzania's Mwanza has already resumed, so the whole logistics supply chain appears to be ready to go in just a few years' time.

While Kenya may be able to revise its original SGR plans, the planning, permitting, financing and construction of the remaining parts will certainly take years longer and remain more volatile than the Tanzanian Central Corridor route. For traders who want the cheaper benefits now, the Tanzanian SGR is the easy option. The importance of path dependency then probably means that these traders will stay in Tanzania, they know the regulatory environment, they have logistics expertise and perhaps fulfilment ports or other dependencies that have now been refocused on Tanzania<sup>43</sup>. As Kenya is at best marginally faster or marginally cheaper, it is uncertain that a large group of people would choose to change their current existing infrastructure and routes.

## Conclusion

What we have seen is that, notwithstanding the Tanzanian SGR, various geopolitical and economic realities favour trade through Tanzania rather than Kenya for both Uganda and Rwanda, so why is the railway needed at all? The problem is the issue discussed in the previous paragraph - path dependency. Individuals and organisations are often stuck in a way of thinking that reinforces systems rather than changing them. Whilst change is not impossible, it requires a significant push to change. While many factors favour the viability of the Central Corridor over the Northern Corridor, the soon to be completed Tanzanian SGR is likely to be the tipping point at which a large number of actors will change course and reorient themselves towards Tanzania. With shipping savings of over 50% and massive speed gains, the opportunity to capitalise on the additional profit will be too great not to take. And even if Kenya is able to complete its SGR as well, it will at best level the playing field, but not provide enough of an impetus to change the actors from their new path dependency.

As transport costs represent the total cost of goods, the change brought about by the SGR is more than significant. Importantly, similar to the Tazara line, this change has significant geopolitical implications as it gives Tanzania leverage. It now controls a significant amount of trade because it controls the port with which it can deny access to Rwandan goods at any time, and it controls the railway line that actually delivers those goods. Importantly, this power does not need to be exercised in order to exist. Just because everyone knows that Tanzania theoretically has this ability, it can demand concessions and be given the upper hand in negotiations. Rwanda and Uganda now have stronger incentives to side with Tanzania in EAC negotiations because Tanzania is responsible for their access to food and other critical goods. It is clear that the resulting changes in trade patterns will benefit Tanzania in the long run.

## **Part 2: Foreign Dependence**

### **Introduction to Foreign Dependence**

In Part 1, we looked at the overall external dependency created by the functioning of the Tanzanian SGR; the focus of this part is less on the direct consequences of the infrastructure project, but rather on the process by which it was acquired. The African Development Bank often speaks of a staggering infrastructure gap in Africa - i.e. a huge discrepancy between the amount of money that needs to be invested in infrastructure and the amount that is actually invested. With a financing gap potentially in excess of \$100 billion, it is clear that the continent alone may not be able to close this gap. Governments are often already resource-constrained, reducing their ability to invest effectively in local infrastructure projects. Large informal sectors often make taxation difficult, large education and humanitarian deficits require large investments, and the persistence of terrorism and secessionist movements on the continent constrain government budgets.

The obvious solution is to look abroad for funding. Look, for example, at the petrodollar boom between 1974-1981, when banks around the world were flush with cash and decided to invest it aggressively around the world, which meant that a huge number of governments suddenly had access to large amounts of cash at relatively low cost. Government debt increased around the world, for example in Brazil it rose from \$5.1 billion in 1970 to \$90.4 billion in 1990. As a result of the massive over-indebtedness of states, a staggering number of governments were pushed into positions of difficulty - an era of easy, fast, cheap money had trapped them in excessive debt that they could not repay.

Foreign control was and is exercised in two ways, direct and indirect. If a country is actually in default, direct pressure can be exerted in the restructuring process, the last resort in which a country tries to restructure its loans so that it can pay them back. Lending countries are also free to attach various other conditions to the restructuring process, such as structural reforms, land concessions or foreign policy commitments. This process also works indirectly, and arguably more often, by anticipating the restructuring process. Since countries have strong incentives not to go so far as to risk restructuring, they often make concessions earlier in order to obtain additional years of grace or perhaps temporary suspension of debt payments.

## Funders of the Tanzanian Standard Gauge Railway

The total cost of the Tanzanian Standard Gauge Railway will be \$10.4 billion, which will be funded by various groups. The cost is divided into two parts, the first 4 phases and the last 2 phases. The first 4 phases cost \$6 billion and the last 2 phases cost \$4 billion. The first 4 phases were financed with the help of the Tanzanian Ministry of Finance, which increased the national debt through a mix of domestic and foreign lenders. On the other hand, a consortium led by Standard Chartered Bank and consisting of 17 development partners, including Denmark, Sweden and South Africa, raised about \$1.5 billion<sup>50</sup>. The last two phases were financed by the China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation (Sinasure) and \$3.9 billion through the African Development Bank. The African Development Bank is the direct lender for \$0.7 billion and merely facilitated and structured the remaining \$3.2 billion<sup>52</sup>. There have also been reports that Yapi Merkezi, the Turkish construction company responsible for the first 4 phases, has led a consortium in Europe to seek further funding to complete the railway.

The variety of players involved is interesting. The financing itself is so diverse that it is even unclear which country is the biggest player. Through a high mix of commercial lenders (often higher interest rates but lower risk of dependency) and national institutions (lower interest rates but higher risk of dependency), Tanzania's SGR funding represents a mixed basket that tries to be exposed to a little of everything but not too much to any single actor. The use of multilateral institutions such as the African Development Bank also facilitates access to concessional loans and other agreements on favourable terms. Without a clear actor owning a controlling share of Tanzania's debt, it becomes more difficult for any country to exert the kind of pressure on Tanzania outlined above.

Another important factor is the distinction between financier and lender. Construction will be carried out mainly by the Turkish company Yapi Merkezi for the first four phases and by Chinese construction companies for the last two phases<sup>55</sup>. German consultants will be used for planning and design<sup>56</sup>. Wagons from South Korea will then be used to operate the lines. By varying the different parts of the project, Tanzania is creating competitive incentives and can thus reduce cost inflation through complacency<sup>57</sup>. In addition, companies that only contribute to small parts of the overall projects are less able to put pressure on the government and are more easily held to account. The result is the lowest cost per kilometre for any SGR project since 2006.

Two other observations are worth making. The first is that the main use of the Tanzanian SGR will be to move cargo from Tanzania's hinterland and mining region to the port. While the current size constraints of the port of Dar es Salaam remain, the likely financial projections still appear very profitable. Current cost projections show logistical costs between Kigali and Dar es Salaam dropping from \$15,000 to \$4,000 per tonne and from 30 days to 36 hours. The incredible increase in profitability is giving investors a lot of confidence and probably means that the loan will be repaid quickly. On the other hand, reports emerged in August 2023 that workers at Yapi Merkezi were on strike over unpaid wages. Although the strike was quickly resolved and the company reportedly addressed the issue, ethical questions remain.

## Funders of the Kenyan Standard Gauge Railway

The Kenyan Standard Gauge Railway project linking Mombasa to Uganda is still a work in progress. While a connection between Mombasa and Nairobi and Naivasha has been completed, the actual connection to the Ugandan border, i.e. from Naivasha to Malaba, is currently suspended. The cost of the Mombasa-Nairobi link alone was already \$3.8 billion, but the extension to Naivasha and other construction inefficiencies have pushed the existing cost to \$6.3 billion.

Designed as a key project in the Kenya Vision 2030 Agenda, the project was 90% funded by the China Export-Import Bank and 10% by the Kenyan government. Construction was carried out by the China Road and Bridge Company. The financing included two interest rates, 3.6% and 3% higher than a London-based interest rate indicator, and all loans were denominated in dollars. Under these conditions, the debt burden has increased significantly and there are already fears of potential payment difficulties. Between July 2022 and March 2023 alone, Kenya will have to pay \$800 million to service the SGR debt. China already accounts for more than 65% of Kenya's bilateral debt, clearly demonstrating a one-way dependency.

With China in charge of feasibility studies, financing and construction, there have also been reports that the cost of the project has been inflated to add to the debt burden, with multiple parliamentary inquiries researching the issue. Even with a diesel train, the cost of the railway was around USD 0.0085 per kilometre compared to Tanzania's USD 0.0058 per kilometre, a 46% higher cost per kilometre. As China is not a member of the Paris Club of international debtors, various disclosure requirements are not met, reducing accountability and transparency.

While these figures are theoretically value-neutral, they take on significance in the context of the dependency theory outlined above. Given the huge power differential between Kenya and China, there is still uncertainty about the equivalence of the relationship. There have been rumours that China would seize the port of Mombasa in the event of a default, which has recently become more likely. Although the Kenyan government has denied this, there are still fears of various risks. Supposedly, in the event of non-payment, an arbitration tribunal in Beijing would find a suitable solution; it is not only speculative but clear that this is likely to be an outcome highly favourable to China and not to Kenya.

Relying on one source for both financing and construction is also risky because it raises questions about how much concern this project would have for the local population. Apparently, 'during construction, the needs of the local people were at least to some extent taken into account in the design of the SGR, and the CRBC (Chinese Road and Bridge Company) allocated some budget for CSR (corporate social responsibility)', suggesting that the extent of exploitation was limited.

A very interesting part of the development of the Kenyan SGR is the reduction in the scope of the project. In the East African Railway Master Plan, the Kenyan Vision 2030, or in any of the proposals or speeches made by Chinese or Kenyan officials, increasing interconnectivity was a key aspect of the project. The project was seen as viable because of the increased hinterland trade it was likely to stimulate<sup>66</sup>. Even with an overall successful transport business, only the freight side was ever able to repay the loans. Because the project was stopped before reaching the Ugandan border, the expected boom in freight traffic did not materialise, the Worldbank in 2014 estimated that the Kenyan SGR would be profitable

with 20-55million additional freights per year, currently there are only 12million. As a result of this Kenya's revenues did not increase significantly but rather the Kenyan SGR is running yearly losses of around \$100million<sup>67</sup>. This makes repayment even more difficult. The asymmetrical relationship with China is particularly evident here, as China had simply decided not to continue funding the project, thus halting its completion at a stroke and leaving Kenya in the mess it is in today.

## Conclusion

It was clear that the funding model of the Kenyan and Tanzanian SGRs was very different. Tanzania's reliance on a variety of institutional funders, including commercial banks, national development banks and multilateral institutions, has minimised undue influence from any one country. In addition, the variety of construction companies and carriage manufacturers meant that companies were constantly competing with each other to get the best possible price for the Tanzanian people.

Kenya took a very different approach. Instead of having a large portfolio of financiers, Kenya relied heavily on China as its main partner. Its Export-Import Bank financed 90% of the project, and Chinese construction companies also carried it out. While there were certainly efficiencies to be gained from dealing with only one partner, there were also risks. Complacency, which increases costs, but importantly, a relationship of dependency. When China controls billions of dollars of your loans, you cannot say no to demands, because angering China could put you at risk as a state. Especially now, with the government's fiscal crisis brewing and further devaluation of the Kenyan shilling making debt more expensive, there are risks to debt sustainability and the consequences of restructuring the loan process.

This analysis is relevant because it shows that Tanzania's approach to the SGR has allowed it to remain much more independent and thus better able to reap all the benefits of the project. With Kenya at the mercy of China, Kenya is weakened not only in public perception but also in its ability to act. The unwillingness of Chinese institutions to fund the expansion of the SGR sends a strong symbolic message to the region about Kenya's real power and strengthens Tanzania as the other powerhouse on the East African coast.

## Conclusion

Who is dominant in the EAC is a binary question, it is either Kenya or Tanzania. Both countries have by far the largest economies, and both sit at crucial choke points (the Indian Ocean), which naturally gives them a dominant position over other landlocked EAC countries. Both Kenya and Tanzania have historically, and more recently, challenged each other to maintain control of the dominant hegemonic position in East Africa. Hegemony in this context is not defined in isolation, but rather in relation to the other landlocked EAC countries. What is crucial is that these actors establish themselves as kingmakers who benefit whoever is in control of them - control of their trade routes being the most important element of this.

The Tanzanian Standard Gauge Railway is likely to change the current balance of power in Tanzania's favour. It promises radical cost reductions, significant speed increases and comes without all the other baggage of Kenya. Uganda does not have to worry about blockades like in the 1970s or oil restrictions like in 2014. Rwanda no longer has to trade through Uganda and is freed from the political unrest that followed the 2007 elections, which could flare up again at any time. Importantly, only the massive benefits of the SGR will be enough to break the current path dependency. This new era is likely to continue even if Kenya manages to get its own SGR up and running. The lesson of the Tazara railway is that even if you are able to free yourself from one actor, you may end up in the arms of another.



If you are a puppet of another state, you cannot be a hegemon. Kenya's financing and construction approach to the SGR has put it in a risky position with China. Being so heavily indebted to a single actor with little to show for it raises questions about its independence and ability to govern. If Kenya is simply doing Beijing's bidding, it is questionable whether it has the same relative power in the region. By comparison, Tanzania's multiple financing arrangements with various construction companies have given it more power in the construction sector, and also much less constraint in the long term. The scale of the costs of these two projects should make it clear why the degree of dependence, or rather non-dependence, is so significant.

Both of these aspects should make it clear that the Standard Gauge Railway could usher in a new era in East Africa, with the dice this time being rolled in Tanzania's favour. While this certainly appears to be the case, this research is obviously limited in scope. Power can also take the form of soft power or other forms of hard power such as military might. The information game, i.e. how much control there is over the media narrative, also affects the extent to which relative power can be portrayed. While it is clear that the Tanzanian Standard Gauge Railway is changing the East African landscape in economic and strategic terms, these other factors may lead to different kinds of developments. Significant parts of this research are also speculative to some extent, as the Tanzanian Standard Gauge Railway has not yet been completed, so the perceived benefits are still uncertain, and crises can always occur and change the landscape further.



# Image Reference

img 1 Isamichuzi.blogspot/Issamichuzi

img 2 Photo by Kyle Glenn

img 3 KAS EU - Project archives

img 4 KAS EU - Project archives

img 5 "Social Media Tools" by jrhode licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

img 6 Source: Faces Of Africa - Mwalimu Julius Nyerere - YouTube

img 7 Julius Nyerere Ujamaa – Ideologies, Practices, Infrastructure, Villages and More. <https://unitedrepublicoftanzania.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Ujamaa-Ideologies-Practices-Infrastructure-Villages-and-More.jpg>. Accessed 13 March 2023.

img 8 "Julius Nyerere". Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Julius-Nyerere>. Accessed 15 March 2023.

img 9 Source: Open source AI

img 10 © AP Photo / Frans Sello waga Machate , <https://11nk.dev/Prlqu>

img 11 Source: Tanzaniainvest

img 12 Map that indicates the route of the Tanzanian SGR. The black lines are the tracks which are part of the Tanzanian SGR and which will be operated by the Tanzanian Railway Authority. Every blue connection between blue markers represents one phase in the SGR project. The red lines are transport links per Water that will connect the SGR with Uganda and Burundi. The purple line represents the Rwandan extension that will connect the SGR with Rwanda and then with Goma (DRC). This map was created by the Author based on Google Maps application.

img 13 Source: Tilmann Feltes/Private

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- 9 Map that indicates the route of the Tanzanian SGR. The black lines are the tracks which are part of the Tanzanian SGR and which will be operated by the Tanzanian Railway Authority. Every blue connection between blue markers represents one phase in the SGR project. The red lines are transport links per Water that will connect the SGR with Uganda and Burundi. The purple line represents the Rwandan extension that will connect the SGR with Rwanda and then with Goma (DRC). This map was created by the Author based on Google Maps application.
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