Devising an Ideology: The Demonstration Effect in East Africa.
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Résumé

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Ideology has a double edge. While normative values often legitimize prevailing interests, new norms also offer advantages in attempts to spur development in the Third World. On the one hand, beliefs and values are directly linked to political economy. They may be a rationalizing device. With ideology, there is an element of what Marx called false consciousness. On the other hand, a working ideology provides guidelines for policy, the framework for implementation, as well as broad designs for the future.

In low income countries, an ideology of modernization may be used to challenge primordial loyalties and dominant socio-economic formations. Insofar as a modernizing ideology is a challenger, it is also a gamble. With the introduction of new norms, the stakes are higher than in pragmatic interest politics. A regime encourages its citizenry to think in terms of ultimate goals and objectives. Ideology becomes the agent responsible for success and bears the stigma of failure.

But to ignore the normative dimensions of social change is also chancy. A regime which neglects new norms takes the risk of suffering from the steady grip of tradition whereby conservative orientations cut against developmental goals. Given the gap between beliefs and values, on the one hand, and a rapidly changing socio-political environment, on the other, there is a compelling need to fill the void and re-align elements of the political process. It is in this regard that modernizing ideologies are potentially valuable resources.

If ideology is to serve as an effective agent for social transformation, it is essential that ruling elites strive for self-defined, autonomous patterns of development. Yet there is close ideological affinity between the precepts of the political and social thought promoted by established interests within the international system and the dominant constellations of privilege in the Third World. Other peoples' material and political culture have a major impact on thought patterns in underdeveloped areas.

In that the vulnerability of the periphery (the masses in the Third World) to the center (the ruling classes in advanced, capitalist societies and their local agents) is already the subject of considerable attention in a burgeoning literature, we will not examine this primary aspect of dependency relations. Our purpose is to set forth some of the transnational ideological relationships which work against attempts to create locally derived strategies of development.

The East African experience illustrates that ideological affinity also emerges as an inter-periphery phenomenon. Just as the penetration of thought patterns from advanced, capitalist countries is inimical to development in the Third World, adopting ideological initiatives from other low income areas can be unsuitable for the historically and contextually specific conditions in the borrowing country. An imported ideology may be divorced from the national setting, fundamentally misguided as regards its unintended impact, and threatening to bastions of privilege so as to promote political violence.

The discussion which follows compares and examines the ideological linkages between two States at the periphery, Uganda from its independence in 1962 until the 1971 ouster of Obote, and Tanzania during the same period. Though this analysis is not a study of political economy per se, the focus on ideology is intended to complement those works which primarily stress dependency and class. The point of departure is that while it would be wrong to overestimate the impact of new norms, ideology plays a vital role in social change. Our argument is not the primacy of ideology but its centrality in attempts to induce behavior consonant with national goals. Hopefully, the contribution of this paper will be to delineate little noticed ideological relationships which are operative at the periphery.

Discernible Patterns

As Obote's response to the problems of underdevelopment increasingly took the form of ideological initiative, many observers regarded Obote's efforts in Uganda as a faint imitation of Nyerere's in Tanzania. In


3. In 1964, three years after independence, Tanganyika joined Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Unless otherwise specified, this text refers to Tanzania, whether pre-1964 or post-1964. A relevant question, though beyond the scope of this paper, asks why Kenya did not become a partner to this relationship. A partial answer turns on Kenya's resource endowment. Relative to Uganda and Tanzania, external market forces have a greater stake in Kenya. Moreover, the White settlers' bargaining position was instrumental in establishing a national bourgeoisie so as to preempt and coopt an effective assertion of nationalism.
terms of ideology, the relationship between these two statesmen involved more than chance resemblance. Rather, the demonstration effect obtained whereby the diffusion of ideological patterns transpired across national borders. Though perhaps not a dominant causal factor, the demonstration effect served to reinforce and contribute to the respective predispositions of at least two African presidents.

While ideological cooperation involves an intended convergence of values, ideological emulation entails the attempt to adopt the same or similar normative values as those derived in another national context. With the increase or spread of ideology in two or more inter-related States, an extreme form of emulation may occur. Escalating ideological relationships arise in a situation in which one leader perceives that the leader of another State is winning acclaim as an ideologue, as well as from a tendency to employ ideology as a symbolic response to objective problems which remain unresolved at the non-symbolic level. In other words, ideological escalation occurs as a form of emulative behavior, one-upmanship in an area characterized by the personalization of politics, or as a compensatory device.4

Where the demonstration effect represents a key factor in devising an ideology of modernization, it is only a partial explanation. In addition to transnational elements, internal social conditions define the structure of choice and provide the constraint under which leadership operates. In East Africa, whatever Obote's personal inclinations, he was unable to exercise the options open to Nyerere. Whereas Tanzania is characterized by a language spoken by over 85 percent of the people, a vast number of ethnic groups unable to dominate the political system, and leadership with widespread charismatic appeal, Uganda is marked by linguistic diversity, cultural heterogeneity aggravated by the role of one historically predominant heartland group, and an absence of charismatic authority. While the Zanzibari radicals represent the chief pressure on Nyerere from within, pro-monarchical sentiment among major ethnic groups consistently provided an internal limiting condition for Obote. In the post-independence period, Obote aspired to match the accomplishments of Nyerere; however, Obote in Uganda was prevented from doing what Nyerere in Tanzania was able to do.

The Demonstration Effect

There were numerous points of convergence between the official ideologies of Tanzania and Uganda. Due to limitations on time and space, it is impossible to examine all of them. To illustrate general trends, the discussion will explore four areas in which the parallels are most

4. Given the complexity of social phenomena, these patterns overlap and coexist. Though the analyst may prefer neatly separable categories, a more realistic but modest objective is to establish broadly identifiable tendencies.
striking: the leaders' conceptions of socialism and self-reliance, the single party, national service, and nationalization.

The major landmarks in the attempts to introduce socialism in Tanzania and Uganda are familiar to specialists on East Africa. Nevertheless, for comparative purposes, some of the pivotal events will be briefly reviewed.

At least as early as 1958 Nyerere began to present publicly his views on socialism. In a pamphlet titled *Mali ya Taifa*, he warned that if land were treated like private property two groups would emerge—relatively few landlords exploiting large numbers of tenants—; poor workers victimized by exorbitant rents would not even be allowed to earn fair wages for their labor.5

In December, 1959, Nyerere began to plant the seeds of self-reliance. Speaking before independence, Nyerere said that Tanzania would reject aid that had political strings attached. He advised that though many offers of help could be expected, they were likely to be dangerous.6 In subsequent years, the theme of self-reliance was to emerge as a major tenet of socialist construction in Tanzania. On many occasions Nyerere emphasized that a socializing society must shift the stress from external to internal resources; it is only by self-reliance, a strategy for remediying the adverse effects of the world market, that an underdeveloped country redefines its relations with external forces.

In his now famous ‘Ujamaa, the Basis of African Socialism’ speech, Nyerere affirmed that an attitude of mind distinguishes the socialist from the non-socialist. According to the Tanzanian president, socialism is not a question of possessing wealth. Rather, the essence of socialism turns on whether one’s income is used to serve or dominate one’s fellow man. It was the foreigner who introduced alien concepts as regards marketable commodities to Africa. *Ujamaa*, or familyhood, describes Tanzanian socialism: ‘It is opposed to capitalism, which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of exploitation of man by man; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism which seeks to build a happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man.’7

Becoming more specific, in his inaugural address (delivered 10 December 1962), Nyerere dwelled on the significance of agriculture in the transition to socialism. He stressed that since Tanzania is largely composed of peasants but few wage-earners, agriculture would have to be the basis for development. This would necessitate abandoning old methods of cultivation, organizing *ujamaa* villages, and strengthening the co-operative movement.8

In the wake of the army mutiny and the Act of Union of 1964, Nyerere dealt increasingly with concrete policy implications of his earlier speeches. Tanzania placed labor unions under the auspices of government; blessed the single party with *de jure* status; gave sustenance to rural mobilization under the villagization program; called on States with centrally planned economies for foreign aid; and invited Eastern countries to join the Canadians as military advisors. Finally, in 1967, the Arusha Declaration not only capped the initiatives of the preceding years but was drafted as an ideological blueprint for future policies. The acknowledged purpose of this document was to correct a situation in which "the absence of a generally accepted and easily understood statement of philosophy and policy was causing problems." The Declaration placed the accent on public control over the economy, domestic mobilization, social equality, and rural development through socialism. Though gaps remained, a variety of measures were immediately enacted to implement the goals set forth by the president.

In Uganda, largely due to internal constraints and the power of external interests, Obote necessarily adopted a gradualist approach to socialism. The early years after independence gave evidence of a few guarded hints at socialist construction. However, the rhetoric remained vague. The more explicit pronouncements voiced by Nyerere in Tanzania were lacking in Uganda. The realities of the immediate post-independence period included a mixed economy with considerable latitude for free enterprise, private ownership of land and major industries, exploitation of resources primarily by foreign firms, and the control of distribution and exchange by non-Ugandans.

Nevertheless, in mid-1963 Obote's speeches began to reveal a flavor of pro-socialist sentiment. The Prime Minister's May Day speech extended fraternal greetings to the 'labouring masses of Uganda' as well as to 'the workers' movement the world over', and expressed solidarity 'with all the progressive forces struggling against exploitation and human indignity'. Although there are somewhat clouded reports of Obote's earliest mention of the need for socialism in Uganda, the first explicit statement was issued during the 1964 debates on one-partyism. While assuring businessmen that nationalization was not in the offing, Obote

spoke of his socialist proclivities and the implications for Uganda's party system:

'We have decided to follow a Socialist line of development. Consequently Socialist principles must inform, guide and govern the basis, form, and content of all the institutions of our society. Our lives, thoughts, and actions must reflect the same trend.

Discipline, order, control and planning are elements of the Socialist code of action, behavior and approach. Organized opposition against the Government is a typical capitalist notion and concept and under capitalism the laws are those of the jungle, namely free for all, laissez-faire, and the survival of the fittest. We have rejected capitalism once and for all.'"\(^{13}\)

Subsequently, following a series of resolutions passed by the Uganda Peoples' Congress Annual Delegates' Conference in June, 1968, the President launched the Move to the Left. The proposals issued in 1969 and 1970 consisted of five ideological documents blueprinting the 'new political culture'. Document no 1, the Common Man's Charter, can be regarded as the ideological stepchild of the Arusha Declaration. As Nyerere had explained that the purpose of the Declaration was to make Tanzania's ideology explicit,\(^{14}\) Obote declared that the Charter would define the practical steps and strategy for the implementation of new party resolutions. While the Arusha Declaration began with a statement of the TANU creed committing the party to building a socialist State, the Charter’s introduction advised:

'[W]e do hereby adopt this Charter for the realization of the real meaning of Independence, namely that the resources of the country, material and human, be exploited for the benefit of all the people of Uganda in accordance with principles of Socialism.'\(^{15}\)

Just as feudalists and capitalists were cited in the Declaration as enemies of socialism, the Charter identified the malaise in Uganda as capitalism, the well-to-do, entrenched interests, the educated, foreign influence, feudalists and neo-feudalists; the latter elements—those with privileged positions based on heredity and landed wealth—were denoted as the major obstacle to the creation of a socialist revolutionary society. Similar to Nyerere’s earlier pronouncements about socialism as an attitude of mind, Obote suggested that answers to Uganda’s problems should begin with the generation of new attitudes to life and wealth.\(^{16}\)

In line with achieving socialism, like the Arusha Declaration, the Charter emphasized public ownership, national development through self-reliance, a more equitable distribution of income, welfare of the peasantry, and the decline of social privilege. As regards foreign rela-

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16. Ibid., p. 7.
tions, both stood firm on the need to combat dependency, a commitment
to fight for liberation, and support for African unity.

Of the two East African countries, Tanzania pioneered the one-party
system. In a 1961 article, President Nyerere argued that traditional
African society had been democratic although it lacked the institutional
form of an opposition party: ‘An organized opposition is not an essential
element [of democracy].’ Later that year, he returned to this same
theme: ‘The existence of two or more stable political parties implies a
class structure of society and we aim at avoiding the growth of different
social and economic classes in our country.’

While mainland Tanzania attained independence with a single party
and by 1965 legislation had outlawed opposition parties, the situation
was far different with the multi-party system ushering in Uganda’s post-
colonial era. Just after Nyerere’s announcement of a commission to
consider constitutional changes necessary to effect a ‘democratic one-
party State’, Obote introduced the idea of the single party in a speech
at Lira. As one would expect, members of the opposition raised strong
objections. Some members of the Prime Minister’s own party even
expressed misgivings. In the period that followed, however, Obote’s
Uganda Peoples’ Congress became the de facto single party. With many
members of the opposition crossing the floor and the imposition of a
state of emergency in Buganda, the UPC was able to consolidate its
power. Finally, in the face of fledgling dissent, the 1969 Delegates’
Conference proposed a resolution, which was adopted by Parliament as
a constitutional amendment, to establish a de jure one-party system.

Of the proposals for the Move to the Left, document no 2 providing
for national service could have been the most consequential for political
development in Uganda. The national service proposals focused on
the twin problems of rural life and elitism. The Obote regime sought
to make life in the countryside more attractive and thereby stem the
migration to urban areas. The president cautioned that new values
would have to be forged not only among the peasantry but among a
parasitic elite as well. Attitudes were to be changed by promoting
‘African Revolution, Culture, and Aspirations’, and in a tone which
echoes Nyerere, by encouraging ‘self-reliance’ in problem-solving. In
a language reminiscent of the Arusha Declaration, document no 2 laid
stress on the initiative of the people. According to the Declaration:
‘The People—In order properly to implement the policy of self-reliance,
the people have to be taught the meaning of self-reliance and its prac-
tice.’ Document no 2 counseled that ‘problems which face the country

17. NYERERE 1967: 106.
18. Ibid., p. 134.
19. ‘Nyerere on One-Party State’, Uganda Argus, January 30, 1964; and Report
of the Presidential Commission on the Establishment of a Democratic One Party
State, Dar es Salaam, n.d.
... can best be solved by the people themselves [...] it is the duty and obligation of every individual to work towards the goal of self-reliance in solving problems which may face the country.22

Both in terms of substance and wording, other themes in Document no. 2 corresponded directly to Tanzania’s National Service Plan, the section of the Arusha Declaration dealing with rural education, and the President’s speech ‘Education for Self-Reliance’. Like the Tanzanian plan, Uganda’s scheme called for a course in ‘national consciousness’. As Nyerere had said that national service would be valuable in blunting social differences and creating political awareness, Obote affirmed that it would enable ‘people of different backgrounds to participate in national and community projects, thereby affording to all participants [...] opportunities to know more [...] about Uganda and her people, and to develop new values and attitudes towards the Nation’.23

It was originally Nyerere who, in 1966, ordered university students to enter national service so that they would not become isolated or cut off from their rural origin. Dar es-Salaam students were not pleased with prospects of obligatory labor in the countryside. When they demonstrated against the National Service Plan, calling it ‘the new colonialism’, Nyerere expelled 300 participants in the demonstration. In contrast, the National Union of Uganda Students welcomed Obote’s proposals. They went so far as to suggest that the camps should provide for military training. While a variety of nuances served to distinguish the Tanzanian and Ugandan plans (length of service, internal organization of the camps, etc.), the major difference was Obote’s self-conscious rejection of ‘training in arms of war’ in favor of ‘arms for the sustained development of the economy’. Though Uganda had its border problems, they were not on the scale of the threat posed to Tanzania by Portuguese White settler colonialism. Hence Uganda had little need for a citizenry versed in the techniques of warfare. Moreover, such skills could be used locally by dissenting groups. Given the level of internal ethnic strife and pro-secessionist sentiment, Obote decided not to establish a paramilitary national service force in Uganda.

Finally, following the takeover of major industries in Tanzania and Zambia, Obote’s Labour Day speech of 1 May 1970 announced Uganda’s program for nationalization. As a declaration of intent, the plan which Obote set forth in the May Day pronouncements was the most decisive of the documents issued under the Move to the Left. The Pronouncements proclaimed that effective from the day of the speech, the government would assume 60 percent control of the 84 major industries in Uganda. Foreign business interests were to be compensated out of repatriated profits over the next 15 years.24

Uganda’s nationalization scheme never came to fruition. The large

companies effectively bargained around the 60 percent-40 percent provision; the government failed to develop the institutional prerequisites for comprehensive financial planning; and Uganda, unlike Tanzania, never accepted responsibility for the management of many of the large concerns.25

Divergence and Directions of Influence

An attempt to determine the areas of convergence must also note the points of divergence. One distinguishing feature is style. While Nyerere tends to be concrete, positive, and conciliatory, Obote was more abstract, negative, and aggressive. Compare, for example, their manner of dealing with locally privileged groups and exploitation. Nyerere’s message has been expressed simply, in summary form: ‘A truly socialist State is one in which all people are workers and in which neither capitalism nor feudalism exists.’26 Speaking on the same theme, Obote attacked, pointed his finger, and stopped just short of naming the Baganda:

‘We reject [...] that Uganda as a whole or any part of it should be the domain of any person, of feudalism, of capitalism, of vested interests of one kind or another, of foreign influence or of foreigners. We further reject exploitation of material and human resources for the benefit of a few.’27

For a Ugandan audience, the innuendo left little doubt on the identity of the ‘feudalists’ and ‘capitalists’.

Furthermore, in terms of content, Tanzania and Uganda have pursued divergent courses of action on some key foreign policy issues. In the early 1960s, when Nyerere pressed to make East African federation an institutional reality, Obote exercised caution and circumspection toward his neighbors.28 Over Southern Rhodesia’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence (November, 1965) Nyerere severed diplomatic relations with Britain. The Tanzanian president explained his position on Radio Dar es-Salaam: ‘Our anger and suspicion arise from the fact that Britain is not [...] committed to the principle of independence only on the basis of majority rule.’29 While Obote issued vitriolic verbal condemnation of London’s failure to bring down the minority regime by all necessary means, Uganda did not join the nine African States which complied with an OAU Council of Minister’s decision to break diplomatic ties with UK.

When war erupted in Nigeria, Tanzania was the first of four African States to recognize the Republic of Biafra. For the Federal government, which had come to Nyerere’s aid in the army mutiny of 1964, it was painful to hear the Tanzanian president argue that ‘the breakup of Nigeria is a terrible thing but it is less terrible than the cruel war’.30 As host to the Kampala peace talks of May, 1968, Obote officially assumed a neutral stance; his Foreign Minister, Sam Odaka, acted as mediator. Nevertheless the Ugandan president revealed sympathy for the secession movement. Referring to the pro-Biafra stand as ‘the humanist approach to politics’, Obote declared that only the Kampala conference prevented him from recognizing Biafra.31 After Presidents Nyerere and Kaunda opened diplomatic relations with Ojukwu, in all likelihood, Obote would have liked to follow suit; however, he was aware that Uganda’s disgruntled ethnic groups could invoke the precedent to legitimize their own cause.

These points of divergence notwithstanding, the modal pattern is that the measures introduced in Tanzania presaged the adoption of similar steps in Uganda; and the direct correspondance in the official ideologies cannot be passed off as mere coincidence. But to posit ideological escalation, influence must be reciprocal. The relationship cannot be one way; all parties concerned must provide leads.

To be sure, on the ideological level, the relationship between Nyerere and Obote was asymmetrical. Nyerere had greater influence on Obote than vice versa. Nevertheless it would be mistaken to suggest that Uganda’s program was a mere replication of Tanzania’s, for Obote did take the initiative. By any standard, document no 5—the Proposals for New Methods of Election—offered an innovative and original technique for dealing with Uganda’s ethnic problems. (The impact in Tanzania was negligible since ethnic rivalry does not represent as serious a source of political conflict as in Uganda.) An outstanding example of an Obote lead can be identified as Uganda’s consistently skeptical policy on foreign aid which dates from the early years after independence. When Nyerere was attempting to attract foreign assistance without the more contemporary emphasis on its consequences and implications, Obote was actualizing these reservations in terms of governmental policy. Government spokesmen voiced concern that those who supplied aid were reaping political concessions and maintaining instability in the Third World. Uganda’s Prime Minister warned that foreign assistance could be a helpful supplement to local programs but never a substitute. Hence Uganda made a less concerted effort to secure aid than its East African neighbors, and indeed has been granted much smaller amounts

of assistance. In 1964, Uganda received only 1.9 percent of total US economic aid to 32 African countries; the corresponding figure for Tanzania is 4.6 percent. Over the next four years the amounts for Uganda and Tanzania decreased to .89 percent and 2.02 percent respectively. While Uganda received a total of $30,000,000 in economic aid from the US through 1968, Tanzania drew $60,000,000. On a per capita basis, in 1968 the US granted $.30 to Uganda and $.44 to Tanzania. (The mean for US economic aid to Africa per capita, 1968 was $1.13.) From 1958 to 1965, total Eastern bloc aid was $30,000,000 to Uganda and $51,000,000 to Tanzania. In recent years Nyerere has attempted to attract aid, but only as an increment to local initiatives. Tanzania’s official policy emphasizes self-reliance at home and admonishes outside powers about ‘the second scramble for Africa’—a posture which Obote sought to implement earlier on. In all likelihood Obote’s stance in Uganda provided a contributory factor for the policy which Tanzania was to assume. For the most part, however, Obote did not supply leads but served as an ideological bedfellow offering reinforcement, confirmation, and occasional fillips for Nyerere’s initiatives.

Linkage Mechanisms

What were the channels for this ideological relationship? What mechanisms sustained or facilitated the demonstration effect? These questions cannot be answered with certitude. One can only speculate about the psychological elements and the personal attitudes of these two leaders, although some of their public statements are revealing in this regard. However, with greater assurance, one can delineate the institutional milieu of the relationship.

Before probing the mutual perceptions of Nyerere and Obote, it is essential to note that other leaders also had influence. Obote, for example, admired Nkrumah. In the early 1960’s, facing internal pressure from the Baganda against East African federation, Obote assumed the Nkrumahist position; he argued that regional Pan-Africanism would


Yet there is no doubt that Nyerere was aware of the dangers of economic dependence even before independence. In a 1961 speech delivered to the UN, Nyerere (1967: 152) commented: ‘The word “neo-colonialism” is one which I believe has some danger, but there is also a reality: the replacement of political domination by economic domination.’

33. The data on foreign aid are derived from Donald George MORRISON et al., eds., Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook, New York, 1972: 134-138. Their data for aid received from the ex-metropole are for 1967 and 1969. In these years the amount of assistance from Britain to Tanzania was largely a function of the rupture in diplomatic relations over Rhodesia’s UDI as well as a disagreement regarding the payment of pensions to former British officials in the colonial service. Hence these figures do not shed light on the issue posed and are not cited above.
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contradict efforts to forge continental unity. And when Nkrumah was unseated via military coup, Obote publicly expressed remorse.

Moreover, it can be argued that the demonstration effect in ideology obtains among other African statesmen as well. In Nigeria, for example, Nkrumah's stand on African unity had enormous appeal. A strong case can be made that leftist and other dissenting groups in pre-war Nigeria sought to emulate Nkrumah and regain the initiative. As the Ghanaian leader's stature grew among the non-aligned, Chief Awolowo and others opposed to the ruling coalition frequently said that Nkrumah's position on international questions provided a model for what Nigeria should be doing.34

Of course, one would not expect statesmen to make a tacit acknowledgment of ideological emulation or escalation. So careful were these two East African presidents not to recognize publicly the evolving relationship that an avoidance taboo became operative. Nyerere assiduously refrained from making public statements about affairs in Uganda during the Obote years. The Tanzanian leader once said that African statesmen should not comment upon, let alone intervene into, the internal affairs of another State.35 When pressed by a reporter about the effect of his policies on neighboring States, Nyerere replied: 'We are not showing other people what to do. Tanzania was doing what was right for her [...] But each country must at every given point judge for itself what is right for itself.'36

For his part, Obote once remarked that Tanzania would not influence Uganda.37 In speeches and governmental papers, the Ugandan president generally shied away from matters of Tanzanian politics. For example, after two weeks of front page coverage in the Uganda Argus of the recently introduced Arusha Declaration, the only indication of the President's reaction came in an article entitled 'Assurance by Dr. Obote: Uganda Retains Public Sector Policy'.38 According to the newspaper account, at the opening of Parliament in Kampala Obote pledged that 'Tanzania's decision did not affect Uganda's own decision toward the private sector'.39 Attempting to consolidate power before launching the Move to the Left, Obote was wary of criticism that may have resulted from praising Nyerere's policies. Amid a generally troubled atmosphere in Uganda as regards the implications of the Arusha Declaration, it is not surprising that Obote preferred either to remain silent or to assuage the fears of the insecure. In a less guarded moment on another occasion,

37. Ibid., February 8, 1967.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
the Ugandan president was given to reflection upon the influence of prominent African ideologues:

‘As regards the view that I was showing signs of wanting to be a philosophical President like Leopold Senghor of Senegal or Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, I have to say that I am a practical and professional politician. My knowledge—and I regret to say this—of President Senghor is limited, but I know President Julius Nyerere well. I can say that I have learned from the latter, and hope to continue to learn from him. After all, he is older than myself and his country achieved independence before mine. In the second place, he built a strong party, which is the only party in mainland Tanzania and [...] we in Africa are learning from one another...’

However, when the Ugandan president was overthrown, Nyerere no longer avoided comment on his erstwhile colleague. In no uncertain terms, Nyerere opined that whereas Obote stood for political unity and local control over economic matters, Amin would serve the interests of imperialism and exploit the people.

A number of international organizations provided the institutional setting where East African leaders could confer. Various sessions of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa, the Organization of African Unity, the East African Community, and the summit talks of East and Central African States offered opportunities for consultation. On a more intimate basis, meetings between ideological partners were regularized in June, 1967, when Nyerere, Obote, and Zambia’s increasingly militant head of State, Kenneth Kaunda, formed a fraternal order called the Mulungushi Club. Membership in this club included a pact whereby each of the three presidents agreed to attend the annual gatherings of one another’s political parties. Although one cannot be precise about the way they influenced each other within the grouping, it is interesting that one of Obote’s few public comments about Nyerere was issued at a Mulungushi meeting. In an October, 1967, address to the TANU Delegation, Obote remarked: ‘The UPC is using in its policies part of the policies of its neighboring countries.’ And it was at an annual meeting of the UPC, with Nyerere and Kaunda in attendance, that the Common Man’s Charter was adopted as Uganda’s official ideology.

In 1970, Obote delivered a get-tough speech to the university over demonstrations that had occurred three months earlier in July. He

43. Uganda Argus, October 18, 1967.
delayed giving the speech until the October inauguration ceremony when
Nyerere, Kaunda, and Kenyatta would be present. Just after Nyerere
had reminded students at the university of Dar es-Salaam of the 'need to
serve' and of 'developing socialist Tanzania', Obote sounded the same
note: 'As from today this university must attune itself to the service
of the Republic, to the causes of socialism and republicanism in this
land and to the cause and success of the African revolution.' Whereas
Nyerere advised of the need to correct past errors, Obote warned: 'We
inaugurate the university today at a time when Uganda is going through
a revolution as a socialist State. This fact by itself presupposes that
the university must also change its direction...'

 Appropriately enough, Obote's last stand—an adamant position on
the issue of British arms sales to South Africa—was common cause
among the presidents of Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia; a careful
reading of their speeches indicates that Obote was becoming the most
militant of his brethren. And when Obote was removed from office, he
immediately visited his erstwhile Mulungushi partners. In search of
refuge, the former president was granted sanctuary at the State House,
Dar es-Salaam.

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When the coup ousted Obote, it was widely believed that more docu-
ments were forthcoming; but the president was deposed before he could
announce them. In all likelihood, the new documents would have esca-
lated ideology even further. However, without verification for these
reports, it is impossible to gauge the proportions which ideological
escalation would have assumed.

To the extent that ideology was infectious, it worked against Obote. He
devised an ideology which was largely transplanted from another national
context. The Move to the Left proved to be inappropriate for social
structure in Uganda, unsuited to the historical setting, and misconceived
in its application. Since the overthrow of a government is multicausal,
it cannot be claimed that the demonstration effect brought about a coup.
Rather, the patterns that we have set forth—ideological cooperation,
ideological emulation, and ideological escalation—were major contrib-
utory factors producing an atmosphere of generalized grievance whereby
the military could intervene.

To be sure, devising an ideology of modernization is a difficult task.
Nevertheless, the lesson from Uganda is that attempts by peripheries

44. 'President Nyerere on the Role of the University', in Colin Legum and
Anthony Hughes, eds., Africa Contemporary Record: Annual Survey and Documents
45. 'Uganda's Dedication to Africa', Uganda Argus, October 9, 1970.
46. Ibid.
47. Cf. the statements by Nyerere and Obote in Legum and Hughes: C 26-29,
B 194-195.
to copy outside models are unlikely to serve their interests. To introduce a modernizing ideology successfully, new socio-economic formations must be created. If new norms are to take hold, it is essential to change the base of social and economic interests. Prevailing concentrations of wealth and privilege need be challenged. Yet the relationship between norms and interests is reciprocal; ideology, when used in conjunction with other strategies, can be one agent to forge social transformation.

In Uganda, one of the major difficulties was inadequate concern for the institutional consequences of suddenly imposing an ideology of modernization. Some of the proposals introduced under the Move to the Left were a surprise to many of Obote’s own colleagues in the Cabinet. The May Day pronouncements (which may have been directed at certain high level government officials and civil servants), for example, were not subject to debate prior to the decision, and the document took effect immediately from the time of the president’s speech.48

By comparison, though the official ideology in Tanzania has yet to deal fully with certain issues (e.g., industrial growth and rural capitalism), the merit of Ujamaa is its consistency. With each step, Nyerere has sought to anticipate the way in which new norms can be attached concretely to political institutions. The Arusha Declaration, for example, gave tangible meaning to governmental policies of the previous years. In releasing the Declaration, Nyerere sought the propitious moment. According to one account, the announcement was expected since 1963 when the national executive committee of TANU called for the establishment of a commission to make recommendations on socialism.49

The president waited to establish the instruments for implementation; but he was also wary of the dangers of delay. Nyerere once remarked that if another 18 months had been allowed to elapse, it would have been impossible to assault the various citadels of privilege.50 Thus, the extent of indigenous contribution, the acute sense of timing, the attempt to prepare local cadres, planning for the full scope of guiding values as to their impact, and particularly credibility in terms of the relationship between rhetoric and reality differentiate ideology in Tanzania and Uganda.

This explanation helps account for why the imperial system did not remove Obote prior to coup of January, 1971. While the Ugandan president was not a mere puppet of his close friend in Tanzania, Obote allowed personal loyalties to play a major role in decision-making.

48 On one occasion Obote (‘Memorandum by the President of the UPC, Dr. A. Milton Obote, to the Delegates’ Conference to Be Held at Mbale on 28th August, 1970’. Kampala, August 21, 1970) acknowledged this problem: ‘A new ideology cannot be implemented through the institutional structure of the old system.’


He adopted many policies which were identical to Nyerere's, but neither grounded in common political and material interests nor attuned to a shared social structure. Hence the hegemonic powers had little to fear from the Move to the Left, especially in view of the commanding position of external market forces in the Ugandan economy and the collaboration of local agents.

But why did as astute a politician as Milton Obote make such elemental blunders? And to what degree are these ideological patterns generalizable to other national contexts? What lessons are to be derived?

In those countries whose economies are dependent and subordinate, the availability of agents to effect social transformation is severely limited. There are few options which present themselves. Since world market forces ultimately play a preponderant role in low income countries, the chances of successfully combatting those who determine the use and movement of foreign capital are slight. In cases where local leadership primarily relies on ideology to effect social transformation, the chosen strategy merely offers testimony to the weakness of the national bourgeoisie. Turning to change at the normative level when coordinated measures for implementation are lacking demonstrates the inability or unwillingness of the ruling elites to confront dominant socio-economic concentrations. Regimes which place foremost emphasis on ideology are generally incapable of adopting developmental strategies of a more fundamentally economic and political nature.

J. H. MITTELMAN — *Créer une idéologie: l'effet de démonstration en Afrique orientale*. Dans les pays sous-développés, une idéologie modernisatrice, introduisant de nouvelles normes conçues en forme d'objectifs communs à long terme, peut être un instrument efficace contre le maintien d'intérêts sectoriels et la prédominance de groupes fractionnels. Elle peut aussi servir de substitut à des valeurs et normes traditionnelles défaillantes ou périmées, dans une situation de transformations sociales rapides. Dans certains pays, l'idéologie modernisatrice, plutôt que d'invention locale, paraît inspirée par celle d'un autre pays : c'est l'effet de démonstration, qui peut comporter des dangers, dans la mesure où les contextes différents, comme le montre ici une comparaison de l'*Ujamaa* tanzanienne avec la *Common Man Charter* ougandaise du Président Obote.