

## In pursuit of continuity: Maji Maji war and nationalistic movement in 1940s-1950s in Southern Tanganyika

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**Abstract:** Dar es Salaam School's Historians in the 1960s and 1970s established that the Majimaji war fought 1905-1907 had an undeviating connection with nationalistic movements which culminated in Tanganyika's (Today's Tanzania mainland) independence on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1961. This implies that Majimaji and the later nationalistic movements are inseparable since the war started the independence struggles initiatives. Nationalist view was challenged but only until early 1990 when new interpretations emerged and the former was regarded as outlived since its main purposes of building the nation and instilling nationalism to the people were outmoded. It is more than five decades, since Nationalist School presented their interpretation. This paper seeks to check if the contemporary generation perceives the Majimaji in similar consonant with the Dar es Salaam School of African History when nation building through the recovery of African traditional values and instilling patriotism were paramount. Since neither society nor history is static, a study aiming at writing the history of the people by the people through verification. The study is qualitative employing both, primary and secondary sources of data. Oral accounts serves as primary source and documentary reviews from books and journal articles constitutes secondary source. The findings shows that the contemporary peoples' understanding of the Majimaji war in juxtaposition with nationalistic movements in 1940s and 1950s. Furthermore, it has been revealed that the people in Songea, Southern Tanganyika still have the nationalist view on Majimaji war apparently due to different factors but not limited to it's nature, history memory, role of the elites and pedagogical practices. Its put forward that Majimaji war has a special place in the history of Tanganyika due to its connectedness, continuity and Change in socio-economic and political aspects. It has also been discovered that Majimaji war had a link with nationalistic movements and its continuity and change prevail to post-independence period.

**Keywords:** Colonialism, Continuity, Historiography, Majimaji War, Nationalistic Movement, Songea, Tanganyika

### 1. Introduction

In Tanganyika people rose against Germans colonialism in a very unique way. The Majimaji war of resistance successfully mobilized and organized various ethnic groups, basing on their pre-colonial political and cultural units, against common grievances caused by German colonial rule. Ethnic groups like Matumbi, Makonde, Mwera, Yao, Makua, Ngindo, Sangu, Ndendeule, Zaramo, Pogoro, Ngoni, Bena, Mbunga and Matengo, among others, participated the war of resistance around 1905– 1907 (Rushohora, 2022; Iliffe, 1967). Etymologically the origin of Majimaji is *Maji*, a Swahili word for “water” which was used by one of the local prophets named Kinjeketile Ngwale. The prophet claimed to have had made medicine from magic water obtained from the Rufiji

River and sprinkled on and made African war fighters drink assuring them that, it could turn bullets into the water simply by uttering the word “*Maji*” once German bullets were shot.

Maji Maji war was preceded by several other minor forms of resistance against Germans confined in a single village or ethnic line (Blackshire-Belay, 1992). For example, the Mbunga clash with German military groups sporadically at the times between 1891 and 1893. Many groups in the Kilwa, took part in Hasan Bin Omari’s opposition of 1894 – 1895. Iliffe (1967), added that the Makonde of the Lugala area, who were the exclusive Makonde to resist, had joined forces with the Yao under the leadership of Mchemba had resisted Germans until 1899. Despite the fact that many people lost lives during Majimaji as it is approximated that more than 70,000 Africans lost their lives as a consequence of the war, there were also some gains. Majimaji war brought the groups together and there is no doubt that it laid a foundation for the future struggles. The mistakes committed during Majimaji were corrected and managed them to have better organization and effective leaders who navigated them through to independence in 1961 and Tanganyika became republic in 1962 (Gregory, 2020).

Majimaji war of 1905-1907 has an important place not only in the history of Tanganyika (Tanzania Mainland) but also the Modern Tanzania and Africa at large (Malekela, 2014; De Juan, 2016; Eliya et al., 2022). This event played significant role in paving the way towards emergence of African independent states through its early ant-colonial initiatives with unique feature of unifying more than ten ethnic groups with ideology of *Maji* as inspired by socio-economic and political injustices by colonialism. The memories of Majimaji among people from the areas where the war took place and the whole of Tanganyika are collective memories. In the study on Memories of German Colonialism in Tanzania, Kirey (2023) discovered that the collective memories of Germans that the local people have are communicative, functional, topographical and trans-generational.

In the post independence the perception of Majimaji war changed significantly, apparently due to nationalist historians’ efforts. The Nationalist school portrayed the war as one of the movements that played an instrumental role in later changes in almost every sphere of life in Tanzania, Africa and the world at large. Following the research conducted in early 1960s, Majimaji gained its supremacy. Based on their research findings, nationalist historians postulated that since independence of Tanganyika, the aspect of Majimaji war of resistance changed significantly as it was then understood as a epic epoch in the history of the Tanganyika and pointed as one of the foundations of struggles for independence. Expressed in a different way, the emergence of Majimaji, equivalent to any other type of colonial resistance, was part of the dynamic processes towards *Uhuru* (Gwassa, 1969). This proves evidently that, ant-colonial movements in Tanzania including Majimaji war were dynamic because they kept changing over time, not only on techniques, organization and role but also people’s perceptions. In 1960s and 1970s historians of the Dar es Salaam School of African History, which was also known a Nationalist School, established that the Majimaji war had a direct connection with nationalistic movement culminating to the Tanganyika’s independence.

With all these, the role of Majimaji war towards Tanganyika’s independence struggles (1940s-1950s) needs proper assesses especially in specific centres like Songea, (Eliya et al., 2022) where the war was vigorously fought and left more visible impacts. The people's interpretations and comprehension of Majimaji history tend to continue, change or co-exist with one another as time goes on despite the fact that societies and sources are never static (Malekela, 2014). Rushorora (2020) argues that Majimaji war is acquiring a unique position in anti-colonial struggles in Africa and particularly in Tanzania since it has roots in struggles for independence in which the nation was found. Since its occurrence up to recent days, the war has been used in different ways through spirit invoked from ideology and memories. The Kilwa District Commissioner addressing the public in an event of commemorating Majimaji war stated that, “the war the heroes of Majimaji fought was against colonialism should continue to motivate and empower us in the war against poverty, people to work hard with integrity so that to boost the economy of our nation” (2023).

The collective memory of the war has not only increased public awareness, but also invoked feeling of demanding war reparation from the former colonial master. Therefore, it is undeniable truth that Majimaji has been and will continue to be remembered and used as a potent weapon in struggles against different vices including Neo-colonialism spreading in the African continent and Tanzania in particular. In this paper it is argued that, Majimaji war has a link to the nationalistic movements in 1940s-1950s in Southern Tanganyika. This is evidenced through the use of *Maji* medicine and ideology as a means of protection or a weapon to fight injustices, means of mass mobilization to fighting malpractices from one generation to another up to even in the post independent Tanganyika. It has further been revealed that, there is continuity and change in terms of ideology, elite's mobilization strategies, organization and practices in Tanganyika's Majimaji war in-relation to nationalistic movements. After the introduction, this paper surveys the Majimaji historiographic trends. This will be followed by literature review, methodology of the study, the results and discussion, contribution of the study, implication of the study and the last part is conclusion.

## **2. Literature review**

The Research on Majimaji war has been carried out for the last 44 years. Becker (2004) reported that, between 1967 and 1969, the Majimaji project was instituted as Tanzanian students and British scholars cooperation initiative a foundation for its historiography. Redmond (1975: 419) stated that, the University of Dar es Salaam collected data and put together different research works titled as Majimaji research project collected papers, and later on in 1969, Mapunda, O. B and Gaudens P. Mpangara as researchers analyzed, selected and finally published their work entitled as the 'Majimaji War in Ungoni' .

The interpretation and perceptions of the war has been ever-changing. During colonial era, Maji Maji war was viewed and perceived by most of colonial administrators and as an episode of colonial processes emerged as irrational movement advocated by sorcerers through the ideology of *Maji*. Apart from considering the war's origin as "witch doctor's conspiring" being dominant during German colonial time, some colonial officials viewed that the war rooted in economic grievances. Wright (1995) observed that the administrators, who brought reforms in German administration, saw that the war had its roots in maltreatment of Africans and economic grievances, especially through the communal agricultural schemes. When the British took Tanganyika as protectorate following Germans defeat in the First World War, Maji Maji war was interpreted as a war of resistance against Germans oppression and cruelty.

Kirey (2023), Eliya et al. (2022), Malekela (2014) and Sunseri (2009) observed that, according to studies and publications by the Dar es Salaam nationalist school which were documented and became popular after independence of Tanganyika, Majimaji war was regarded as the early manifestation of the , inter-ethnic united opposition posed against colonial invasion and subjugation of Africa. After the nationalists historiography, to large extent Majimaji war as the subject matter was relatively left virtually untouched until in the 1990's when Marcia Wright, Thadeus Sunseri and Jamie Monson made the beginning of new interpretations of the event in sub-divided regions of the area it affected (Wright, 1995; Monson, 1997; Becker 2004). Stating factors motivated people of Southeastern Tanganyika to fight Germans in Majimaji war, Monson (1998) and Becker (2004), both agree that Majimaji war of resistance was continuation of precolonial relations of societies in the region on aspects of social, economic and politics. Examining Majimaji war via the environmental history approach, Sunseri (2003) challenges nationalists' narrative by putting forward an argument that Germans' control of forests resources by barring Africans from accessing the resources like construction materials, pasture, games and food materials led to people's dissatisfaction, hence war erupted especially in Rufiji an area where the *Maji* originated. According to Sunseri (2000), the nationalists' narrative states that, Majimaji war occurred in Southern Tanganyika in 1905 as an African reaction against German's colonial oppression particularly the establishment of cotton scheme in 1902. The examination of the Germans interpretation of Majimaji was divided. The new

policy makers in east Africa and German viewed the 'economic unfairness' as the cause of the war while those who advocated for settler faction and pre-war administrators viewed the 'witch doctor conspiracy' among Africans as the cause. On the other side, British administration in Tanganyika justified their own rule by portraying German rule as abusive and most of the British accounts interpreted African resistance as irrational, uncivilized and poorly prepared (Sunseri, 2000). This signifies the complexity of interpreting the event and the followed impacts.

Yeager (1989) reported that, British occupied most of the German East Africa after the First World War, in 1920, British renamed Tanganyika and in 1922 established its administration after League of Nations consigned Tanganyika to the British Empire. During and after transition of power British used to tarnish the image of the German colonial rule in order to be accepted by the African (Kirey, 2023). This signifies that, by British displaying the dark side of German made people of Tanganyika keep bad memories of their former colonizer as well as the traumas resulted from Majimaji.

Despite its role and position in the history of Tanzania, Gwassa (1969) remarked that, the facet of Majimaji war has been going through metamorphic since independence significantly due to the fact that, during colonial era it was viewed and considered by many as significant episode in the history of the colonialism arising from behind fanatic Africans. After independence Majimaji war took a new look as Gwassa (1969: 117) added that, it was then perceived on as an epic in the history of the country and considered as one of the beginning of struggle for lost independence, in a nutshell, Majimaji war was part of the dynamic of the process towards *Uhuru*. Up to date Majimaji war with the role of *Maji*-cult is viewed by people of southern Tanganyika as tool to fight socio-economic and political malpractice. For example during a protest against gas piping from Mtwara to Dar es Salaam which later violent in 2012-2013, there emerged an old woman by the name Somoe Mtiti (*Bibi wa Msimbati*) aged 106 who warned to turn the natural gas into water if an one dared to pipe it to Dar es Salaam. *Bibi wa Msimbati* had good number of believers followers as many people compared her with Kinjeketile Ngwale who made Majimaji fighters believe his promise of turning European's live bullets into water. The two events and personalities share a lot in common and hence, signify the continuity of struggles through *Maji* cult which. It is also evident that, the continuity of the *Maji* being used in ritual as authenticated by the presence of cult belief in the possibility of a earthy substance being turned into water, explicate the persistence of rituals in southeastern Tanzania (Rushohora & Silayo, 2019). This is an indication that the Majimaji war has connectedness not only with nationalists movements in 1940s-1950s Tanganyika, but also beyond. Now it is clear that Majimaji war was fought for freedom, against colonialism and all forms of injustices and because the vices are prevalent, the spirit of Majimaji lives with who inherited it among the people of southern Tanganyika. Kirey (2023) argued that, since Majimaji is a traumatic event of the colonial epoch, it could not be easily forgotten by individuals who participated or experienced it. Since this traumatic event has been inherited from one generation after the other, the spirit of Majimaji lives with many people of southern Tanganyika and it will continue to co-exist with many generations to come.

Gwassa's point on dynamic nature of the war seems to hold water because emphasizes that, the Majimaji war's history with its role and interpretation has been changing since its origin to post- independence and apparently to the over fifty year old Tanzania. The war resulted into trans-generational memory and trans-generational trauma hence it can not be forgotten easily. The status of memory tend to change from informal to formal, unofficial to official or from private to public (Assmann & Shortt, 2012). Majimaji war played a great role in Tanzanian social, economic and political aspects in general. It also played a vital role in shaping people's ways of life because its impacts were and are still diverse. Temu (1969) observed that, in Majimaji the connexion between the early organizers generations and the later nationalists due to the fact that both generations experienced successfulness in rallying and unifying the masses against colonial domination though with the first generation the scale of the activeness and organizational structure was constricted. This is evident that Majimaji

at different times was used as a tool for mobilizing people, however the order of magnitude was felt differently due to continuity and change character of it.

This shows that the role of Majimaji towards Independence did not end in 1907 after its failure. One of the nationalist historians, Temu (1969), argued that, there is no doubt that in most of the colonial wars, the colonizing powers emerged victorious because they had and used the strong and modernized arms, but it is mendacious to say that Africans fell as easily as has often been assumed and claimed by pro-eurocentric. Africans, especially in Majimaji war resisted colonialism to the last drop of their blood. After the attempt through Majimaji failed, they decided to find an alternative. That aspect is further argued by Temu (1969) that, as Tanganyika failed to achieve independence through Majimaji war, they abandoned use of force hence the struggle for *Uhuru* from colonial rule was reduced as of remote future and It was largely based on the failures that determined the style and journey in which the people of Tanzania mainland were to be rallied for the *Uhuru* in the later years. This clearly shows the role and connection of Majimaji in the later nationalistic struggles towards freedom. Okoth (2006: 46) agrees with Temu (1969) when he states that, the Majimaji war had been defeated, but the period following it was one when Africans in various ways attempted to improve their positions by adopting new methods of facing their adversaries, Europeans on more equal terms, this argument implies that, people of Southern Tanzania started their attempt by uprising in Majimaji war and later on with the same spirit and inspiration changed methods of fighting colonialism until the achievement of independence in 1961.

Realizing the role and contribution of Majimaji to nationalist movement in Tanganyika, Gwassa (1969) observed that; in his speech in 1956, in the United Nations Assembly, Nyerere used Majimaji war as a basic argument in demanding Tanganyika's independence while at the same time the new nationalistic movement through TANU had to assimilate ideas not the practical methods of the Majimaji. It is evident that Nyerere used Maji Maji ideology to mobilize the people of Tanganyika towards independence like Kinjeketile Ngwale used the idea during Majimaji. In recognizing the role and importance of the Majimaji war in the Tanganyika's history, Gwassa (1969) asserts that in Songea Martin Haule, the then Ruvuma Regional Commissioner cherished initiatives started by his predecessor of building a monument in the localities where 60 Majimaji warriors were hanged by Germans and put to rest. Gwassa (1969) further stated that, in the Month of October 1967 TANU meeting convened in Mwaza, a moment of silence was observed in remembrance those who lost their life in Majimaji. In 2006 Majimaji war celebrated its 100 years anniversary organized by National Museum of Tanzania. Since then, the War's commemoration festival is conducted in February 27<sup>th</sup> each year at Majimaji Memorial Museum located in Songea municipality, hence proving the significance of Majimaji memory, the significance of the event in the history of Tanzania mainland. This shows the significance of the Majimaji war's continuity and change not only during nationalism in Southeastern Tanganyika, but also in the of post-independence era. Another important role Majimaji war played is that of making people of Tanzania change and adopt new ways within colonial system. Iliffe (1969: 131) postulated that, it seems that after Majimaji Tanzanians increasingly resigned to working for the time being within the colonial framework and realized that education was the key to success within colonial system. Moreover Iliffe (1969: 113) emphasized that, the struggle for higher education was dominant in the years when improvement was transforming into nationalism, the aspiration for the improvement had been to expansion of education which had great impact on Tanzanian and African societies at large.

Cementing on the argument, Ranger (1968) concurred with Iliffe's argument when he stated that, TANU as a nationalist party which resulted into attainment of Tanganyika's independence, drew a lot of its background in Majimaji war among other early resistances and associations the *élite* like Tanganyika African association (TAA) as well as the Tanganyika African civil servants association. This implies that, Majimaji had and apparently still has significant role almost in every aspect of people's life ways in Tanzania.



It has been observed that historians have been shied away from studying collective memories in Songea and the handful who dared, either had limited content or generalized to much their discussions (Kirey, 2023; Schmidt, 2010). This concurs with Tosh (2010) who also observed that, the problem of many historians is turning a blind eye to contemporary history which is defined as the period within human memory. In writing contemporary history of Africa, Philips (2005) insists using African sources for better understanding peoples ideas in time and place and realizing how they conceptualize their world and figure out their thought about changes in their environment. Taking Songea into consideration, in this 21<sup>st</sup> century when most of the the Southern part of Tanzania is in desperate due to economic hardship, marginalization, negative memories and insecurity Ahearne (2016) and Wembah-Rashid (2008) despite being endowed with abundant resources, Majimaji holds keys to unlock its power house and to rescue the situation (Rushohora, 2020). The politics of identity is played against marginalization and subjugation (Okeke & Uche, 2021). This is evident due to the fact that many of the areas where the war was fought are marginalized landscapes of Maji maji war memories, can be turned to tourist destinations through proper development, promotion, marketing and proper utilization of the cultural and natural heritage hence, turning the memories of war into peace and development.

From the existing literature and researches done on Majimaji, it can be deduced that Majimaji uprising was dynamic and its role and importance not only to the people of South eastern Tanganyika but also to Africa and the world at large is of high value. Despite the fact that the interpretation of the event has been a great challenge, many scholars have dared to touch it in different ways. The scholars have been trying to critique and critic the historiography of Majimaji and touched many aspects of it like origin, organization, causes, role and impacts, even the position of it to Tanzania as a nation and Africa in general. Relatively fewer studies have been done to check, verify and validate the historical knowledge established by the nationalist school in 1960s and 1970s.



**Figure 1: A Map Showing Place Names Connected to Majimaji War** ( Source: Greenstein, 2010)

Each number on the map represents a specific region as follows: 1.Uluguru 2.Ukaguru/Kilosa 3.Uhehe/Usambara 4.Highland Ubena 5.Usangu 6.Ungoni 7.Mwera/Makua 8.Upogoro 9.Umbunga

### 3. Research methodology

This study was mainly guided by qualitative research methodology. To render a historical search and examination on the link between the Majimaji war (1905-1907) and nationalistic movement in 1940s-1950s

Tanganyika. The study employed firsthand and secondary historical sources. The data gathered traced the commencement, the Majimaji war's root causes and its evolution process in relation to nationalistic movement in Songea, Southern Tanganyika. The information was gathered from the respondents through face-to-face in-depth interviews and others participated through two Focus Group Discussions (F.G.D) and others supplied with semi-structured questionnaires making a total of 83 respondents. The data have been collected from the custodians of local peoples' histories in the area of study including the Majimaji Elders' Council Member, descendants of Majimaji war victims among others. More importantly, documentary sources were consulted from colonial sources, nationalist historians as well as sources by postmodernists.

#### **4. Literature review**

##### **4.1. The Majimaji war's Link to the Nationalistic Movements**

In early 1940s and 1950s, Tanganyika, witnessed emergence of Nationalist movements, which were aimed at struggling for independence and the leaders were appealing to Majimaji war as their point of reference. This convinces many individuals that apparently there were connections between these two epochs as Ranger (1968, p. 636) reported that, at any rate the continuity between Majimaji war and TANU was the theme of importance in the Tanzanian politics of the time. A respondent from Peramiho "B" reacting to the same theme through questionnaire in stated that, "Majimaji war created an environment towards independence struggles in 1940s and 1950s because it awakened the spirit of unity and solidarity for Tanganyika people especially people of Songea district." This concurs with Temu and Swai (1981) who argued that, the relevance of the past is found in the manner of its use in explaining the present.

Another respondent from Msamala in Songea municipality commented that, Majimaji war linked with Tanganyika's struggles for independence (1940s - 1950s) because both were against colonial domination and all injustice done to Africans such as exploitation, racial discrimination, land alienation and forced labour. The respondents' comments are similar to observations made by Terence Ranger (1968: 440) that, in some cases the grounds for subsequent politics was molded by the outcome of the total failure of attempted resistance. Furthermore, Ranger (1968) remarked that, Julius Nyerere brought to our attention that memories of the subversion of early anti-colonial resistance were among the foundations which subsequently ascertained the strategy of Tanganyika's nationalistic struggles. Malekela (2014) observed that, there are evidence showing that the better organized nationalist movements in 1940s and 1950s people drew a lot of lessons from Majimaji war as it was guided by *maji*-cult was very dynamic and connected to the later struggles by taking different shape in different wars against injustices. *Maji*-cult during Majimaji war epoch was an ideology which employed violence but, in 1940s-1950s ideology used by elites changed to political parties like Tanganyika African Association (T.A.A) and Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) which conducted their politics peaceful but drew the idea of Majimaji for political mobilization as it could make people remember and act to protect their identity. The idea drawn from Majimaji has been evident even in contemporary Southern Tanzania as people use it to fight injustices, forge unity, mobilizing and protecting communities against internal and external enemies as it can be referred to what happened in 2012-2013 during gas saga in Mtwara where the local communities protested against Mtwara-Dar es salaam gas pipping.

During struggles for independence in 1950s through TANU, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere as *elite* advocated for peaceful means as opposed to violence struggles for independence kept on appealing back to Majimaji war but emphasizing on nonviolence as a way of mobilizing people to join hand in the struggles. Davidson (1992) cited Tanganyika (the modern-day Tanzania) to be one of the rare African nations which had numerous ethnic groups unified and formed nationalistic movement with TANU culminating to independence in 1961. The same spirit of unity started during Majimaji war when more than 12 ethnic groups assembled via ideology of *maji*-cult was dominant was also experienced during TANU hegemony. Strategies and tactics used

in struggle for independence were dynamic with elements of continuity. Iliffe (1967) asserted that, the later nationalist organization needed the use old allegiance so as to popularize an attempt to transcend them, also characterized this earlier attempts to maximize their political scale. Nyerere as a leader used memory of the Majimaji to mobilize people in order to achieve the set goals. This resembles to a respondent from Maposeni who narrated that,

“when TANU started, faced critical problems as I remember Nyerere faced problems there in Namtumbo. At first, people didn’t have faith in him (Nyerere). They were skeptical fearing that he could bring them the same, Majimaji war and make them quarrel with Europeans. Nyerere told them that it would be through dialogue and finally, many joined TANU until we attained independence”.

All in all, majority of the respondents gave information showing that there was connection between Mjimaji war and the nationalistic movement in course of struggle towards Tanzania’s independence achievement in 1961.

#### **4.2. The Role of Majimaji War towards Tanganyika’s liberation Struggles (1940s – 1950s)**

Results from the study discovered that Majimaji war of 1905 – 1907 played crucial role in the struggle for independence in Tanganyika (1940s – 1950s) in Songea district in Southern Tanzania. One of the informants interviewed at Ndilima village, commented that; “It created the sense of togetherness and oneness among Tanzania and then increased the pace towards independence on the other hand it planted the seed of nationalism as people became more conscious”. Also Otiso (2017), observed that the harsh German colonial rule triggered inter-ethnic unification and later on nationalistic movements which culminated to Tanganyika’s independence. This indicates that, people of Tanganyika and now Tanzania have a tendency of coming together when experiencing a thread from within or without. Majimaji war as originated from *maji*-cult has been used as an ideology or a memory which acted as mobilizing tool to fight and defend the internal or external originated dangers. Another respondent through questionnaire stated that,

“Majimaji war played great role in Tanganyika’s independence struggles as the African fighters in the war learned that they were using poor weapons and had poor organization in the war. This enabled them to organize well and prepare well in the future struggles for independence. Again they believed that they could fight against whites, despite any difficulties they were facing, and all this encouraged them to fight for independence.”

The information given by the respondents match with what Iliffe (1967: 125) observed in the period signified as the ‘Age of improvement and differentiation (1970 – 1945)’ that, the dream of unity which hand inspired Majimaji was never forgotten, due to the fact that towards the end of the period new attempts were made to unite people of Tanganyika, using the new methods and ideas which improvement had made available. This implies that in the eyes of colonizer among others, Majimaji war came to an end in 1905. Contrary to what was expected, the people of Tanzania did not just seat back and do nothing. They reorganized themselves and adopted new ways through improved ideas within colonial system. Such measures enabled them emerge with new vigor through elites from 1940s to 1950s and look forward toward independence in 1961 when Julius Nyerere became the first black Prime Minister of Tanganyika. People went through changes as Temu (1969) asserts; it would have surprised many if the people of Tanganyika did not modify fighting techniques for independence due the fact that, those times there was no legislative assembly that could be an alternative and the best way for them to precisely aim at attacking specific adversary. Apparently the focus of attack was erroneous and in many ways it was diffused but, it is certainly incorrect to allege that the Africans in Tanganyika or elsewhere in the colonial territorial dominion lacked focus or a common foe. Nancy Rushohora insists that, “this is the history of Majimaji war which did not end during colonial era and still its narration is yet to end up to this day”(Rushohora, 2020: 108). Therefore, it is important to note that the nature of the war subsequent to impacts have been changing from time to time.



Having realized all those aspects, leaders as well as their people changed their ways in fighting colonialism through its system of operation. They kept changing techniques of fighting from actual war through Majimaji, formation of peasant cooperative unions to the emergence of political parties like TANU as Sunseri (2000: 575) put forward that, in 1950s, the decade when TANU under the leadership of Julius Nyerere pressed for independence in Tanganyika by appealing to the UN for support, leaders distanced themselves from Majimaji for fear of being treated like Mau Mau in Kenya. Sunseri (2000) further added that, while invoking Majimaji as a response to a natural call of spirits, reverberating in the inner most part of all Tanganyika's hearts, all times, well-educated or illiterate, to resist alien dominance, Nyerere emphasized people to opt for amnesty rather than violence which proved failure through Majimaji.

In Tanganyika organizers of TANU as a political party were worried to associate the party with violence like used during Majimaji as it could make people give less support to the party's push for independence. This indicates that people were fearful in supporting independence movements via the similar ways used during Majimaji as their memories were fresh about German suppression of the war and its devastating impacts in general. The presented observations by Sunseri above concur with most of narrations or responses from people who participated in the study conducted in Songea, Southern Tanganyika. It has been revealed from the study that, the Majimaji war has a significant role played in Tanzania's independence struggles (1940s to 1950s). They also indicated the connection between Majimaji war and nationalistic movements (Gregory, 2020; Kirey, 2023; Eliya et al., 2022). This implies that struggles for Tanzania's independence were dynamic as well as a continuous process. The struggles never stopped at any point of time. In struggles, organizers, techniques and the medium of organization kept changing, From Kinjeketile to Nyerere, violence to non violence, *Maji*-cult to TANU.

## **5. Conclusion**

The history of Majimaji war has peculiar place in not only the Tanganyika's nationalistic struggles towards *Uhuru*, but the foundation of the nation itself. From its start, the war displayed unique features never experienced before. In Tanzania, even today many people's aspects can be reflected on this event. For example, the oneness among more than 100 ethnic groups enjoyed today is the life the ancestors lived. Though it is more than a century since the war occurred and despite of the limitations encountered, the memory of the war is still in the minds and hearts of many people in Songea and other parts of Tanzania. The elders, youths, men and women still value the initiatives and actions the Majimaji fighters took, link it to the nationalistic movements and even beyond. Most people of the researched areas are aware of the Majimaji war's history and its link to nationalism and even beyond, especially using it as a mobilizing tool to fight any form of injustice. The degree of awareness varies from place to place, one group of people to another and from one aspect to another aspect. For example it has been noted that the knowledge on the event vary significantly between elders in urban and those of rural. Most of the respondents from Peramiho and Maposeni wards showed to have adequate knowledge on the theme than those from urban. Also Youths at secondary schools are relatively more informed on Majimaji war than those did not go to school.

The Majimaji war's knowledge and people's perceptions in Songea district have not that much changed from Nationalist historians' historiography. Though there are slight changes on it as some of the informants might have received knowledge from unreliable source, still the history the war is well remembered, especially by elders. In a nutshell, Majimaji war to many is regarded as an expression of Africans' colonial rejection and liberation movement due to its nature of continuity and change in socio-economic and political aspects. The movement is said to impotent weapon in struggles against oppression and exploitation in southern Tanganyika. It is likely that in the near future, this war will be use by many people of Africa to fight neocolonialism among other injustices. Therefore, Majimaji and its memories can be turned into opportunity by making use of it in developmental trajectories such as tourism, education and peace building.

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