A people power philosophy: Republican ideology in opposition in Tanzania

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Disclosure statement: I, the author, have no competing interests to declare.

Abstract

This article is about democratic political thought and African political parties. Studies judge that opposition speak about democracy, but rarely express democratic ideologies. This determination arises from democracy's perceived hegemony. As democracy is accepted, opposition parties invoke democratic ideas without advocating them. I contest this line of argument. There are multiple visions of democracy. Therefore, whether or not democracy is hegemonic, not all arguments for and perspectives on it are. By omission, the literature on African parties has denied this variety in democratic thought and precluded the study of one variant of it in particular: republicanism. Republicanisms elevate domination and corruption as ills and advocate limiting state power and empowering citizens. I analyse the "people's power philosophy" of leading Tanzanian opposition party, Chadema. It imagines a ruling party oligarchy which pursues its private interests through an interconnected system of domination and corruption. Chadema advocates a new constitution to undo that system: institutional reforms that limit state power and empower citizens. It claims that it can do so by overpowering the oligarchy in a popular struggle. It imagines struggle as the breaking of everyday dominance and therefore as emancipatory: a second liberation. I argue that this philosophy constitutes a republican-democratic ideology.

Keywords: republicanism; democratic theory; democratization; political parties; African politics

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Portia Roelofs, Sa'eed Husaini, Deogratias Munishi, Yohana Hoka for their comments on drafts of this paper. Thanks to Patrick Ole Sosopi and Deogratias Munishi for the insights they provided on Chadema in conversation. Thanks to Tundu Lissu for his encouragement as I finalised this paper. Thanks to everyone in Tanzania, and beyond, who gave me their time, insight, hospitality and/or friendship as I conducted my research. Any errors are mine alone.

Word count (excluding title page): 9,000

Democracy, the adage goes, needs democrats. Yet studies conclude ruefully that few can be found in African opposition parties. Specifically, they determine that such parties often speak about democracy, but rarely express democratic ideologies.[1] On the contrary, haunted by "change-candidates" that disappointed, they often dismiss opposition messages about democracy as opportunistic or ideologically vacant. They depreciate the ideational content of African democratic ideas on the grounds – among other - that democratic principles are widely accepted; democracy is hegemonic. Accordingly, opposition parties take the desirability of democracy as given. They make valence appeals which assert their superior competence to fulfil those ideals, without asserting those ideals themselves.[2]

I write in revision of this literature. There are many conceptions of democracy, and many ways in which it might be justified. Therefore, whether or not democracy is hegemonic, speaking of it still means choosing which vision of it to assert and arguments for it to make. However, the Africanist literature has seldom recognized this potential variety in contemporary democratic thought. This has precluded the study of how political parties in general and opposition parties in particular articulate democratic ideologies.

I argue that this denial of the potential diversity in democratic thought has precluded the study of one concrete strand of such thought in particular: republicanism. By "republicanism," I do not mean the political thought of the US Republican Party. Instead, I refer to the intellectual tradition which can trace its lineage back through James Madison, Condorcet, James Harrington, Montesquieu, and Niccolò Machiavelli, among others to Cicero, Polybius and Aristotle.[3] Republicanisms vary, but most elevate domination and corruption as bads, and freedom as non-domination and government in the common interest as goods.[4] They advocate mixed government, the limitation and

division of arbitrary state power, and the empowerment of citizens through constitutional and extra-constitutional means. Contemporary republicanisms are republican-democratic ideologies; some simultaneously embrace democratic ideals; most embrace democratic constitutions, albeit reformed, as the means to realize republican goals.

I study the case of Chadema (*Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo*, or "the Party of Democracy and Development"). Chadema is Tanzania's leading opposition party and has been since at least 2010.[5] I analyse Chadema's political message since 2006, when it revised its constitution and began to change its public-facing message. Past analyses of Chadema's message closely mirror the analyses of opposition parties in Africa at large.[6] They conclude that Chadema focused on democratic issues, but they dismiss the possibility that these ideas constituted a democratic ideology. However, Chadema espouses what it calls a people's power philosophy. I argue that this philosophy closely resembles a republican-democratic ideology.

Chadema adopted a radical-republican vision of Tanzania as ridden by corruption. It imagined this corruption as perpetrated by an oligarchy at the pinnacle of the ruling party. It claimed that this oligarchy dominated the state, and through it, the people. It portrayed domination and corruption a mutually reinforcing system. Later, it mixed this with a neo-republican vision of tyranny by a violent dictator. Chadema called for that system to be dismantled. It championed constitutional reforms that would check and balance arbitrary state power. These neo-republican reforms would prevent domination and stymy corruption. However, it claimed that to achieve these reforms, first the ruling party must be overthrown. It argued that this could only be achieved if citizens resisted domination through direct action. Chadema presented itself as the collective organ through which citizens could break the domination of the ruling party.

It claimed that this would constitute a "second liberation." Therefore, Chadema's people power philosophy connected empowerment and emancipation in radical republican terms. In other words, it expressed a homegrown republican-democratic ideology, mixed with ideas of liberation.

In sum, Chadema's message contained a contentious and original democratic ideology. Irrespective of whether democracy was widely accepted, Chadema articulated a distinct conception of what it constitutes and a distinct argument in its favour. Therefore, there is not just potential, but manifest, diversity in democratic thought in contemporary African party politics.

While some political theorists from Africa advocate radical republicanisms,[7] to my knowledge, this is the first study is the first to argue that a contemporary African political party has articulated a republicanism. However, it is unlikely that Chadema is its lone proponent on the continent. On the contrary, I suggest that contemporary opposition parties in other post-liberation regimes express ideologies which resemble republicanisms. Third-wave democratization movements may have too. I hope that by revealing the close resemblance between Chadema's ideology and democratic republicanism, this article will inspire future research to explore republican-democratic thought elsewhere in Africa and beyond.

For this project, I collected a set of Chadema documents, including its 2006 constitution, its 2010, 2015 and 2020 manifestos, a handbook on its ideology published in 2014, and 2020 policy documents. Insofar as these official documents express a philosophy of people's power, it is sometimes fragmented, ambiguous and contradictory. However, I also collected analysed a wider set of materials which elaborate on those official documents and further fix meanings. These included two 2014 conference speeches, the founding chairman's autobiography, transcripts I

generated of two speeches given at Chadema rallies which are available on YouTube, and a further six local Chadema rallies from 2015 with I attended, recorded and transcribed, all selected for purposively for relevance and accessibility. I embed this in a still wider reading of writings by Chadema advocates and their allies.

Nonetheless, analysing the discourse which these texts inscribe raises methodological challenges about interpreting meaning and reading both coherence and incoherence. These challenges were compounded by my limited Swahili and my reliance on translations. To address these challenges, I drew on eight years of sustained research about Chadema, including eight months of site-intensive field work in 2015. I attended 24 of its rallies. I interviewed 11 members of its Central Committee and a further six high-level officials; 14 of its MPs and its nominated parliamentary candidates (of which, five Central Committee members); 86 of its active members and officials, spread across 35 party organs at the zonal, district, ward, branch and foundation-level. Finally, I developed and have maintained correspondences with several senior Chadema members and associated activists. I analysed those documents *intertextually*, in the context of everyday discourse of Chadema to which I have become accustomed. I *reflected* on my perspective and position and how it may affect my interpretation. Finally, I have developed my analysis in dialogue with select Chadema officials and activists (so-called *member-checking*).[8] I relied variously on a translation company and two research assistants (who wish to remain anonymous) to translate speeches and documents from Swahili which appear herein.

By presenting this analysis of Chadema's ideology, I speak for others who also speak for themselves. This raises questions of privilege, power and purpose: what can a discourse analysis, conducted from a perspective in the Global North, add that is not evident from these Tanzanians' own self-representations? I endeavour to distil the core

of Chadema's message as expressed by many voices at many times, and to connect their messages to bodies of thought that they themselves had not fully realized. While Chadema's advocates certainly describe their cause as democratic, they do not, to my knowledge, think of it as republican. To borrow the words of philosopher Charles Taylor, I reinterpret Chadema's self-interpretations.[9] The authority of my analysis rests on the efficacy of my empirical research. However, the ultimate authority to characterize Chadema's ideology belongs not to me, but to Chadema members. I envisage this article, among other things, as part of an ongoing dialogue with Chadema intellectuals and associated thinkers.

Dismissing democratic ideas in Africa

The study of ideology begins with a subjectivist premise. There are many perspectives which are equally valid.[10] Accordingly, many concepts and claims are not simply true or false but subjectively true. Ideologies assert such subjective truths as *the* truth, or some perspective as *the* perspective.[11] Through such sets of assertions, they form systems or "universes of meaning."[12] However, such systems do not consist of exhaustive lists of such assertions. In Michael Freeden's theory of ideology, they consist of arrangements of finite sets of concepts.[13] Ideologies make some concepts key and fix their meanings in relation to one another. Such a concept-arrangement forms a fragmentary framework through which the world can be seen. Numerous meanings can be made and asserted as true in relation to that framework. In Freeden's view, ideologies cluster in families defined by a set of concepts. A particular instantiation of that family – for instance, a particular liberalism from the liberal ideological family – offers a specific arrangement of those concept, which yields particular systems of meaning. This theory of ideology as concept-constellation closely resembles the theory of discourse as partial system of meaning fixed through key signifiers articulated by the discourse-theoretic

perspective,[14] inspired by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.[15] For the name of good prose, I refer to ideology, discourse, imaginary and meaning-system interchangeable below.

These retheorizations have ramifications for what counts as an ideology. Ideology is defined not by fidelity between action and sincerely-held principle, but arrangements of concepts that fix meanings. If one accepts this definition, then the realm of the ideological is vast. Freeden writes that "ideologies may come in all shapes and sizes: bombastic, totalizing, doctrinaire; or modest, fragmented, and loose."[16] Therefore, alongside the grand ideologies of the 20th century – liberalism, communism, socialism, conservatism and fascism – there are countless other ideologies which might be (and now are) recognized and analysed.

This revival and reconceptualization of ideology studies has only been partially echoed in studies of contemporary African political parties. Studies of postcolonial African parties ascribed grand ideologies or their variants generously.[17] Some studies see ideology in contemporary political party messages,[18] especially studies by African scholars.[19]

Despite of all these works, a partial consensus has held in the Africanist literature that post-Cold War political parties' messages rarely give expression to ideologies.[20] In the case of African opposition parties, the messages in question are about democracy. Jamie Bleck and Nicolas van de Walle determine that opposition messages differ from their ruling party counterparts by focusing on one cluster of issues which they call "democracy and constitutionalism."[21] Some studies ascribed liberal or liberal democratic ideologies to parties in Tanzania and Ghana which focused on these issues,[22] claims which have occasionally been repeated since about parties in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Ghana.[23] Nonetheless, studies like these remain the

exceptions.[24] Most research discounts the possibility that opposition messages about democracy express ideologies.

Some studies infer that opposition messages about democracy do not express ideologies because they are insincere. This academic incredulity was fuelled by the departure of ostensibly democratic opposition parties from their principles once in office; inconstancy in message belied non-ideological status. See jaded scholarly postscripts of so-called democrats Frederick Chiluba (Zambia), Abdoulaye Wade (Senegal) and Mwoi Kibaki (Kenya) in office, for example. Even when parties' democratic messages endure across time and circumstance, studies nonetheless judge that they rarely express ideologies. They conclude that they lack the expansive and coherent structures of thought to qualify as democratic ideologies. Sebastian Elischer offers such a judgement about Kenyan opposition parties in the 1990s, for instance.[25]

Even when party messages meet all of these conditions, studies often determine that they *still* do not express ideologies. This conclusion stems from the premise that the principles of liberal democracy are uncontested in Africa. The reasoning goes that democratic transitions ushered in a democratic zeitgeist. Liberal democratic principles were both enshrined in constitutions and embedded in popular opinion. Bleck and van de Walle explain that in contemporary Africa "No one [in politics] can be against democracy."[26]

In this context, Bleck and van de Walle conclude that opposition messages about democracy took its desirability for granted. They argue that "rather than stressing ideological distinctions within these issue areas, candidates struggle to prove that they are better placed to address challenges of democracy."[27] In other words, their messages convey valence appeals. Of course, to express sets of ideas as if they were beyond contention is an ideological act.[28] Indeed, for contentious claims to become understood

as uncontentious is the essence of ideological hegemony.[29] Nevertheless, Bleck and van de Walle emphasize that even though there is a "hegemony of ideas about 'democratic politics'"[30] parties do not contest "the rightness of a specific position."[31] In other words, they operate within that hegemony, without actively or creatively contributing to it. They rehearse those ideas without advocating them.

This final line of argument rests on the following premise: that there is a singular democratic ideology. However, as political theorists know only too well, there are many conceptions of and arguments for democracy. Democracy is accepted and rejected; acclaimed and criticized; and contested and re-contested by and for innumerable voices and causes. Therefore, the argument that democratic messages merely rehearse hegemonic ideas is specious. Even if the principles of liberal democracy are widely accepted, it does not follow that all conceptions of it or arguments for it are. Therefore, even if there is a hegemony of democratic ideas, opposition messages about democracy are not necessarily ideologically vacant.

Works by Portia Roelofs, Sa'eed Husaini, Jeffrey Paller and Nic Cheeseman break with this consensus.[32] I envisage this article as contributing to this same intellectual project. I argue that not only *could* there be diversity in the democratic ideologies which African opposition parties express, but there *is* such diversity My claim is not only about potentiality, but actuality. Specifically, I argue that a democratic ideology is present which has not been ascribed to a contemporary political party in Africa before: republicanism.

Republicanisms

Republicanism is an intellectual tradition with its roots in antiquity, in early modern Europe and in the "age of revolution."[33] Republicanisms, moreover, are being excavated in historic left-wing thought.[34] There are many republicanisms with distinct and

contested meanings. There may be no set of shared core claims which unite them. However, there are common patterns of thought which connect prominent republican thinkers. First, republicans foreground the "common interest" or public good as an ideal that government ought to pursue.[35] Second, republicans foreground domination. Domination, in their eyes, enables rule in the interests of some part over the whole, be it the few (oligarchy), the one (tyranny), or the masses.[36] Third, republicans foreground corruption. They understand corruption, following Aristotle, as the degeneration of a system of rule into one in which some part dominates.[37] Fourth, republicans foreground freedom and place it in opposition to domination. Following Cicero, they conceive of liberty not as freedom from interference but from the possibility of *arbitrary* interference, or non-domination.[38] Republican prescriptions privilege constitutions. They envisage well-designed constitutions as the means to prevent domination, achieve freedom and enable rule in the common interest. They draw inspiration from the Aristotelean idea that corruption (as degeneration) can checked in a hybrid system of rule. Early-modern republicanisms embrace the law as a means to shape governments. They propose a variety of mixed constitutions.

Recently, republicanism has been revisited and revived. Contemporary republicanisms fall into two strains. The first, neo-republicanism, is advocated principally by Philip Pettit.[39] Neo-republicans draw on the convictions of Montesquieu and Madison that domination emerges among power-holders from the accumulation of institutional power. They advocate law-bound systems of "balances, and checks"[40] as the means to prevent such domination and create instead a system of rule that tracks citizens interests. They propose institutional limits on state powers, and the division of power-holders between branches of and positions in government, so that each will check the others.[41] Pettit also proposes that citizens be institutionally empowered to

keep vigil against the state.[42] Pettit hails the US constitutional model as the "consensus on institutional matters… among traditional republican writers."[43]

Radical republicanisms share Machiavelli's conviction that the threat of domination is the threat of oligarchic domination by the rich and powerful few.[44] In their imaginaries, oligarchic interests hold extra-institutional, material powers. Some focus on how this enables domination beyond the state in the home, the workplace and the public square.[45] Others, such as John McCormick and Camila Vergara focus how this enables the circumvention of institutional limits and divisions of state power.[46] Vergara defines this as "systemic corruption." Radical republicanisms advocate constitutional reforms to liberal democracy which they envisage check oligarchic corruption by empowering the many (the plebs). Equally, radical republicans, drawing again on Machiavelli, advocate that extra-constitutional systems be built into political parties, social movements and economic organization. Lawrence Hamilton, channelling James Harrington, envisages such empowerment as freedom itself.[47]

Therefore, republican and democratic ideologies envisage different freedoms and advocate powers. Theories of representative democracy in the mould of Urbinati's advocate the "political liberty" of collective self-rule. She conceives of representative democracy as the exercise of sovereignty of the people *through* the power of the democratic state. In contrast, neo-republicans advocate *limiting* the arbitrary power of the state to preserve the people's "Roman liberty" from domination. Some radical republicans advocate making people or plebs free by empowering them *against* the state, or by empowering them against "the few" in and beyond the state. I refer to these democratic, neo-republican and radical-republican conceptions of freedom and power below.

These distinctions have often set republicans and democrats against one another.[48] However, contemporary republicanisms, neo- and radical alike, are simultaneously democratic. They embrace the features of democratic constitutionalism and present them as the means to achieve collective self-rule *and* republican ideals.[49] Therefore, even if the principles of liberal democracy are widely accepted, the expression of a republican-democratic ideology would not be the empty reiteration of already-hegemonic ideas, but one of several possible visions of it and arguments for it. In the following sections, I interpret Chadema's message from 2006 until 2021. I argue that Chadema articulated a republican-democratic ideology. Therefore, I determine that an African opposition party articulated an original, home-grown democratic ideology, and did so neither passively nor derivatively.

Chadema's people power philosophy

Chadema's official documents describe it as ideologically "centrist,"[50] "liberal,"[51] and most recently, as "centre-right."[52] What Chadema has chiefly meant by these terms is that it advocates a neo-liberal combination of free markets, private enterprise and a small state. Max Mmuya and Amon Chaligha portrayed Chadema as pro-business party.[53] The party was founded by businesspersons connected to the elite Legion Club. They were led by former World Bank economist Edwin Mtei.[54] Ostensibly, this remains Chadema's ideology. It remains affiliated to the right-wing International Democratic Union.[55] In 2014, the party's chairman Freeman Mbowe told the party conference "Chadema believes in building up a state economy based on free market approach that respects and protects rights and private property, free market and private sector."[56] However, a second generation of leaders arose between 2004 and 2015. Under their leadership, the Chadema developed a parallel discourse which assumed greater prominence in its public-facing message. These changes were drafted and promulgated

in the revised version of the party's constitution, finalized in 2006. Prior studies describe that it shifted its focus to the issue of resource sovereignty but most of all to anticorruption[57] while elevating the issue of democracy.[58] This simultaneous focus on anticorruption and democracy made Chadema's new message a close approximation of the typical African opposition message distilled in the literature.[59]

Analysts and Chadema intellectuals alike disagree on what this change in message represents. Some argue that constitutes a leftward shift. Central Committee member and 2020 presidential candidate Tundu Lissu said "From around 2005, we began to move leftward… way to the left."[60] Similarly, the late long-time Central Committee member Mwesiga Baregu said Chadema opened its "doors to all progressive forces demanding change."[61] Others, like academic Chambi Chachage, maintain that despite becoming "a broad church", Chadema ultimately remained "a business-oriented party."[62] Some argue that Chadema message relegated its own ideology in its public-facing message. Journalist Athuman Mtulya judged "that Chadema flourished out of an anti-corruption agenda, and not out of a party ideology of conservatism."[63] Similarly, Baregu judged that "the debates that we are engaged in are not highly ideological."[64] Indeed, the party's own 2014 ideology handbook lamented that Chadema MPs rarely invoke the party's ideology or philosophy in parliament.[65]

I argue that none of these readings encapsulates fully Chadema's shifting ideological claim-making. Chadema did indeed incorporate a growing breadth of partially contradictory opinion. Nonetheless, it articulated an increasingly coherent, if incomplete set of ideas since 2006. Chadema's 2006 constitution declares that in addition to having a centrist ideology, it has a "philosophy of 'People's Power and Authority'."[66] Indeed, "people's power" is the party's more enduring slogan, which is called and answered at every Chadema event. Chadema's authoritative statement of this

philosophy is brief. Its constitution expresses this philosophy in fewer than 400 words, many of which are vague and platitudinous. Nonetheless, I argue that this nascent philosophy, rather than any centre-right or liberal ideology, was most prominent in Chadema's public-facing discourse. In fact, through countless speeches, texts and everyday utterances, Chadema leaders and members alike developed its people's power philosophy and configured a more substantive and consistent set of ideas around it. As this discourse is expressed by many texts and many voices, it is necessarily fragmented, ambiguous and sometimes contradictory. Nonetheless, I propose that this sometimes-amorphous set of ideas builds upon and fixes the meaning of Chadema's people's power philosophy. This philosophy does not extend to every conceivable topic. Nor does it resolve the left-right contradictions described above. Nonetheless, it amounts to a set of concepts and claims through which Chadema interprets the world. Therefore, it constitutes an ideology in Freeden's terms.[67] Specifically, it approximates a republican one.

Radical republican diagnosis: 2006-2015

Between 2006 and 2015, Chadema made this claim central to its message: Tanzania is riddled by corruption. A succession of corruption scandals emerged between 2001 and 2014, peaking in the period 2006 to 2009. Each exposed illicit enrichment by CCM politicians and their funders at the expense of the public and state. Chadema wove them together. It described them as instances of *ufisadi* or "grand corruption." It alleged that these instances stemmed from a conspiracy at the pinnacle of government. In 2007, Chadema's then-secretary-general Wilbroad Slaa published a "List of Shame" which named two presidents, one prime minister, and eight further politicians and senior officials as the chief perpetrators and beneficiaries. Chadema claimed that the conspirators had captured the state and bent its action to their interests. Mbowe said "the

people serving the government of few people having[/have] usurped power from the people."[68] Furthermore, it alleged that this elite network connected government and big business. Chadema's 2015 manifesto states that "corruption connects the public and private sectors where the biggest money for corruption comes from."[69] Altogether, consistent with (radical-)republicanisms, Chadema imagined oligarchy: the domination of the state by the few and rule in their private interests over common interests.[70]

Chadema conceived of the CCM oligarchic state capture as a self-perpetuating system in which power and corruption were mutually reinforcing.

First, Chadema portrayed CCM as embedded in power. This involved little imagination on their part. CCM and the two parties that merged to form it have ruled Tanzania since independence in 1961. Multiparty elections were reintroduced in 1992, but the authoritarian architecture remains partially intact.[71] Nonetheless, Chadema emphasized that CCM was dominant, and worked to perpetuate that dominance. Chadema conceived of this domination as deliberate. Mbowe wrote that "The government is determined to hold onto power by all means."[72] In fact, the espousal of Chadema's philosophy in its constitution locates contemporary oligarchic dominance in a national history of such domination by others.

> …the "people" of Tanzania have never had a voice, power and authority over decisions on the fate of people's life…from the colonial era to date.[73]

Therefore, consistent with republicanism, Chadema elevated domination as the defining theme of its truncated history of Tanzania.

Second, Chadema asserted that CCM's domination of the state enabled it to practice corruption. It claimed that CCM deliberately defended "the current constitutional and legal structure because of the existence of various loop-holes that allow them to mismanage state resources for themselves."[74] Chadema's constitution

states that this structure has persisted because "the country's Constitution has remained a monopoly of the Government."[75] In effect, it claimed that CCM exercised dominance to deliberately preserve a permissive de jure system which enables illicit corruption.

CCM's unchecked power enabled it to practice corruption, not only through manipulation of the state but through the exercise of arbitrary state power on ordinary Tanzanians. For example, describing local extra-legal taxes ("development levies"), Lissu said "It's basically an extortionist racket. Rural people are exploited and oppressed… There is no pretence of rule of law. It is rule of the law of force" which amounted to "rural tyranny."[76] Therefore, Chadema imagined CCM corruption as not only harmful to Tanzanians, but exploitative of them.

Third, not only did domination enable corruption; in Chadema's view, illicit corruption enabled CCM domination. Corruption was a means to subjugate citizens. CCM used ill-gotten wealth to defeat the opposition in election campaigns. Lissu said "you don't compete with CCM on money. They will simply *overwhelm* you with their trailer-loads of cash [emphasis added]."[77] Chadema worked to make these ideas common-sensical to everyday life. It claimed that, specifically, CCM used corruptly-gotten wealth to buy votes. Chadema presented vote-buying as predatory. Baregu wrote that vote-buying "exploits the vulnerabilities of the population (poverty, ignorance, ill-health and fear)."[78] This predation enabled systemic exploitation. Then Chadema parliamentary candidate Jesca Kishoa pointed out that by buying votes so cheaply, CCM politicians were able to return to office and get richer.[79] In all these cases, Chadema imagined CCM using its wealth to take advantage of others' poverty to control them.

Chadema saw subjugation not only in the way that corruption was used to preserve CCM power but in the way coercion was too. Mbowe said that: "our party was

harassed from all sides at all levels."[80] Slaa claimed that the state subjected not only activists but citizens to violent oppression. He described "the wanton misuse of state and security organs to make innocent citizens insecure."[81]

Altogether, Chadema imagined a system in which CCM continually achieved dominance and enabled corruption. It did so by simultaneously subjugating and exploiting Tanzanians. Chadema crafted this imaginary to resonate with Tanzanians' everyday experience. It articulated this vision of oligarchic corruption at a moment that the aforementioned mediated corruption scandals were capturing public attention; material inequalities were fast-widening; and public services, despite expansion, were inadequate. Equally, it drew together quotidian experiences like development taxes, police coercion, vote-buying and arbitrary bureaucratic power, described above; and wove them into a picture of oligarchic domination.

Chadema distilled this imaginary into evocative metaphors of domination and exploitation like those used in Tanzania's past.[82] Slaa described CCM as "a monster that eats both one's flesh and bones."[83] In a similar vein, emphasising manipulation, Kigaila compared CCM to a mosquito that promises to have a treatment for malaria.[84] This view is summarized in Chadema's constitution, which states pointedly that:

> being elected to form [a] government does not mean [that one has been authorized] to usurp PEOPLE's power and to use those powers to suppressed[suppress] the very electorates [that elected one] to defend narrow personal interests instead of the interest of the wider public.[85]

In sum, between 2006 and 2015, Chadema advanced a radical-republican critical interpretation of the state quo. It imagined a state that was systematically corrupt which was run in the interests of an oligarchy centred on CCM but spanning big-business and the state. The oligarchy practiced corruption by dominating the state. It maintained its

dominance by continually overpowering Tanzanian citizens that might challenge it. This closely resembles the radical republican idea of systemic and oligarchic corruption.[86]

Neo-republican diagnosis: 2016-2021

Through 2015, the discursive context in which Chadema spoke changed. First, Chadema accepted CCM defector and List of Shame member Edward Lowassa as its presidential candidate. Whether or not Chadema speakers continued to advocate anti-corruption earnestly (presumably, Lowassa did not) such advocacy took on an air of hypocrisy in light of Lowassa's nomination. Second, the newly-elected CCM President of Tanzania John Pombe Magufuli embarked upon a performative anti-corruption programme. To many Tanzanians, he became a more believable opponent of corruption than Chadema.

In this context, Chadema relegated corruption in its public-facing message and its party documents.[87] In its place, it elevated "dictatorship." In this period, the CCM regime undertook an authoritarian turn.[88] In this context, Chadema changed its characterization of the CCM oligarchy. First, in Chadema's characterization, CCM's goals changed. Chadema relegated self-enrichment and elevated the consolidation of power as CCM's motivations. Chadema ally and democracy activist Fatma Karume interpreted CCM's authoritarian actions as increasingly ruthless and desperate attempts to secure de jure power in perpetuity by "killing" the opposition.[89] Second, in Chadema's imaginary, CCM's methods changed. It, CCM, relied less on corruption to circumvent checks on its power. Instead, it adopted overt methods to override and dismantle them. In Chadema's vision, the law morphed from a permissive system of loopholes into an instrument of oppression. Chadema incorporated succession of laws and state actions into this picture of legalized domination.[90] Equally, CCM became increasingly violent. In Chadema's eyes, the CCM-regime increasingly employed legal

and extra-legal coercion. An assassination-attempt against Lissu became a stand-out exemplifier of this violence, but so did numerous instances of physical violence, detainment, intimidation and disappearance.[91] In the 2020 elections, Lissu claims, it intensified these tactics while practising "blatant" election rigging.[92]

Third, the character of the of the dominating group changed. Chadema increasingly characterized it as a one-man dictatorship; Lissu called President Magufuli a "petty dictator" (*dikteta uchwara*).[93] Chadema increasingly characterized other regime actors as President Magufuli's subordinates. Democracy activist and Chadema ally Maria Tsehai called them "one man and his cabal called CCM."[94] Illicit self-enrichment still took place, but it was increasingly personalized. President Magufuli, in Chadema's eyes, practiced nepotism in appointments and parochialism in the largesse he lavished on his home-town Chato, which Lissu compared to dictator Mobutu Sese Seko's "Gbadolite."[95] President Magufuli's lieutenants and cronies continued to practice corruption, but they needed to curry his favour to do so.

Altogether, Chadema continued to articulate a republican vision of domination, but this vision changed. Increasingly, this vision mixed neo-republican ideas of tyranny (by Magufuli) with radical-republican ideas of oligarchy (by the regime). Equally, it relegated corrupt subversion and elevated overt oppression, violence and election rigging.

Neo-republican prognosis: limit arbitrary power

In the spirit of republicanism, Chadema singled-out political system-change as the chief means to address these ills. Chadema advocated what the late Victor Kimesera described as "a new structure of governance." He elaborated "we do not, Chadema, take over from CCM and become another CCM."[96] Chadema's prioritization of democracy was built into its constitution, and indeed, into its name. It advocated democratic

"systems and structures of governance."[97] These explicitly include the protection of individual liberties, the rule of law, media freedom, judicial independence, the limitation of the executive, a stronger parliament, and devolution (*majimboism*), among other things.[98]

From 2011 and onwards, Chadema advocated that this new structure be embedded in a new constitution. Chadema called for a new constitution in a nationwide campaign in 2011. President Kikwete initiated a constitution-making process later that year. Retired CCM-politician Joseph Warioba led a commission which drafted a constitution in 2013. Chadema and other opposition parties embraced this so-called Warioba Draft, even after it was rejected in the CCM-controlled constitution-making process. The Warioba Draft significantly reduced the executive's powers. It altered the federal system of government and transferred powers from the centre to two subnational governments. It created a supreme court, made supreme justice nomination subject to parliamentary approval, and strengthened the independence of the judiciary. It created an independent electoral commission, and it extended the list and scope of the human rights it recognized. These are consistent with (neo-)republican prescriptions.

In 2015, President Kikwete paused the constitution-making process indefinitely. Chadema made the struggle for the Warioba Constitution central to its 2015 election campaign. Together with other opposition parties, it formed an electoral coalition entitled the Coalition for the People's Constitution (*Umoja wa Katiba ya Wananchi*). In the light of the authoritarian turn initiated from 2015, and especially the "organized electoral thuggery"[99] of the 2020 elections, its stance on constitutional change has hardened. Since then, "New Constitution" (*Katiba Mpya*) has become the central demand of Chadema, and indeed a wider assemblage of activists and civic bodies.

This platform was republican not only in the measures prescribed but the justifications given for them. First, Chadema's constitution states that it would realize "a free society" by limiting state power. Once power was no longer "in the hands of few people", it could no longer be used to "oppress citizens."[100] A later document said that the Warioba Draft would "set and categorically state the separation of powers and principles of checks and balances."[101] This emphasis on the institutional limitation of state power to achieve freedom exemplifies (neo-)republican thought.

Chadema also claimed that constitutional reforms would bring about a "free society" by empowering citizens to check state power. It called for a "people's constitution that would give them [the people] authority to control rulers."[102] Rulers would be controlled by being "questioned and held accountable by the people."[103] This constitutes one (neo-)republican meaning of "people's power" in Chadema's philosophy: institutional empowerment of people to check an otherwise arbitrary state power, which in their eyes, made people free.

Equally, Chadema's leaders justify these constitutional reforms as the realization of the people's "sovereign autonomy."[104] Chadema official Deogratias Munishi said "The public should be the voice of its own."[105] Slaa said "that the powers and decisions to plan and exploit opportunities in the country will be in the people's hands..."[106] This constitutes a second, democratic meaning of "people's power" in Chadema's philosophy: the power to collectively self-rule.

Altogether, Chadema advocated institutional measures consistent the principles of liberal democracy. Its people power philosophy contains both republican and democratic arguments in support of them. It argued that these measures would achieve neo-republican freedom from domination and democratic freedom to collectively self-govern.

After 2015, neo-republican ideas gained even greater prominence in Chadema's political thought. Chadema responded to the actions of the CCM-regime. As Lissu put it, "Five years of iron-fisted rule by Magufuli have taught us an unforgettable lesson on the importance and the urgent necessity for a new democratic constitutional and legal order."[107] In particular, in the light of his power-centralization and overt oppression, Chadema saw the division and limitation of power as ever-more imperative. Chadema Central Committee Member Patrick Ole Sosopi tweeted this paradigmatic neo-republican argument for a new constitutional in 2021: "Strong structures help prevent the arbitrary use of power... Strong structures prevent power from being taken over and into the hands of a single powerful group. #NewConstitution #Wearethecitizens."[108]

The 2020 election gave further clarity and resolve to Chadema's neo-republican thought. For Chadema thinkers, it affirmed their long-held suspicions about the lengths to which the CCM-regime would go to preserve its power. In the wake of the election, Karume tweeted "CCM has made a Faustian bargain. Sold its soul for absolute power."[109] Tsehai tweeted "rights denied, lived ended and limbs lost just to keep [stay] in power."[110] In this light, Chadema increasingly concluded that the regime would never offer reforms that would jeopardize their power, only cosmetic reforms to placate its critics, and petty reforms it would reverse later. Therefore, incremental reform was inadequate; wholesale constitutional reform alone would bring change by dismantling the regime's architecture of power.

The development and hardening of these ideas should be interpreted in the context of historic and contemporary political thought in Tanzania. First, founding-president Julius Nyerere articulated (and put into practice) a theory of one-party democracy. In this theory, authority over all offices of government were united in the party. Ostensibly, the people ruled through this all-powerful party, but in later

articulations of this theory, the party became a "paternal"[111] body that, when necessary, would dictate what the people's interests were. [112] Elements of these ideas endure in common Tanzanian political thought. They make possible a generous appraisal of Tanzania's regime, in which its status as democratic is measured against the benevolence of its actions, rather than its limitation of arbitrary state power. Second, Magufuli's supporters, in defence of his authoritarianism, how popular lauded his person and actions were. Implicitly, his (constructed) popularity made his actions democratic. Chadema's neo-republican ideology offers a critical and contrasting view in which neither action in peoples' interests nor popularity alone makes one a democrat; fidelity to procedural limits on power does. Only such fidelity maintains the watch against state domination, and so preserves the democratic power of the people to rule themselves.

Radical republican vision of emancipatory struggle

Republican thought inhered not only in the diagnosis that Chadema offered or the solutions it prescribed, but in the radical republican ways in which it imagined realizing them. Chadema advocated the overthrow of CCM as prior to the implementation of its republican institutional reforms. It conceived of the achievement of these twin goals as a "second liberation."[113] Therefore, it was an emancipatory project. Like other self-styled liberation projects, it conceived of liberation as not only a teleological end-point, but the process to realize it, or "our struggle to liberate our nation [emphasis added]."[114] Chadema conceived of it as a struggle because it took place against an opponent: CCM. Chadema claimed that to achieve liberation, it would have to "fight against CCM hegemony",[115] the very system of domination which it claimed made Tanzania unfree. Lissu said that this was the "kind of militancy that drove my politics."[116] Therefore, it

understood the struggle as a contest of power and the overthrow of CCM as an overpowering of CCM.

Chadema construed popular involvement as necessarily for the struggle. While it would lead the struggle, Tanzanians would have to participate en masse for it to succeed.[117] Kimesera said that "there has to be a change in the people themselves."[118] Similarly, Lissu said that "They knew that to deal with the issues that had confronted them all these years; they had to organize themselves."[119] As such, Chadema took the mobilization of people as a necessary part of the struggle. Indeed, Chadema planned and executed a succession of "operations"[120] intended to "send our ideologies, our policies through public rallies."[121]

Popular participation in the struggle was necessary, in Chadema's view, because CCM's domination was achieved through the subjugation of people. Therefore, to break that subjugation, the people had to liberate themselves from it. In other words, Chadema imagined the overpowering of CCM as a *popular* overpowering. As Lissu put it, "I was calling for rebellion."[122] It envisaged breaking CCM's subjugation of people as the path to overthrowing it. Chadema asked citizens to undo CCM's system of domination through resistance. Slaa said that, encouraged by Chadema, people increasingly "refused to be harassed and intimidated and began to mount open protest."[123] Chadema portrayed these acts of "resistance from below"[124] themselves as emancipatory. As Mwakibete summarized, "It was a story, that they [Chadema] told, that the common man and woman could liberate themselves if they so chose."[125] In sum, Chadema conceived of popular empowerment through resistance to subjugation as emancipation from a dominating state. This constitutes a third and republican meaning of people's power in Chadema's philosophy: freedom as power.

While Chadema conceived of the struggle as popular, it simultaneously conceived of it as collective, and imagined itself as the vehicle for that struggle. Between 2004 and 2014, Chadema converged on the conclusion that to defeat CCM, it must organize branch-by-branch.[126] One party document states that "the party's strength must come out of and should be built within the people at the grass root levels."[127] Therefore, Chadema assumed a special status in the struggle. It imagines that it was the collective organ through which CCM dominance would be broken. Slaa proclaimed that "CHADEMA has now been embraced as 'Tanzanians hope' and specifically the oppressed people."[128]

Altogether, Chadema discursively rendered organising the party equivalent to empowering people, which in turn, in (radical-)republican terms, signified emancipation. Slaa claimed that "Chadema visits, rallies, public meetings, demonstrations and internal meetings…are the start of the second liberation."[129] Therefore, a variant on the third republican meaning of "people's power" in Chadema's philosophy was as collective and extra-constitutional power as freedom, and accordingly, collective empowerment as emancipation.

Conclusion

In this article, I have demonstrated that there was and is a strain of republican-democratic thought mixed with ideas of liberation in contemporary African party politics. It was articulated by Chadema through its people's power philosophy. This original, in-formation and changing ideology mixed neo-republican, radical-republican and liberation ideas with democratic ones. It claimed that the Tanzanian state, and through it, Tanzanians, were dominated by a CCM oligarchy which ruled in its private interests. It imagined an interconnected system of corruption and subjugation through which CCM sustained its domination. Later it imagined a system of dictatorship. It

advocated the overthrow and the reform of this system through constitutional reform. This overthrow would achieve individual, neo-republican freedom from an otherwise arbitrary state and the positive democratic freedom of collective self-rule. It also portrayed the overthrow as a liberatory struggle, in which people must participate, and through which they would be empowered as they broke CCM's dominance. It presented itself as the collective vehicle for that popular emancipation. While Chadema leaders were divided on left-right issues, they shared this people power philosophy. In Baregu's words: "People's power, that's our slogan. That has never been a slogan of the right-wing. That way, Chadema was able to accommodate people of my [left-wing] disposition."[130]

While Chadema is the first contemporary African party to which a republican-democratic ideology has been ascribed, it is unlikely to be the only republican voice on the continent. A cluster of opposition movements speak in similar terms to Chadema. Bobi Wine and the People's Power Movement in Uganda bears notable resemblances to it.[131] So does Zimbabwe's Citizen's Coalition for Change. Future research should explore whether and to what extent other African parties' ideologies resemble democratic republicanisms or original hybrids borne of them. It should start with opposition parties in post-liberation authoritarian regimes. These regimes make domination and corruption particularly ripe for opposition critique.[132] It should also look back. Prior research which writes-off democratic principles as ideologically unfaithful or vacant may mischaracterized them. This research should be revisited and perhaps, revised. In particular, the movements that fought for and won democratic transitions in the 1980s and 1990s ought to be reinterpreted. Republicanisms aside, the case of Chadema illustrates the diversity of democratic thought. Future research should

study democratic ideas among contemporary African party messages and explore the diversity in the political thought that they express.

This is a fitting historic moment in which to reconsider the intellectual content of democratic ideas. This article is published at a time in which the partial democratic hegemony of the recent past has been fractured. It is disfigured by some,[133] overtly rejected by others and contradicted in actions of many.[134] Understanding how democracy is understood and championed is more important than ever. This is true as Tanzania as much as anywhere. CCM's authoritarian agenda culminated in the elimination of Chadema in the official 2020 election results.[135] Putting aside any speculation about Chadema's future, that context gives this article the air of an indeterminate obituary. Whatever Chadema's future holds, its cause may live on through its ideas, and that makes understanding them all the more vital.

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Endnotes

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[1] Bleck van de Walle, *Electoral Politics.*

[2] ibid.

[3] Hammersley, *Republicanism,* Skinner, *Liberty*.

[4] Vergara, *Systemic Corruption*; McCormick, *Machiavellian;* Pettit, *Republicanism.*

[5] Paget, "Authoritarian Origins."

[6] Bleck and van de Walle, *Electoral*.

[7] Hamilton, *Freedom Is Power*; Leipold et al, *Radical Republicanism*.

[8] Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, *Interpretive*.

[9] Taylor, "Interpretation."

[10] Laclau and Mouffe, "Post-Marxism."

[11] Laclau, *Politics and Ideology*.

[12] Freeden, *Ideologies*.

[13] ibid.

[14] Glynos and Howarth, *Logics*.

[15] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*.

[16] Ibid, 1

[17] See, for example, Young, *Ideology;* Coleman and Rosberg, *National Integration*.

[18] See, for example, Dorman, *Understanding Zimbabwe*; Beresford et al, "Liberation Movements;" for an overview, see Paget, "Election Campaigns."

[19] See, for example: Husaini, "Beyond;" Opalo and Smith, "Ideology."

[20] Rakner and van de Walle, "Opposition;" Carbone, "Political Parties."

[21] Bleck and van de Walle, *Electoral Politics*; Bleck and van de Walle, "Valence Issues."

[22] Mmuya and Chaligha, *Political Parties;* Jeffries and Thomas, "The Ghanaian."

[23] Whitfield, "'Change';" Mac Giollabhuí, "How," Gallagher and Chan, *Why Mugabe Won.*

[24] Cheeseman, *Democracy.*

[25] Elischer, *Political Parties*, 58, 67 and 72.

[26] Bleck and van de Walle, "Valence Issues," 1405-6.

[27] Bleck and van de Walle, "Parties," 1132-3.

[28] Freeden, "Ideology."

[29] Glynos and Howarth, *Logics*.

[30] Bleck and van de Walle, *Electoral Politics*, 9.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Paller, "Dignified;" Roelofs, "Transparency;" Husaini, "Beyond;" Cheeseman, "Africa."

[33] Hammersley, *Republicanism*.

[34] Leipold, Nabulsi and White, Radical Republicanism; Vergara, Systematic Corruption.

[35] Machiavelli, *Discourses;* Harrington, *The Commonwealth,* First Part of the Preliminaries; for a summary see Hammersley ,*Republicanism*.

[36] See in particular Machiavelli, *Discourses*; but also Montesquieu.

[37] For a summary, see Vergara, *Systemic*.

[38] Skinner, *Liberty*.

[39] Pettit, Republicanism

[40] Ibid, 38.

[41] Hamilton et al, *The Fedealist Papers*, No. 47 to 51.

[42] Pettit, *On the People's Terms*.

[43] Pettit, *Republicanism,* 172

[44] Machiavelli, *Discourses*, especially First Book, Chapters 4-6.

[45] Leipold, Nabulsi, and White, *Radical Republicanism*.

[46] McCormick, Machiavellian Democracy; Vergara, Systemic.

[47] Hamilton, *Freedom is Power*; Harrington, *The Commonwealth*, First Part of the Preliminaries.

[48] Urbinati, "Democracy and Republicanism."

[49] Some contest whether these reconciliations of democratic and republican theory are satisfactory. See Urbinati, "Democracy and Republicanism."

[50] Chadema, *Constitution*.

[51] Chadema, *Foundations*.

[52] Chadema, *Policy*, viii.

[53] Mmuya and Chaligha, *Political Parties*.

[54] Mtei, *From Goatherd*.

[55] *International Democratic Union*, "Member Parties."

[56] Mbowe, speech.

[57] Nyaluke and Connolly, "The Role;"

[58] Nyaluke and Connolly, "The Role;" Babeiya, "Multiparty Elections;" Paget, 'The Authoritarian Origins;" Fouéré, "Tanzania's 2015 Elections."

[59] Bleck and van de Walle, *Electoral Politics*.

[60] Lissu, interview, June 2015.

[61] Baregu, interview.

[62] Chachage, "Magufuli."

[63] Mtulya, interview.

[64] Baregu, interview.

[65] Chadema, *Foundations*, 38.

[66] Chadema, *Constitution*.

[67] Freeden, "Ideology."

[68] Mbowe, speech.

[69] Original text: '..rushwa siyo kwamba iko sekta ya umma pekee yake bali inaunganisha sekta za umma na sekta za binafsi ambako ndio fedha kubwa ya rushwa zinakotoka.' Chadema, 'Election Manifesto," 13.

[70] Vergara, *Systemic Corruption.*

[71] Paget, "Tanzania's Authoritarian Landslide."

[72] Mbowe, 'A Dangerous Shift."

[73] Chadema, *Constitution*.

[74] Mbowe, speech.

[75] Chadema, *Constitution,* 15.

[76] Lissu, interview.

[77] Lissu, *interview*.

[78] Baregu, "How Ignorance."

[79] Kishoa, "Speech."

[80] Mbowe, "Speech."

[81] Slaa, "Report."

[82] Hunter, "Revisiting Ujamaa."

[83] The exact quote from the transcript is '*Zimwi likujualo siyo tu linakula na kumaliza bali hata mifupa haitaonekana japo kila siku wanakuja na kauli tamu tamu*'. Slaa, speech.

[84] Kigaila, *interview*.

[85] Chadema, *Constitution,* 16

[86] Vergara, Systematic Corruption.

[87] Chadema, *Policy.*

[88] Paget, "Shrinking Space."

[89] Karume, "Tanzania."

[90] Paget, "Shrinking Space."

[91] Paget, "Tanzania: The Authoritarian Landslide."

[92] Lissu, “Press Conference.”

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