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# Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922-1999) and the quest for decolonizing African mind: Reflection on first generation of African nationalist leadership

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**Abstract:** The colonization of the African continent mainly in the 19th century was neither for the African interest nor for the interest of Africans. The alien domination caused the greatest damage to the African continent nearly in every aspect of life. Though most of the African countries became independent in the early 1960s and 1970s, many are still connected to Neo-colonialism for more than five decades. Julius Kambarage Nyerere is one of the African freedom fighters, Pan-Africanists, sages, and one of the founding leaders and First president of independent Tanganyika (Present-day Tanzania mainland).

There is abundant literature on the role of the first generation of African nationalist leaders including Nyerere on African anticolonialism and nationalism but, relatively less has been covered on how they contributed to the decolonization of African minds which is the centre of the coloniality of power and decolonial processes on the continent. Therefore, this paper seeks to uncover Nyerere's quest for decolonization of the African mind. The paper also aims to analyze historiographical trends in the African decolonization process. The study is purely qualitative and uses secondary sources to enrich it. It has been revealed that Nyerere's philosophy on politics, education, development, policies, and socio-economic aspects is highly focused on the decolonizing African mental landscape. The paper concludes that in order to achieve true liberation and development, African leaders are called to lead their people and direct their efforts to decolonize the minds by reconstructing and deconstructing important aspects such as language, education systems, traditions, and customs as well as building a transformative Pan-Africanism.

**Keywords** – African Mind, African leadership, Colonization, Decolonization, Decolonization of African Mind, Julius Kambarage Nyerere

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Africa was largely dominated by the processes of colonial conquest, colonialism, and decolonization. The colonization and its operations impacted significantly the continent in economic, political, and social spheres of life. Colonialism introduced its economic influence via military conquest and followed political dictatorship. Its most essential area of dominance was the mental aspect of the colonized through cultural control of how people perceived themselves. This signifies that political control can never be complete or effective without mental control (Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1981). The social impacts of colonization are more insidious than those of political and economic. This is because they sink deep into the minds of the individual and, hence take longer to

eliminate (Nkrumah, Arrigoni & Napolitano, 1963). For example, the colonialists struggled hard to make Africans inferior by calling them uncivilized, irrational, barbaric, uncultured, and people without history. So, these Africans started to think that everything done by whites was superior and best for humanity. Hence, Africans ignored and even abandoned theirs. Here suits the British saying, 'Give a Dog a Bad Name and Kill It'. The identity of inferiority was created and ascribed in a two-stage process. It starts with economic and material inferiority as a product of colonial subjugation and exploitation, and the second manifests when economic lowliness is internalized and becomes a psychological pathology (Fanon, 1986). The idea of racism and all colonial inventions and activities did not last long before Africans called them into question. It was only when the validity of Western conquest of Africa was questioned that series of resistance began and the anatomy of colonial rule came under attack" (Nkrumah et al., 1963). Africans took the initiative as they organized anticolonial movements. The economic practices and policies formulated by the alien administration sharpened the way Africans reacted towards it and started decolonization movements.

Betts (2005) defined decolonization as a binary activity and process that involves military and diplomatic engagement between colonial and anti-colonial parties. Mandoza (2020) observed that decolonization lies in epistemic rights recuperation, deconstruction of Euro-centrism, and re-indignation. Decolonization is the activity and process of challenging, deconstructing, and reacting against any form of colonial values or system imposed and affecting an individual or society. The decolonization process in Africa started with the organization of individual ethnic groups against colonizers. The Ndebele people in Zimbabwe waged resistance against British colonialist and the Hehe under Mkwawa in Tanganyika launched an anticolonial war against Germans. This was followed by unified ethnic group movements like those of Nama and Herero against Germans in present-day Namibia, Shona, and Ndebele against the British in Zimbabwe, and Majimaji War of 1905-1907 in Tanganyika. " 'Majimaji' war was the first and largest inter-ethnic expression of anti-colonialism for its scale and extent and it was the largest and actually, single threat to German authority in East Africa" (Msellemu, 2013: 138). According to Malekela (2023 & 2014) through the experience of unifying ethnic groups gained in the early anticolonial movement like Majimaji of 1905-1907 in Tanganyika under Kinjeketile Ngwale, the foundation was laid down from which the later political leaders used in organizing and coordinating mass actions. The African movements against colonialism went through different stages and took different shapes within the colonial system and beyond (Malekela, 2023). The mass ethnic anticolonial stage was followed by the formation of peasants and workers associations, African independent churches up to the formation of political parties.

The period followed after the end of the Second World War ushered in a new era in the decolonization process in Africa. The politics of the Cold War and economic problems resulted from the costs of wars which most European imperialist nations faced and the change in colonial policies in Africa contributed largely to the intensified decolonization process. This was the time when mass nationalism emerged in many parts of Africa. The decolonization continued until the 1960s when most of the African states gained independence. Some of the states attained their political independence late due to several factors but not limited to the nature of colonizing power and the richness of the colony especially on natural resource endowment (Shillington, 1995). African states that had their independence delayed include Mozambique and Angola whereby both became independent from Portuguese domination in 1975, Zimbabwe in 1980 from British, Namibia, and South Africa became independent from Boer's regime in 1990 and 1994 respectively. This signifies that most of the colonialists were not ready to leave Africa making the process of uprooting them more difficult and prolonged especially in the settler colonies.

After becoming politically independent, African states did not stop decolonization due to the fact that the post-independence era was the most challenging for the independence gainers, especially African leaders. After achieving flag independence, the colonialists simply changed mechanisms and processes to keep a throttle-hold on the economically vulnerable newly independent African states (Tamale, 2020). It was an epoch when the collective pursuit of African identity became an integral part of the struggle for African autonomy in the aspects of economic, political, and cultural liberation from the influence of European domination (Nwala, 2004). For some of the newly independent states, the seeds of identity were placed on sterile and rocky ground leading to unfruitful results

(Collins, 2017). The leaders of the African anticolonial struggles involved themselves in articulating their vision of the new Africa; they wanted it in philosophical terms. Drawn inspiration from the indigenous cultural achievements, they came up with social philosophies founded on the traditional belief systems and values related to the moral, unity, egalitarian, and holistic views of humanity (Nwala, 2004: 7-8). These include Leopold Sedar Senghor's Negritude (the 1960s), Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism (1964), Nyerere's African Socialism or *Ujamaa* (1967) and Keneth Kaunda's Humanism (1967) fall under this very liberation philosophy category. Collins (2017) propounded that, the ground on which the seeds of postcolonial African identities were planted in unfriendly environments since the nationalistic movements were elite-led and focused on state power capturing with shallow roots in the society.

It has been observed that most of the African leaders of independence concentrated and invested resources on anticolonial nationalism apparently due to the environment and needs of the time. This was the struggle towards achieving political independence, and thereafter most of the leaders concentrated on maintaining power and launched development projects which did less on decolonization and democratization. Since colonialism was not all about the imposition of political or cultural aspects, but deep inside it laid the aspects of economy and psychology. Undoing the colonial legacies requires complex methodical and innovative formulation that will take centuries (Tamale, 2020). Therefore, this paper seeks to examine Julius Kambarage Nyerere's quest for decolonizing the African Mind by reflecting on African Leaders of Independence.

### **1.1. Julius Kambarage Nyerere: Early Years and Political Career**

Julius Kambarage Nyerere, famous by the name *Mwalimu* (A teacher) was born on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1922 at Mwitongo, Butiama village in Musoma district, Mara region, Northwestern Tanzania. He received basic education at Mwisenge Primary School located in Musoma District and later joined and completed secondary education at Tabora school in Tabora region. In 1945, Nyerere graduated with a Diploma in Education at Makerere University College in Uganda and started teaching Biology and History at St. Mary in Tabora Western-Central Tanzania. Mwalimu went for further education in Europe where he graduated with a Master's Degree with specialization in history and political economy from Edinburgh University in Scotland in 1952. It is here that he learned a lot about liberal politics, especially the ideas of John Stuart Mills, the father of utilitarianism and philosopher of education (Chachage, 2010). Upon completion of his postgraduate studies, he returned to Tanzania and continued to work as a teacher at St. Francis Secondary School at Pugu in Dar es Salaam.

While teaching at Pugu, Mwalimu was at the same time involving himself in politics as he joined the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). At this point, Nyerere found himself at a crossroads after being compelled to choose either teaching or politics. The latter was his choice which later in 1954 made him elected as party President by TANU members. In 1958, he entered the Legislative Council of Tanganyika. Nyerere used the party to mobilize the people of Tanganyika to fight against British colonial power and managed the country to attain its political independence in 1961, and he became the first Prime Minister. In 1962 Tanganyika became a republic and Julius Kambarage Nyerere became its first President. He embarked on building the country and adopted *Ujamaa* (African socialism) as a guideline. In 1967, the Arusha Declaration was made where aspects of Ujamaa were documented and commenced its official implementation. The document focused on building a country that is founded on the principles of unity, familyhood, equality, democracy, humanity, and respect. The Arusha Declaration and Ujamaa gave birth to ideas and practices which transformed society such as self-reliance, Adult education (Life-long learning, Universal education, villagelization, ethical leadership, and Unity.

In 1963 Mwalimu Nyerere was one of the founding members Organization of African Unity (O.A.U); and his Pan-African spirit, made him advocate for the liberation of southern Africa in which countries like Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Namibia were still under colonial domination. O.A.U formed a liberation committee which was chaired by Nyerere, and Tanzania became land that hosted liberation fighters from Southern African countries which were under colonial domination. Liberation training camps were formed in different parts of Tanzania including Bagamoyo, Nachingwe, Tunduru, Kongwa, and Mazimbu among others.

With the same spirit of Pan-Africanism, Nyerere managed to convince Abeid Amani Karume of Zanzibar to unite the two countries. Finally, Tanganyika and Zanzibar united to form the United Republic of Tanzania on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1964 about four months after Zanzibar Revolution. The Union of the two countries went together with the unification of two political parties of Afro Shirazi Party (A.S.P) and TANU to form Chama Cha Mapinduzi (C.C.M) in 1977 and Nyerere became its first chairperson. Nyerere stayed in power as a president for more than 24 years until he voluntarily stepped down in 1985.

Nyerere was also pro-peace as he engaged in peaceful negotiations and conflict resolutions in different countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and Rwanda (Campbell, 2010). In his last days of life, he was the United Nations Chief Facilitator of peace negotiations in Burundi which started in 1994. Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere died of Leukemia on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1999 at St. Thomas Hospital in London at the age of 77 years.

## 2. LITERATURE SURVEY

### 2.1. Conceptual framework

#### 2.1.1. African Mind

African mind is the orientation of the mindset, attitudes, and world view of the people in African communities that result from acquired knowledge skills, and experience tacitly or explicitly. According to Isife and Agbanus (2022), the African mind is a natural ability required to understand and communicate total humanity and environmental realities in an African setting. Pristine African mind is loaded with Indigenous traditions, customs, laws, beliefs, ethics, standards, theories, and practices through which various quandaries were resolved as well as human competence and presentment were fostered (Chinweuba, 2018). Before contact with aliens, Africans had their particular way of conceptualizing things which was reflected in every aspect of life. The aliens with the use of the terms civilization, development, and modernization turned upside-down nearly everything in African communities. For instance, through westernizing Africa, Europeans destructed African institutions, systems, and ways of life and created inconfidence, exploitation, divisions, colonialism, and animosity among Africans (Mhango, 2018). This was simply done by imperial agents who made Africans accept new ways of life and demonizing their own. "It is a painful legacy of western civilization which fostered a myth that whatever comes from there is the best, by tailoring its educational, cultural and social values to Europeanize and de-Africanize Africa via European languages tended to despise those who did not" (Chacha, 2003: 10).

#### 2.1.2. Colonization of African Mind

The colonization of the African continent touched almost every aspect of human life. For the purpose of making colonization process successful, it was the crucial aspect for conquerors to capture the mind of the colonized (Tamale, 2020). The colonization of the African mind is the imposition of an alien worldview through different channels, such as education and religion. The colonization of the African mind is the subjugation of the African psyche, which alienates the indigenous Africans from the cultural aspects and resources after the creation of external and internal assumptions of the superiority of the colonizers (Isife & Agbanus, 2022). Alien religion is one of the channels of colonizing the African mental landscape due to the frame of mind embedded in their worldview. Colonial education was also a medium through which colonization of the African mind was realized. Colonialists passed their values and propaganda through the education that they provided. Apart from religion and colonial education, foreign language is also the medium through which colonization of the African mind is affected. For example, in the process of colonizing Africans, British colonial power employed the English language in official communication and as a medium of instruction in educational institutions. This action resulted in Africans regarding as a superior language and disregarding their own since speaking good English signified civilization and made an individual acquire higher social status. The tangible legacies and psychological scars inflicted by

European colonialism are still fresh to Africans up to date in different aspects but not limited to gender relations, laws, race, and education (Tamale, 2020).

### 2.1.3. Decolonization of African Mind

Decolonization as it is with colonization involves the attitude of mind. “The prefix “de-” in the term “decolonization” and “decoloniality” connotes an active action of undoing or reversal” (Tamale, 2020: 20). In order to do away with colonization, the colonized should begin by shaping themselves in new optimistic view in the face of their adversaries (Kgatla, 2017: 151). Leone (2018) argues that, as part of the resistance, our minds need to be freed from poisonous ideas and their spread on the one hand and defend as well as gain our rights and values by knowing them on the other. This concurs with what has been propounded by Franz Fanon, who regards decolonization process as the creation of a new individual whose legacy owes nothing to natural power (Fanon, 1963). According to wa Thiong'o (1998, & 1986), a person with decolonized mind accepts his past, loves the present, and struggles to create the future despite stumbling blocks encountered or encountering. The way people learned and thought about themselves and others in the context of colonialism, can not be eliminated via political change alone (Oelofsen, 2015). The true path to decolonization, today is to resist neocolonialism that is perpetrated globally by empire or neo-liberalism mainly via economic means (Olivier, 2019). Effective decolonization of the African mind informs being aware of colonial impacts on Africans and their communities (Isife & Agbanus, 2022). The total decolonization of a society is preceded by epistemic decolonization. This can be achieved by making sure that the aspect of the mind is independent.

## 2.2. African Decolonization: Historiography

The writing and interpretations of the African decolonization process have been a complex and evolving field of historical study. It constitutes the examination of how nations on the African continent attained independence from European colonial powers and the varied interpretations and perspectives on the process. Here below is an overview of the African decolonization historiography:

Early historiography or Official Mind School. During and immediately after decolonization of Africa, many historical writings and interpretations were rooted in the colonial perspective. This school is dominated by the thinking that decolonization was designed planned, directed, and executed from Europe. Collins (2017), argues that the decision making for decolonization was made by Europe’s metropole. It portrayed decolonization as benevolent and downplayed the role of African agencies in the decolonization process.

The moral Perspective is the historiography based on the argument that colonialists had a moral responsibility of preparing for and granting independence when colonized were ready for self-governance. This argument was based on the “European Civilizing Mission”.It was depicted that decolonization was advocated by the colonial powers due to their generosity and humanistic face. Kitchen (2014) Observed that during wartime there were huge colonial mobilization in Africa where a number of soldiers or laborer were taken for European empire defense and expansion in the name of reward portraying imperial reciprocal benevolent practice. It also included awakening African war veterans who claimed political rights and freedom. The proponents of this school argued that the colonial empire was decolonizing the African continent gradually while modernizing, developing, and preparing them for self-government fulfilling colonial mission of “Civilization” (Collins, 2017).

African Agency School or Nationalist Historiography. This interpretation of African decolonization developed after most African countries attained political independence. It was viewed that Africans played a significant role in the decolonization process. To a large extent, the emphasized the agency role played by Africans in the Decolonization process. For example, Historians from Dar es Salaam Nationalist School argued that Kinjeketile Ngwale during the Majimaji war 1905-1907, and Julius Nyerere in the 1940s-1950s via *Maji* cult ideology and Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) respectively, contributed significantly to the Independence of Tanganyika (Malekela, 2023; Gwassa, 1969). The Nationalist school to a large extent placed the African agency at

the centre of the African decolonization process. However, this school has been criticized for romanticizing African reaction to colonization considering the role of only a few elites and marginalizing the masses.

Global Perspective is another historiographical school of the African decolonization process. This is the historical writing which viewed the African decolonization process as an internationalized aspect. This happened in the period after the second world war which is regarded as a watershed in the African decolonization journey. Hopkins (2008) observed that, after 1945 when the Second World War ended, the subject of colonization became globalized as it went beyond Africa and Asia to include the former dominions of Europe's empire. It was the time when the African decolonization agenda dominated many international forums. According to Betts (2005), whatever it is assigned chronology, decolonization was foremost considered a global-scale political change, intensive and successful in three decades following WWII. The post-1945, globalization was based on the wars which resulted in people's movements and transnational social links leading to independence (Thomas & Thompson, 2014). Africans themselves home and abroad teamed up and worked together through Pan-Africanism, especially during and after the Manchester Conference in 1945 which convened African nationalist and Black people's rights activists from all over the world including Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, and Marcus Garvey. Decolonization was viewed as a continuous process after WWII and became irreversible with the loss of India which regained its independence in 1947. Thomas and Thompson (2014) argued the changes brought by the Second World War which resulted in the formation of the United Nations Organization (UNO) replacing the League of Nations as an international peace and security regulatory body, and the bi-polarization of the world contributed significantly on African decolonization process.

Dependence School is another type of African decolonization historiography. This perspective was dominant during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century when scholars such as Walter Rodney and Samir Amin advocated it by offering a critical perspective on decolonization. They argued that the newly independent African nations often remained economically and politically dependent on the former colonial powers and multinational corporations. Their interpretations and understanding of the situation suggested continued decolonization initiatives since the colonization of the continent was still going on. This is evident as Malekela (2023) observed that the people of southern Tanganyika still use the aspects of the Majimaji war (1905-1907) to fight injustices including those related to neocolonialism such as the exploitation of African resources, particularly natural gas.

Postcolonial and Subaltern Historiography is another African decolonization historiography. This school emerged after the 1960s when many African states gained their political independence and beyond the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The historiography provided an opportunity to study African decolonization through new lenses. The new approaches highlight and consider the experiences of marginalized groups, women, and ordinary citizens who played essential roles in the decolonization struggles but were often excluded or marginalized from mainstream historical narratives. For Instance, Suzan Geiger's *Women in Nationalist Struggle: TANU Activists in Dar es Salaam*, published in 1987 examined the role of women in independence struggles in Tanzania since it was revealed that this group's voices were relatively unheard (Geiger, 1987). The most recent work covering the aspect of Gender is Sylvia Tamale's *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism* published in 2020. This book gives a guide towards deconstructing the law, gender, family, and lenses of Afro-feminism.

The Contemporary School of African Decolonization is the most recent historiographical trend. The contemporary perspectives observed in recent studies call for a re-examination of alternative paths to decolonization that were not followed. Collins (2017) observed that the relations between the formerly colonized world and the European ex-colonial powers remain deeply interwoven. He went on to argue that, in order to comprehend the arguable failures of the postcolonial African states in the formerly colonized world calls for the revisit of the independence itself and its shortcomings. Example of the scholars of this school includes Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni who wrote a book titled; *The Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization*, published in 2013, and Sylvia Tamale's *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism* published in 2020. All these signify that, "it is likely that the historiographical debate over the place of nations and nationalism in Africa's decolonization will continue for some time" (Collins, 2017: 33). The Historiography of African Decolonization has evolved over time to

give a nicety and comprehensive understanding of this critical phase of African history. It continues to be a transmutative and vibrant area of study with enduring research and reinterpretation of events and their significance.

### **2.3. African Leaders of Independence and Decolonization Process**

Contemporary Africa can not be comprehended without understanding the process of colonialism, nationalistic, and decolonial process. Slavery and colonialism had fabricated Africa as well as Europe, creating new global racial and cultural configurations, while within Africa itself new shapes of ethnic and social identities appeared (Zezeza, 2014). Africans reacted differently in order to do away with colonialism.

The anticolonial nationalistic movements were expressed in different forms from political and civic organizations to religious and cultural forms like independent churches to peasants and trade unions. African nationalism which gained momentum after the Second World War sought to achieve mainly five goals with historic and unique features namely: decolonization, nation-building, development, democracy, and regional integration (Zezeza, 2014). This gave to the rise of struggles in different forms from territorial nationalism to the development of Pan-Africanism which focused on racial redemption, freedom, and human rights. Different personalities participated in the movements from writers such as Chinua Achebe to profile African politicians like Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya), Nelson Mandela (South Africa), Samora Machel (Mozambique), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Joseph Kasavubu (Democratic Republic of Congo), Julius Kambarage Nyerere (Tanganyika) to those in diaspora including personalities such as Marcus Garvey and Du-Bois. Revolutionary leaders such as Amilcar Cabral from the early stages of independence of Africa were skeptical of what Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni called the 'ideological deficiency' of the African decolonization process (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012).

The thinking of many African independence leaders was focused on developing the people of the continent to the level of dreaming of becoming the world's inspirational point (Sylvester & Antony, 2014). In the period between the 1960s and early 1970s, many African countries recorded remarkable socio-economic development due to the fact that in this particular epoch, the African economy experienced a boom stage. Despite the developmental achievements that many African countries attained, slavery and colonial experiences require great attention, examination, and re-examination in order for the African continent to take further steps. The two aspects and especially how decolonization was approached are the issues that required and still require special treatment. Nkrumah (1970) argued that since Africa preceded Pan-Africanism, colonialism was replaced by neocolonialism and the state of political independence could not stop economic control. This shows that the whole process of decolonization was not well planned and executed. Many nationalist leaders put much effort and focused on political independence rather than liberation which Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003) defined as breeding novel humanity of free citizens and new beings out of the colonized. Since decolonization can never go unnoticed, for it influences people and changes them fundamentally (Fanon, 1963); the twentieth-century African dream of decolonization was partially accomplished (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). This signifies that most of the African independent states from the early years lost focus failing decolonization process.

Nelson Mandela, one of the African Nationalist leaders who advocated the anti-apartheid movement and the first black South African President, was one of the African leaders who joined his fellow South Africans in the decolonization process by fighting the apartheid regime in South Africa. Having realized the difficulties of peaceful means, he mobilized his people and formed a military wing known as *Umkhonto We Swizwe* which means "Spear of the Nation" Its operation resulted in him and many other freedom fighters being jailed only to be released in 1990. Mandela and other leaders including Bishop Desmond Tutu led South Africans in peaceful negotiation with President Frederik Willem de Clerk to South African Independence in 1994, where Nelson Mandela became the first black African President and ended the apartheid system in the country. The decolonization drama started in Egypt in 1922 with the restoration of the monarchy and limited international self-government and finally ended in 1994 with the demise of apartheid in South Africa" (Zezeza, 2014: 132). Mandela embodied and endured all phases, dynamics, and ideologies of the decolonization process from before the Second World War, reforms after the war,

and the era of militarization to the ultimate peaceful phase (Zezeza, 2014). Even after independence in 1994, South Africa was still in the chain of coloniality power that was not well addressed during anticolonial movement and even after majority rule was achieved. To many common South Africans decolonization was a myth and freedom turned out to be an illusion. After achieving majority rule, decolonization relatively stopped and elements of post-independence neocolonialism became visible. For example, in 2015 South African students held a campaign decolonization with the hashtag; “Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall” aiming at making the government provide inclusive, accessible affordable cost as well as decolonizing the curriculum to allow the use of Indigenous as a medium of instruction (Duvisac, 2022).

In West Africa, Kwame Nkrumah assumed leadership in Ghana's decolonization struggles. He managed to organize and mobilize people through Conventional Peoples Party (CPP) formed in 1949. Apart from fighting for the independence of Ghana, Nkrumah was one of the advocates of Pan-Africanism and the founder of the Organization of African Union (O.A.U) in 1963 which today turned into be African Union (A.U). Being one of the early independence achievers in 1957, Ghana played a vital role by acting as a role model to many African people in decolonization process. Ghana and Nkrumah demonstrated decolonization of the African mind from early times due to the fact that the country's independence changed the mindset of many Africans that eradicating colonialism was possible. Kwame Nkrumah's initiatives of uniting the continent decolonized many Africans and acted as an eye-opener demonstrating the role of people's unity in decolonization struggles. Nkrumah also did marketable work by showing Africans that political independence was not the ultimate freedom rather advocated for people to keep on fighting until they were economically free as he was aware that neocolonialism was in full operation. This is supported by the claim made by Nkrumah and observed by Oliver (2019) that the true path to decolonization today is to resist neocolonialism that is perpetrated globally by empire or neoliberalism mainly via economic means. However, within a decade of Nkrumah's presidency, he demonstrated authoritarian politics as he lacked tolerance for the opposite views of his political opponent (Häussler, 2017). This signifies that Nkrumah failed in some aspects and was against his own philosophy of egalitarianism.

In central Africa, People in South Rhodesia (Modern-day Zimbabwe) under the leadership of Robert Mugabe took up arms to fight British settlers and managed to achieve independence in 1980 with Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) being the political party. Despite its political independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's Nationalistic leaders did little to eradicate the colonial characteristic of state homophobia as they maintained many colonial laws and policies (King, 2022). Following the economic crises faced by the country between the 1990s and early 2000s which were also characterized by people's protests and political instability, the state used state-phobia to weaponize political affairs. The nationalist leaders spent almost every moment of post-independent Zimbabwe defending power and cracking the opposition (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003), hence more emphasis was put on regime security as opposed to people security, and relatively less was done in decolonizing people's minds. Mozambique and Angola under the leadership of Samora Machel and Agostinho Neto respectively, also used military form to decolonize; and both countries achieved independence in 1975. The independence of Mozambique and Angola shares a lot in common including the year of independence and colonizing power (Portugal). Not only that the two nations share a common colonizing power but also both countries experienced post-independence civil war. It was also difficult to set enough time and resources for decolonizing people's minds.

North Africa as part of the continent was not spared from colonial domination. The varied nature of European colonization of the North African region resulted in diversity in decolonization process (Naylor, 2009). In this region, the old colonialism did not take a long time compared to other parts of Africa but did not escape its impacts. For example, Tunisia and Morocco managed to sustain their monarchies and identities; however, they could not escape colonial exploitation. Both Tunisia and Morocco attained their independence in 1956 under Habib Bourguiba and King Mohammed V respectively. Other countries which also went through decolonization process in North Africa include Libya, Egypt, and Algeria and their independence dates are 1951, 1953 and 1962

respectively. Generally, these countries faced a number of challenges in postcolonial times mainly the coloniality of power as experienced by many parts of the African continent.

In the East African region, the focus is on Tanganyika (Mainland Tanzania), Uganda, and Kenya under the leadership of Julius K. Nyerere, Milton Obote, and Jomo Kenyatta, who attained their independence in 1961, 1962, and 1963 respectively. There are a number of things that these countries have in common, the most important one is that they all got independence from the British and so, they are members of Common Wealth Nations. After attaining their political independence the Tanganyika took Ujamaa as a path towards development different from her regional partners Kenya and Uganda which opted for capitalist. Nyerere's Tanganyika took the lead in achieving political independence ahead of the other two countries due to the fact that it was a protectorate Mandatory United Nation's Territory placed under the British, and the Kiswahili language was used to mobilize masses in unity (Shillington, 1995).

### 3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The nationalistic movement in most of the African countries had both, positive and negative in the independent African states. For example, in Zimbabwe, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003) observed the existence of 'regime security' as opposed to 'human security' which was highly embedded in the nationalist struggles. Most of the nationalist leaders have the tendency to privatize politics as they claim it to be for those who participated in liberation struggles and their clients. This shows that the African plan for decolonization process lost focus immediately after the achievement of political independence. Much attention was put on political power and quick development for the things and people instead of continuing decolonizing structurally, especially on the aspect of thinking as some few independence leaders demonstrated. Furthermore, most of the African independence leaders had a short life in power as many were removed by either being killed or military revolution and hence failed to execute their plans for decolonization process. This implies that the replacement of the Western white imperialist elite by an equally elite black man without challenging the system and dismantling colonial class-based hierarchies like gender, sexuality, and epistemology the decolonization process becomes initiatives in futility (Parker, 2018). Since decolonization is concerned with the present as well as the past, it is imperative that the colonized' descendants do not inherit the community which honour their ancestors' oppressors. The African decolonization *modus operandi* which reflects today's *modus vivendi* on the continent poses and leaves a number of questions unanswered. There is a relative paucity of how the first generation of African independence leaders the African decolonization, especially the mental aspect. Therefore, this paper is focused on discovering the role of Julius Kambarage Nyerere in decolonizing the African mind.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is a historical research design. It employed both primary sources and secondary sources. A variety of literature on the related subject matter was consulted, carefully selected, and critically evaluated to arrive at conclusions. Conducting literature review research allows the researcher to gain deeper knowledge and research gaps in the context being studied (Chukwuere, 2024; Chukwuere, 2023; Tranfield, Denyer & Smart, 2003). The study relies on qualitative data derived from books, journals, conference proceedings, official documents, newspapers, and magazines, among other related gadgets extracted both in hard copies and online. Qualitative content analysis is done and presented in logical and chronological form in a way that the actions, events, and experiences are interconnected, interrelated, and integrated.

### 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 5.1. Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere and the Quest of Decolonizing African Mind

Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere as the first Tanzanian president and the founding father of the nation liberated people's minds by introducing *Ujamaa* and an African version of socialism instead of taking socialism in

its totality as coined elsewhere. Ujamaa is an African form of socialism which drew most of its tenets from African values such as respect for humanity, unity, work, equality democracy, and family-hood. *Ujamaa* insisted that every able-bodied person must work as a basis of justification and towards achieving the set goals (Nyerere, 1987). Nyerere took the path of ujamaa as different from scientific socialism. It acted as a political ideology, and social and economic policy officiated in 1967 with the aim of building a society with egalitarian principles, self-reliance with distributive justice. Despite its failure, *ujamaa* attained significant achievements some of which are still visible in today's *modus vivendi* in Tanzania.

Mwalimu gave the Kiswahili language a top priority and made it the government's official language over English which is a foreign one. Despite the fact that he used Kiswahili as a unifying tool, he also realized that "Language carries culture, and culture carries particularity through orature and literature the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our in the world" (Wa Thiong'o 1986: 16). A part from being used in government business, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere himself used Kiswahili widely in his speeches when addressing the nation as well as in most of his writings and publications (Chacha, 2002). This is the reason why colonialists put much emphasis on the use of their languages by the colonized as a means of fulfilling their mission of 'civilizing the uncivilized'. Nyerere believed and demonstrated that Africans could be in a better position to achieve development by making use of their own languages. He started by liberating the people in Tanganyika (Now Tanzania), and the whole of Africa by realized the use of Africans' own languages in achieving different developmental goals. During struggles for independence, Tanganyika and Southern Africa Kiswahili language was used for people's communication as well as a unifying factor. On July 7<sup>th</sup> 1954 Mwalimu declared Kiswahili as a national language (Musoke, 2024). Now, Kiswahili is widely used in Africa and has become one of the African Union's (AU) official languages and the only African language used in the organization.

He advocated for Pan-Africanism. Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere was one of the great African leaders who encouraged Africans to unite regardless of where they were located or came from. In March 1997 when Ghana marked its 40<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary, Nyerere argued that state nationalism made African unity hard to achieve; hence, he encouraged Africans to unite and stop humiliation and international marginalization (Shivji, 2009). Mwalimu made Africans think and act in unity since they have common experience. Since Africans were humiliated as Africans, they needed to liberate themselves as Africans. He ensured Africans that liberation was possible starting from the regional level to the continental. According to Major and Mulvihill (2009), Nyerere was a Pan-Africanist who empowered black people and wanted them to be out of racial discrimination and oppression. This signifies that he wanted black people to change their minds and work together towards the future which for him was positive. Despite the fact that Mwalimu differed with Kwame Nkrumah the then president of Ghana who insisted on fast-tracking towards the African Union while Mwalimu advocated for uniting Africa from regional levels (Regionalism), his role to vividly observed. Mwalimu took many steps ahead in materializing Pan-Africanism when he chaired the O.A.U Liberation Committee. The committee was formed as part of liberating Southern African countries, such as Mozambique, Southern Rhodesia (modern-day Zimbabwe), Angola, South-West Rhodesia (present-day Namibia), and South Africa. With the same spirit of Pan-Africanism, Julius Kambarage Nyerere convinced Abeid Amani Karume president of Zanzibar to unite Tanganyika and Zanzibar and form a United Republic of Tanzania. The union was realized on 26 April 1964 and this marks its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Early this year on the ceremony of unavailing Mwalimu's statue at AU's headquarters, Moussa Faki Mahamat who is the African Union Commission Chairperson reflected on Julius Kambarage Nyerere's own words spoken in Tanzanian Parliament in 1970: "We must stand by our brothers fighting for freedom in southern Africa. Their struggle is our struggle, and their victory is our victory" (Musoke, 2024). All these played a great role in changing the African mindset that colonial crated borders separating them was nothing but a dividing tool and realized that Africa was, and will still be one united continent. This also is a wake-up call to all Africans to change their mindset especially those who hate their fellow Africans, to stop those acts such as xenophobia which has become common in South Africa.

Nyerere argued Tanzanians to work hard after achieving independence since the two aspects are interrelated, integrated, interconnected, and interdependent. *Uhuru na kazi* which literary means independence and work was the slogan adopted in the post-independence epoch aiming at mobilizing people to work hard for self and national development. Mwalimu Nyerere advocated education for self-reliance as a way to prepare independent and responsible citizens. This type of education was a practical and integrated learning activity and work as opposed to Western education which was too theoretical and prepared job seekers (Makhungulu et al., 2017). It was also insisted in Nyerere's Ujamaa that every person in a community with sound health and ability to work, had to do so diligently (Nyerere, 1987). This aimed at eradicating dependence and exploitation. More actions were made by Nyerere even at the international level when he rejected foreign aid which was attached to dehumanizing and exploitative conditions (Chachage, 2010). This decolonized people's idea that independence did not mean to sit back and relax or be jubilant forever, rather it came with its price to pay which is responsibility in personal and national building.

On development, Mwalimu Nyerere believed that it has to be people-centered meaning that it should not be conceived as material acquisition but rather for the service of the people. Money and wealth just represent the results of development and not the basis of it (Nyerere, 1968). Acquisition of wealth or properties does not matter in development but rather on how equitable is the distribution of wealth (Shivji, 2009). During colonial times, Africans were made to believe that development was all about the development of things such as infrastructure building, having money, and general possession of material things. Contrary to this colonial thinking, Nyerere demonstrated that development was people-centered as he advocated and invested a lot in people by making sure that they access food, education, and health services. This idea changed and is still influencing many Africans and people from other parts of the world that people-centred development is important as it creates an innovative empowered, self-sufficient and sustainable community.

Julius Nyerere believed that Western education was one way of colonizing the African mind; hence, he came up with African centered education which is compatible with the African environment, traditional values, and demands of the time. Mwalimu Nyerere was of the view that through socialization, extending the attitude of mind could be acquired by Africans (Major & Mulvihill, 2009). Hence, restructuring education to meet African demands was a liberating tool and concurred with Paulo Freire's conception of education in relation to freedom. Mwalimu insisted that education is meant to prepare individuals as responsible, free, and democratic in thinking and making judgments on issues that affect them and the entire society (Makhungulu et al., 2017). Realizing the importance of relevant and compatible education as a tool for mental liberation, Nyerere came up with the proposal of education for self-reliance. This type of education linked learning activities with production; hence, liberating Africans from conceptualizing that education was meant to prepare individuals for white color jobs. Furthermore, Mwalimu insisted that education was meant for service and for acquiring status, jobs, or as an exploitation tool. Mwalimu argued that a university education is meant to prepare an individual to be able to think independently and acquire skills that enable one to solve personal and community problems (Asaju, 2023; Mandalu, 2019).

On poverty and injustices, many things have been done by Mwalimu to decolonize the African mind. Africa has been more often than not referred to as a poverty-stricken continent with specific reference to the South of the Sahara. This to a large extent has been used as a propaganda tool to allow continuation of colonization and African dependence. Nyerere decolonizes African minds by arguing that poverty was and is not a real problem since the world is endowed with abundant knowledge and resources. He went further by identifying the real problem as divided humanity into satiate and hungry, those with power and those without it and those without it, those who dominate and the dominated and exploiters and exploited (Mesaki & Malipula, 2011: 96). This idea is an eye-opener to the people of the African continent which is blessed with abundant resources like a vibrant population, potential and strategic minerals, arable land among others as well as Indigenous knowledge endowment. Africans are called upon to use their knowledge and resources responsibly for developmental achievements and acquire power to fight internal and external injustices.

Inequality is still relatively high in the African continent. Smith (2017) observed that in the world's list of the top 20 most unequal countries, seven of them were of African origin. This is not a good indicator of the African continent as it signifies a lot has to be done to intervene in the situation. On equality, Nyerere preached for equality and walked his talk before and after independence. According to Nyerere, equality was beyond the African context as he went far into even non-Africans such as Europeans, Indians, and Chinese among others. He condemned those who were discriminating against others and regarded them as racists and destructive to the foundation of Tanganyika's independence movement (Pratt, 1999). Nyerere believed in and built a society in which all members had equal rights and equal opportunities (Kassam, 2000). Nyerere's ideas were and are still relevant as they concur with Parker (2018) who simply defined decolonization as the eradication of racism which is the direct colonial legacy. This made Africans decolonize the idea of racism and start treating everyone as equal beings regardless of whether being colonized or colonized. On gender equality, Mwalimu Nyerere championed equal treatment between men and women. He witnessed the position of women in society through village life and understood well how women were marginalized nearly in all aspects of life despite their pivotal role in production and observing the welfare of society. He went further by decolonizing the attitudes and practices of ignoring women. Nyerere criticized oppression and exploitation acts done against women as early as 1944 when he wrote an essay on the freedom of women. Mwalimu Nyerere also struggled to ensure equality in the aspect of education by ensuring all Tanzanians irrespective of gender or age get access to education through the Musoma Resolution of 1974 which insisted on 'education for all' (Chachage, 2010).

On the aspect of democracy and sovereignty, Julius Kambarage Nyerere played a significant role in decolonizing the African mind. Following the epoch of colonialism, many Africans were occupied with the thinking that everything introduced, practiced, or even imported by Europeans was better than locally originated or made. During colonial domination, even after achieving independence, many Africans put much trust in Western democracy while looking down on that of African origin. To Nyerere, the existence of government party and opposition party debates knowing that they will disagree in parliament is not democracy but a mockery. To him, essential democracy is when the government decision is reached as a result of discussion (Dunheved, 1961; Nyerere, 1987; Pratt, 1999). He believed that be it in one party or multiparty politics form, the materialization of democracy was possible given that there is room for dialogue (Nyerere, 1987). Many Africans have their thinking changed as Nyerere insisted that, the real democracy to him is when people are given an opportunity to discuss and find solutions to problems. On the sovereignty of African states, Mwalimu Nyerere argued that in order autonomous, people and nations needed unity as an enabling factor to have power in decision-making at both, local and regional levels (Shivji, 2019). For an African country to have its voice heard and access power to decision-making, it requires to be free and independent as well as in unity with others. This shows that many African states fail to exercise their power in decision-making because of their weak and divided state while the global world is dominated by the powerful ones. Therefore, Mwalimu enlightened African thinking by changing their worldview on democracy by demonstrating that it operates and has to be comprehended at local and international levels. Therefore, achieving political independence is not democracy, and the sovereignty of a country is warranted.

## **6. CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study contributes to the scientific community in a way that it has brought to the fore through empirical research on how colonialism affects an individual being and the community at large through mental intoxication. This is more specifically in scenarios where there is an existence of coloniality in terms of power and epistemology. The study also contributes to academia by adding knowledge and recovering new areas for future studies. The study also contributes to scientific understanding of the current and predicts the future generation on the aspect of leadership and nation building which require people who are bold, focused, daring, retrospective as well as futuristic in order to achieve the set goal and turn vision into reality.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The decolonization of the African mind as it is with other types of decolonization must start with the victim himself or herself and be followed by the institutions that are meant to serve Africans. Decolonization must be continuous and changing based on time and context since colonization is a continuation in form of neo-colonialism. The process of African decolonization for many Africans turned out to be a myth as freedom became an unfulfilled dream. This is contributed by many factors including the pressure of global geopolitics at the time of independence, the demise or forced removal hence the short-lived leadership tenure of the first generation of independence leaders hence failed to execute the plans and achieve their vision. The struggles towards African independence were mainly focused on decolonization, nation-building, democracy, development, and Pan-Africanism. Realizing these goals needed proper strategies, dedication, resources, and empowered and prepared people. There were relatively few African Nationalist independence leaders who worked hard on decolonization process. Julius Kambarage Nyerere managed to realize the decolonization dream by reconstructing and deconstructing different aspects including language, education, politics, and economics making Tanzania stand as one of the independent African states that has relatively succeeded in restoring its identity, respect, integrity, and unity despite the challenges they have been facing. Since Africans lacked unified efforts in decolonization process, after the destabilization, removal, and demise of the African Nationalist Independence Leaders due to the impact of decoloniality of power and imperialist maneuvers, the next generations of African leaders disappointed African independence fighters and the continent in general by failing to materialize objectives of their predecessors.

The future of liberated Africa can be fulfilled by each of the African states reviving and rejuvenating the decolonization process and changing mindsets. In the process of decolonization and moving toward liberated Africa, social engineering transformative Pan-Africanism, and global inclusion are important factors in rebuilding a heterogeneous continent.

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