

Tools of Deception: Media Coverage of Student Protests in Tanzania

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INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognized that news, like other forms of discourse, is not a neutral representation of facts (van Dijk 1988, 1992, 1995; Fairclough 1995a, 1995b; Fowler 1987; McLeod and Hertog 1992; Downing 1990). Writers, editors, and presenters of news select, interpret and present events from particular ideological positions. They not only present selected facts according to their orientation, but also construct reality in a manner consistent with their underlying ideologies. News reports, therefore, impose a world view of the editors, writers, and presenters and their value systems.

Numerous studies of media discourse have demonstrated how various linguistic features are employed to construct representations of various social groups in the western media (for example, Wodak 1991; van Dijk 1988, 1992, 1995; Fairclough 1995b; Sykes 1988; McLeod and Hertog 1992; Brookes 1995; Riggins 1997). The studies show that ideological representations play an extremely crucial role in molding the reader's perception and understanding of reality. Although much of the research has focussed on western media, the body of studies on how states exert control over state- or party-owned media in Africa is growing (Kasoma 1995, 1997; Ruijter 1989; Pratt 1996; Ziegler and Asante 1992; Olayiwola 1995). However, little research has been done on how African newspapers use linguistic features to construct ideological representations of various post-colonial civic organizations.

In this paper I examine the coverage of the 1978 and 1990 University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) crises by the most widely read newspapers in the country, **Uhuru** and **Mzalendo**, in order to illustrate how state- and party-controlled media manipulated public perception of student protests and the government response to the protests. This paper is a contribution to the study of the way post-colonial regimes in Africa manipulated the public against civic organizations by isolating them and portraying them as subversive. An analysis such as this one will contribute to our understanding of how authoritarian regimes in post-colonial Africa remained popular in spite of frequent abuses of power.

Through critical discourse analysis, I examine the representation of the government, the students, the students' struggles and the punishment that the government meted on the students. I will show that the stories depict the students as selfish and spoiled children, and the President and the government as a fair and considerate parent. The newspapers legitimize the steps taken by the government and delegitimize student

protest by using various linguistic expressions. I will also discuss a social reality that was completely obscured in the papers, namely, the student actions as instances of struggles for democratic reforms. In so doing I will be locating the news discourse on the crises in the wider historical context.

1. BACKGROUND TO CRISES AT THE HILL

There have been many student protests at the universities and colleges in Tanzania since independence. The government's response in most cases has been severe repression, and public opinion has on the whole supported the government position and has been very unsympathetic to the students even though the students championed the rights of the public. In this section, I provide a brief narrative of the protests in 1978 and 1990 at the University of Dar es Salaam (also popularly known as the Hill), protests whose coverage is the subject of this paper.

1.1 CRISIS IN 1978

On March 5, 1978, about 350 students from the University of Dar es Salaam, Ardhi Institute (college for land and survey studies), and the Water Resources Institute, all of Dar es Salaam, marched towards the offices of the government newspaper, **Daily News**, in the city. They were brutally intercepted by the paramilitary riot police, Field Force Unit, who beat and dispersed them. They later regrouped and proceeded to the offices of the government daily to read their memorandum. Their complaints included, among others:

- Excessive increase in the benefits of ministers, members of parliament, and other party and government leaders;
- The passage of this increase came when the country was engulfed in an economic crisis that forced the government to suspend its 5 year development plan and other social programs;
- Escalating national debt;
- Low wages of workers and low prices of farmers' produce;
- Apparent departure from socialist ideals.

After reading their memorandum, the students were rounded up, detained, and subsequently expelled from their respective institutions. The dynamic Dar es Salaam University Students Union (DUSO) which was held responsible for organizing the protest was banned by the government (Peter and Sengondo 1985; **Africa Now** April 1978).

The march was prompted by what the students perceived as the refusal of the President to meet with them to discuss national issues. They had requested a meeting with the Chancellor, who was also the President of the United Republic, Mr. Julius Nyerere, to discuss their complaints. The President agreed, but the response never reached the students, because the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Ibrahim Kaduma, had wanted them to meet the Party Executive Secretary. They took their grievances to the newspaper, so they could be made available to the public (Sengondo and Peter 1985; Shivji 1992).

The **Daily News** never published the memorandum. Instead, the government accused the students of engaging in acts of hooliganism and protesting against a made-up government program to send them to villages as experts (**Uhuru** March 6th 1978). The expelled students were later pardoned after finding fault with the university administration. The ban on DUSO, however, was never lifted. The President instead entrusted the Youth League of the ruling party (the only political party allowed) to run student affairs. Subsequently, *Muungano wa Wanafunzi Tanzania* - MUWATA (Tanzania Students Union) was formed by the youth wing to oversee all student governments in colleges and universities. MUWATA remained the student government at the University of Dar es Salaam to the time of the 1990 crisis.

1.2 CRISIS IN 1990

In April 1990, students at the University of Dar es Salaam presented a list of grievances to the university administration demanding the immediate attention of the university administrators and the central government¹. Their demands included:

- Increase in allowances to enable them to cope with inflation;
- Better remunerations and working conditions for university faculty in order to curb brain drain;
- Better prices for agricultural produce for farmers;
- Government accountability and curbing of government corruption;
- Increase in the education budget.

To underscore the urgency of their demands, the students held an 'Extended *Baraza*' or a long meeting. Unlike boycotts or strikes, which were illegal, such an extended meeting was legal. Students did not picket, nor did they demonstrate. However, they could not attend classes because they had these pressing issues to resolve.

Student leaders met with the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Geoffrey Mmari, and later had audience with the President of the United Republic, Mr. Ali Hassan Mwinyi, who was also the Chancellor. They requested the Chancellor to meet with the student

¹ My narrative here is based on the news stories in the sister papers **Uhuru** and **Mzalendo**, **Daily News** (April and May 1990 issues), **Africa Events** (August 1990), and my own recollections.

community to discuss their concerns. He promised to meet them after his return from a trip abroad, but instructed the students to go back to classes. Students continued with their extended *Baraza* for two more days and finally agreed to return to classes amidst confusion, threats, and discomfort on the part of the government.

Upon his return from the trip abroad, the Chancellor paid a surprise visit to the university to inspect the dilapidated classrooms, dorms, cafeteria and the rest of the physical plant but did not meet with the student community. At the conclusion of his visit he met with top university administration and party branch leaders at the party office. He castigated the students for, among other things, disobeying his order to return to classes and for discussing politics instead of studying. Mr. Mwinyi expressed dissatisfaction with faculty for entertaining student political discussions, and for failing to teach students respect for elders, custodians of authority. Since students disobeyed him, he said, he was no longer obliged to meet with them.

Students were infuriated. They had placed their hopes on the President and they felt he had betrayed their trust. To them it was yet another example of a government not responsive to its constituency. Flyers, obscene cartoons and other forms of protest expression started appearing on campus, filled with sexual innuendos and insinuations about the President and his government. State security officers in plain clothes could be seen roaming on campus, some reportedly armed. A state of insecurity was created where students feared they would be attacked by the paramilitary riot police. The fliers escalated giving the government a convenient excuse to close the university two weeks before the exams². It remained closed for an entire year. Students were not allowed to work and had to report to local authorities in their respective home districts.

For weeks before and after the closure, the media condemned the students and rallied support for the government. The public responded by massive demonstrations throughout the country in support of the government following the closure. Students were hounded by mobs whenever they were recognized. They were ridiculed and verbally assaulted by people of different classes.

The students were stunned by the severity of the punishment and the hostile public response. How could their genuine demands for government accountability and better conditions for students, farmers and workers be ignored? The government was getting support for a most outrageous and unreasonable action costing the tax payers millions of shillings. A year later, a committee set by the University Council to investigate the crisis exonerated the students and placed the blame squarely on the government (**Family Mirror** 1-15 October, 1991).

The media chorus against the students can only be understood if we examine the hidden relations of power between the political elite, the newspaper, and the students. The historical context of the crises and the action of the government and media support provide a good opportunity to examine the dialectical relationship between media discourse and social reality.

² For most departments, all final exams are held at the end of the academic year.

Using data from **Uhuru** for the 1978 crisis and **Mzalendo** for the 1990 crisis coverage, I have studied those relationships. These two events were selected for two reasons. One reason is that they marked student protest for issues that were not limited to campus or student affairs. Many other protests had occurred which mainly focussed on some basic needs of the students such as the protest against food prices in 1988. In such protests, the government did not intervene even when the students held their Extended *Baraza* for a whole week. The second reason is that perhaps due to more media coverage, there was a more visible response from the public in the form of condemnation of the students and support for the government.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Many features which bespeak of the authoritarian nature of the state and how it handled the two crises are hidden in various linguistic and textual features. To uncover the features I use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), an approach that specifically addresses questions of power and ideology in texts. In this section, I outline the main features of the approach and sketch the aspects of the text that I examine in this paper.

Critical Discourse Analysis is an approach that studies texts and talk (discourse), its features and structures and how these structures relate to and reproduce social relations such as inequality, power and dominance (Fairclough 1995a, 1995b; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; van Dijk 1988, 1998). It explores the relationship between structures and strategies of text on the one hand, and social, political, cultural structures and processes on the other. CDA is cognizant of the fact that texts are not only a result of social and political context, but also have constitutive power to shape cognition and influence relations among various social groups (van Dijk 1998; Fairclough 1995a, 1995b). The central concern of CDA, therefore, is how the structures of discourse reflect, confirm, legitimize, reproduce or challenge power relations in society.

In this paper, I use Fairclough's analytical framework of discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995b). In this framework, analysis of discourse involves complementary focus on (a) communicative events, and (b) the order of discourse. The analysis of the communicative event deals with specific instances of communication such as a newspaper article, a news bulletin, a conversation or a report. The order of discourse, on the other hand, is concerned with how discourse is structured in a constellation of genres and discourses in a particular institution or convention. Although the two are complementary, in this paper I focus on the analysis of the communicative event.

The analysis of a communicative event examines three dimensions of the event: (a) text, (b) discourse practice, and (c) socio-cultural practice (Fairclough 1995a, 1995b). Text is a piece of written, spoken, or other visual form of discourse produced in a communicative event. Discourse practice refers to the processes of production, distribution and consumption of text. The texts are produced as part of a social, cultural context – socio-cultural practice. For example, in this paper I examine articles from *Mzalendo*. The stories from the newspaper are the texts. They are produced by the

newspaper owned by the party. The news or texts are consumed by the readers who interpret them in different ways. This is part of discourse practice. The stories in the paper arise out of a specific social situation at the University and in the country. The situation and the discourse that is embedded in it are results of historical developments in the society. Therefore, it is shaped by certain social, cultural and political realities in Tanzania.

The analysis of text may take the form of linguistic analysis, examining the vocabulary, semantics, grammar, phonology, or writing of the text. It may also take the form of studying the organization of text above the level of the sentence. The study of cohesion, for example, looks at devices that make the various sentences and paragraphs of a text fit together. Furthermore, one can look at the structure of the whole text, such as the entire interview.

In analysing the texts from the coverage, I use four analytical concepts following van Dijk (1995, 1998). They are (a) participant and process, (b) thematization, (c) lexicalization, and (d) quotations. Participants are individuals, groups or institutions who are reported as part of events, while processes are events denoted by verbs. For example, in her study of the welfare debate in one official report, Sykes (1988) identified the participants as Commons Select Committee, Young Blacks, and Parents. Young Blacks had the highest frequency indicating the focus of the report. But these Young Blacks are sole participants of one participant verbs such as “roam the streets,” and “hang around arcades.” They are not agents of verbs that show power and responsibility, or life-changing events. In this paper, I limit my analysis to the examination and discovery of patterns of what participant is associated with what events.

The analysis of participants and processes is related to thematization or how the information is organized in clauses. Thematization divides a clause into two parts, the theme, which is what the whole clause is about, and the information predicated on the theme (Halliday 1985). An analysis of thematic patterns reveals what information the writer considers important. The subject of the sentence is often the theme, and the predicate is the theme. However, other clause elements may be used as themes. Headlines, for example, provide what the writer considers catchy information. In this study, I will examine which of the participants are considered important information and the implications of the information organization.

Lexicalization deals with the choice of words the writer uses in order to construct the framework of interpretation of the events and the participants. The vocabulary the writer uses carries the producer’s negative or positive evaluation of the people, events or actions (Sykes 1988; van Dijk 1988, 1995; Fairclough 1995b). Consider, for example, the coverage of the war in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) before the 1980 independence. The newspapers that supported the government of Ian Smith labelled the guerillas as “terrorists” while the pro-guerilla press of the Frontline States³ called the guerillas

³ Frontline States were East and Southern African nations that were very actively involved in supporting anti-colonial and anti-apartheid war in Southern Africa. Before Zimbabwe’s independence, these countries included Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Angola, Swaziland, and Lesotho.

“freedom fighters.” Such a choice of terminology and vocabulary, therefore, reveals the ideological orientation of the writer, and how they relate to the people they are reporting about.

I analyse quotation patterns in order to examine the identity of people, institutions or organizations whose discourse is represented and how it is represented. Depending on how they are quoted, certain sources are presented as more credible than others. Quotations are also related to the question of power because they indicate access to public discourse. My objective in this paper is to determine the balance between the sources of discourse and the participation of civic organizations (in this case the student organization) in public discourse.

Any newspaper article, any news bulletin, indeed any text is shaped by the immediate social context and a wider context in which the communicative event is embedded. Economic, political (power and ideology), cultural and other forces are at play in shaping the discourse. But since language use is not a neutral form of signification, discourse is always used to construct and shape social reality. For example, newspaper stories are discourses arising out of events before the articles. The writers and editors select information providing prominence to some aspects of the story, downplaying other aspects, ignoring some information and presenting it in such a way as to reflect the ideology and socio-cultural background the producers of the text. The consumers of the news conceptualize the events and the participants accordingly.

Therefore, the three concepts, text, discourse practice, and socio-cultural practice, are the layers I examine regarding **Uhuru** and **Mzalendo** articles. In the following section, I attempt to uncover the hidden power relations and ideology by focussing my analysis on topics, participants and processes, thematization, lexicalization, and discourse representation.

3. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND VOICES UNHEARD

In this section I demonstrate how the newspapers reproduce power relations, legitimize the government action and condemn student protests. The legitimation and delegitimation is accomplished by: (a) syntactic focus on the students, obscuring their grievances and the government’s actions or policies against which the students are protesting; (b) semantic association of the students with negative processes; (c) lexical choices which cast the students in a negative light while the government is portrayed positively; (d) denial of access for students’ discourse; and (e) leaving glaring information gaps. I begin with headlines.

3.1 HEADLINES

News stories consist of numerous themes which are hierarchically arranged. Headlines display the most prominent piece of information in the news story. They ‘summarize the summary in one clause or sentence’ (van Dijk 1988: 226) and signal which information is more important in the views of the writer, editor or presenter. Therefore, we can study headlines from the point of view of the topics, the words selected to provide cues of how to interpret the events (lexicalization), how participants and processes reported are grammaticalized, or how themes of the topics are organized. A study of the headlines, therefore will show what information is placed prominently so that it can be considered important and catch the reader’s eye.

There were only two news stories about the 1978 crisis and they had the following two headlines:

Wanafunzi 350 Wafukuzwa Vyuoni Dar (350 Students Expelled from Dar Colleges - March 6, 1978)

Wanafunzi (Students – March 7, 1978)

According to **Uhuru** headlines, there were students who had been expelled. The headlines do not provide a hint for the reason. There was much more coverage for the 1990 crisis. Here are the headlines from **Mzalendo** May 13 – 27, 1990:

Chuo Kikuu Dar Chafungwa: Kitivo cha Tiba Kuendelea (Dar University Closes: School of Medicine to Remain Open 5/13/90);

Vurugu za Chuo Kikuu Dar: Wanafunzi Walitumiwa na Maadui (Unrest at Dar University: Students were used by enemies-5/20/90);

Halmashauri Kuu Yampongeza Rais Mwinyi (The National Executive Council congratulates President Mwinyi - 5/20/90).

Wakorofi Kung'olewa Chuo Kikuu Dar (Instigators to be expelled from Dar University -5/27/90)

According to **Mzalendo**, there was unrest at the University of Dar es Salaam main campus. The School of Medicine, Muhimbili campus was not part of it. The unrest was instigated by the nations’s enemies who used students as their puppets. President Mwinyi closed the campus and was making plans to weed out the trouble-makers. The upper echelon of the ruling party approved of Mwinyi’s action. These are the important topics and the most prominent information. Note that in both crises, the students’ complaints or grievances are not depicted in the headlines. The incident in 1978 involving police violence when they intercepted the students’ peaceful march should have hit a headline in this popular press. But it is not mentioned at all.

In analysing the headlines I also examined the participants and the processes they were involved in. Table 1 below provides a list of participants identified in the 1990 headlines and their frequencies.

Table 1. Participants in headlines.

Participants	Frequency
Students	4
Enemies	1
President	1
Party	1

Students appear in four of the six headlines analysed here, and the university (the place) appears four times also. The President appears once, and the ruling party appears once. The university administration does not appear in any of the headlines although it is a prominent part in the stories covered. The processes the students are associated with are expulsion (*fukuzwa*), weeding out (*ng'olewa*), and being used (*tumiwa*). The 'enemies' are associated with using the students, and the President is associated with being 'congratulated' by the Party. The high student frequency gives the impression that the stories are about students more than anything else.

These participants are accorded different semantic roles such as agent, patient, receiver, beneficiary and other roles. Students appear as subjects of three headlines which have a passive structure. For example, *Wanafunzi 350 wafukuzwa Vyuoni Dar* (350 Students **are expelled** in Dar Colleges – **Uhuru** March 6th 1978). The active form would have been *Serikali Yafukuza Wanafunzi Vyuoni Dar* (The government **expels** students from Dar colleges). The passive structure performs two functions here: one is foregrounding or making the students the topic of the sentence, and the other is obscuring the agents of unpleasant events. The students receive punishment from the government (**Uhuru** March 6th 1978, **Mzalendo** May 13th and 27th 1990), or they are used by the enemy (**Mzalendo** May 20th 1990), or they will be removed (**Mzalendo** May 27th 1990). The consequence of this is a representation which conveys the impression that the students do not cause any meaningful or significant action. The government, which does not appear in the headlines, is actually backgrounded as the omniscient and omnipotent power that determines the fates of the student.

Various cues regarding the students in the headlines are found in the lexical choices made by the writers. Students are described as *wakorofi* (troublemakers), and their protest which in 1990 took the form of an extended meeting and the protest discourse mentioned earlier, is depicted as *vurugu* (unrest, chaos bordering on a riot). The government action is to expel the student (*fukuza* = to run someone out), or to uproot or weed out (*kung'olewa* = to be uprooted, weeded out). Weeding out appears as a natural

action against the bad weeds, the leaders of the protest. This alludes to the metaphor of a garden or nursery in which the students are plants or seedlings that should not be talking anyway.

The headlines, therefore, perform at least three functions: (a) they reproduce power relations between the government and the students by making the government the agent; (b) they delegitimize student action with negative words and without hinting on the reasons for their actions; and (c) they isolate students and antagonize them in the eyes of the public. These functions are also performed by the news texts, to which I now turn.

3.2 THE NEWS TEXTS

I begin my analysis by identifying the participants and the predominant processes they are associated with, then I show how vocabulary choice contributes to the negative portrayal of the students and their action.

According to the papers, the participants in the crises are students, the university administration, the government, and the President. Each has a different frequency, a fact which is significant because the frequency indicates the focus of the story. As an example, let us examine *Mzalendo*'s main story of May 13, 1990. Table 2 below provides the information of how frequently the participants in the crisis are mentioned.

Table 2. Participants and frequency of appearance in Mzalendo May 13th 1990.

Participant	Frequency
University Administration	19
Students	12
Government	5
President	6

The highest frequency is that of students followed by that of the university administration. The frequency of the government combined with that of the President is less than that of the university administration. This is a feature found in all stories about the crises and in the headlines examined above. The effect is that the reader will perceive the whole crisis as being about students and their behaviour and how they interact with the university administration. Focus on the students and the administration in effect backgrounds the government so much that the fact that the students are protesting against the government is completely obscured.

The participants appear in various semantic roles such as agent, patient, beneficiary, or experiencer. The students are associated with *hudhuria* (attend-Student *Baraza*), *waligoma* (they boycotted), *walibusia* (they boycotted), *walipuuza* (they ignored), *kumkashifu* (to insult him), *waliwaita* (they invited them - foreign journalists), and

waliandamana (they marched). With these verbs, the students were the agents. But they are also depicted in patient roles in *wanatakiwa* (they are required), *waliombwa* (they were asked), *walitumiwa na maadui* (they were used by enemies), and *watasafiri* (they will travel). Finally, *wanafungasha* (they are packing), *kuondoka* (to leave), and *watasafiri* (they will travel). The university administration is associated with *kutoa taarifa* (issue a statement), *kuwataka wanafunzi* (to require students), *kueleza* (to explain), *pendekeza* (to propose, suggest), and *kusema* (to say, speak). The verbs associated with the government are: *imewafukuza* (it has expelled them), *imekifunga* (it has closed it, i.e. the university), *imetoa taarifa* (it has issued a statement), *imewataka* (it has required them), and *kutia saini* (to sign). In all cases, the government appears as the agent of the verbs. The President also appears as the agent in most of the verbs such as *alizingumza* (he spoke), *alikutana na* (he met with), *alilaumu* (he blamed), *aliwaomba* (he asked them), *aliwasihi* (he implored them), *aliwaamuru* (he ordered them), *alitembelea* (he visited), *aliwaahidi* (he promised them), *alihutubia* (he gave a speech), and *kutoa maagizo* (to give directives).

Another prominent participant in the crises was the University Administration, sometimes personified by the Vice-Chancellor. In the 1978 crisis, the news texts carried no indication of what role the administration played in the whole crisis. It is mentioned briefly in the follow up story of March 7, 1978, where the administration is quoted as saying the remaining students and the university were back in their normal routine. In the stories of the 1990 crisis, the administration got prominent coverage. First it recommended (*pendekeza*) to the government to close the university, and then it made travel arrangements (*fanya mipango ya usafiri*) for the students and gave instructions (*agiza*) on vacating the campus. The impression that comes across is that the administration is a bureaucratic extension of the government.

The government and the President receive the most positive representation. In 1978, the government tried to have a dialogue with the students, but students who were intent on instigating the riot refused to have a dialogue. Like a parent, the government had to discipline the students by expelling them. The government closed the university in 1990 after dialogue failed again. **Mzalendo** (May 13th 1990) reminds the readers that it had done a similar thing in the past. These stories want to emphasize that the government is in control. This is partly achieved by foregrounding the government decision as seen in the lead paragraphs of stories following the expulsion (March 6th 1978) and the closure of the university (**Mzalendo** May 13th 1990). The power of the government is also invoked by mentioning the President as having said or taken a specific step. The President is foregrounded in the texts that appeared on May 20th and 27th 1990. His pronouncements appear in the lead paragraphs of the two issues. We also learn that during this crisis when he met with the student leaders (like a very fair-minded parent). He then promised to meet with the students and instructed the students to go back to classes. Later he visited the campus and expressed displeasure at the disobedience exhibited by the students and decided not to meet with the students. After the closure, he explained to the public why he had to discipline the students for their childish behaviour (*mambo ya kitoto* – May 20th 1990).

The vocabulary provides a very clear example of how the newspapers are justifying or legitimizing government action while at the same time delegitimizing student activities. Using local semantics and choice words, the writers isolate the students and describe their actions as illegal and harmful to the public. The extended *Baraza*, for example, is described as a ‘boycott’ or ‘strike’ as in the following examples.

hatua ya wanafunzi kugoma
‘the students decision **to go on strike**’
wanafunzi waliposusia kuingia madarasani
‘when students **boycotted** classes’

Boycotts and strikes are not only illegal, but are perceived by the public in Tanzania as selfish disobedience. The writers were aware of these implications of the labels and of the fact that the students were careful not to do things typical of strikes or boycotts such as picket lines or demonstrations. But the newspaper represented the label the students gave to their action as “what they called attending a student *Baraza*”. This carries an implicit cautionary note that the students are not to be believed. Note that the phrase “what they called” is never used to represent the charges or claims of the government. But it is used twice to preface students’ discourse.

wanafunzi waliposusia kuingia madarasani kwa kile walichokiita kuhudhuria kikao cha Baraza la Wanafunzi kujadili matatizo kadhaa yanayowakabili. (Mzalendo May 13th 1990)

“When students boycotted classes for **what they called** attending an Extended Student *Baraza* to discuss problems they are facing”.

Chuo Kikuu kilifungwa mara ya pili mwaka 1978 wakati wanafunzi walipoandamana wakitoa madai kadha ikiwa ni pamoja na kile walichokiita kujiongezea marupurupu kwa Wabunge. (Mzalendo May 13th 1990)

“The University was closed the second time in 1978 when the students demonstrated with several grievances including **what they called** excessive benefits that members of parliament had passed for themselves”.

This phrase is used in the same way in the 1978 stories when referring to the students’ grievances. It is never used for what is said by the government. This use is obviously biased against the students and is reinforced by the President’s claim that demands for better conditions for workers and farmers were ‘bait’ so the public would join hands with the students to cause general unrest (Mzalendo May 20th 1990).

On the other hand, the government and the President in particular is described as having ‘asked’ and ‘advised’ students to return to classes. The fact that these words are used sometimes in place of ‘instructed,’ or ‘ordered’ for the same utterances shows that the writers chose their words with calculation because these two pairs have very different semantics. The detail that the President met with the representatives of the

students in April 1990 is intended to show that he is very fair and responsible. He did not immediately show apprehension but promised to meet all students upon his return from abroad. The students' continuation of the *Baraza* after the promise stands in very deep contrast to the apparent good nature and intentions of the President.

Apart from lexical choices, the newspapers often made indirect appeal to the public by emphasizing that the common people, farmers and workers are the ones who pay for allowances of the students. Moreover, students are already getting more than those who pay for it.

"..Serikali ilichukua hatua za kushughulikia malalamiko hayo ya wanafunzi na kutoa ufafanuzi kuhusu posho wanazolipwa ambazo ni kubwa zaidi ya mapato ya wafanyakazi na wakulima wengi nchini ambao jasho lao ndilo linagharimia uendeshaji wa Chuo hicho, na posho za wanafunzi". (Mzalendo Editorial, May 13th 1990)

"...The government took steps to deal with the complaints of the students and gave explanations about the allowances which are more than the income of most workers and farmers in the country whose sweat pays for the running of the university and the allowances of students".

Here the students are represented as unreasonable because they are demanding for more even when they are getting more than the poor peasants and workers. That they are demanding increases in allowances indicates that they are selfish and spoiled ingrates. This antagonizes the students against the workers and poor farmers. The question of the inadequacy of the allowances is not raised. This makes the readers assume that the students were getting sufficient allowance.

In spite of the successful tactics in the coverage, there are interesting contradictions throughout, especially the main story of May 13th 1990 and the editorial. On the one hand the newspaper takes pains to show that the President and the government is fair, responsible, and has acted with restraint and understanding. On the other hand, it wants to send a message that the government has the power to destroy the students and would not hesitate to do so. These contradictions are manifested in two forms: one is semantics, specifically, the choice of words as discussed above, and the other is ungrammaticality or unacceptability of some sentences. For example, consider how the President's response to the student leaders is represented. In some instances the meanings conveyed show the President as fatherly and kind.

kuwasihi kurudi madarasani

"**implored** them to return to classes"

rai waliyopewa na Rais

"**advice** they were given by the President"

kutotii ombi lake

“not to obey his (President’s) **request**”

He *implored* and *advised* the students and did not use his power. He did not impose on them although he is the Chancellor and the President of the country. Notice also the syntagmatic anomaly, *to obey a request* in the last example. In other instances, however, the same action is described more forcefully.

akawaamuru waingie madarasani

“he **ordered** them to go to classes”

agizo la Rais

“the President’s **directive/instruction**”

These two examples show authority on the part of the President. He does not implore or advise the student but orders them like a principal of a grade school. Thus for the same directive function, the paper portrays the President as a fair and reasonable person, but also powerful. The softer description is intended as a contrast with the students’ behaviour of being unreasonable and spoiled.

The paper therefore carries the implicit threat that the state will not hesitate to take harsh measures against those threatening the power of the elite. This is done by showing the adverse consequences that befell the students. A good example is the following sentence from the lead story.

Kufuatia tangazo la Serikali kukifunga Chuo Kikuu, wanafunzi kadhaa walionekana wazi wazi jana mchana kuwa wamepigwa na butwaa.

“Following the announcement by the government to close the University, several students appeared clearly confused yesterday afternoon”.

It appears the students did not expect any such action and now they face an uncertain future. Recall that the nature of the insecurity on campus that prompted the government to close it is not disclosed in the story. The reader initially gets an impression of a near riot situation.

The semantic contradictions have in some cases resulted in ungrammatical and confusing sentences. Consider the following sentence.

Hivyo, hatua ya Serikali ya kulazimika kufunga Chuo hicho ili kuepuka hali kuwa mbaya zaidi, ni hatua inayofaa kukaribishwa. -editorial

“Therefore, **the step taken by the government to be forced** to close the University to avert the escalating crisis, is a step which should be welcome”.

It is illogical for the government *to take a step to be forced*. This error is most probably not a deliberate one. It results from trying to conceal what is otherwise clear that the

government had made the decision to close the University (the *step it took*) and blame the students for *forcing* the state to shut down the campus. Throughout the coverage of the 1990 crisis, we are told the government closed the university at the recommendation of the University Council. While wanting to maintain this version of the report, **Mzalendo** fails to conceal the conflict with what might be the truth, that the government wanted to close the university to put an end to growing demands for democratization and accountability.

The analysis of the text thus far has focussed on what the stories say and the hidden meanings underlying the grammar, the choice of words and the presentation of the stories. However, many questions regarding what exactly the students did remain unanswered. A study of quotations reveals more about not only who is saying what, but also who is not quoted or who is silenced, as I will show.

3.3 QUOTATIONS AND VOICES UNHEARD

An analysis of the voices, that is individuals or groups whose discourse is represented in the story (Fairclough 1995b: 70), reveals three important things. The first one is that it shows whose discourse is permitted in the newspapers or in public discourse. Secondly, those quoted or whose discourse is represented are taken to be the sources. The source that is often quoted is the reliable source. Thirdly, the proportion of the voices in a story reveals some power relations with respect to access to public discourse (van Dijk 1995). In this subsection, I examine discourse representation in the stories about the crises in **Uhuru** (March 6th and 7th 1978) and **Mzalendo** (May 13th and 27th 1990) to illustrate how the newspapers systematically exclude discourse from the embattled students in order to highlight and ultimately justify government action.

Following Fairclough (1995a), I make use of four modes of representation of discourse in the stories to show whose voice is heard. The first mode is direct discourse (DD) presented in quotation marks. For example,

"Hatua hii imesababishwa na hali isiyo ya kawaida iliyoendelea kuwa mbaya siku hadi siku hapo chuoni tangu Mei 7, mwaka 1990", taarifa iliongeza. (Mzalendo March 13th 1990)

"This step has been brought about by the unusual condition which was becoming worse day after day on campus since May 7, 1990", the statement added.

The whole utterance is provided in direct quotes. However, sometimes only part of the quote appears. Fairclough (1995a) characterizes this partial quote as slipping direct discourse (SDD). The following is a good example.

Serikali imekifunga Chuo Kikuu cha Dar es Salaam kuanzia jana kutokana na "hali isiyo ya kawaida" ambayo imekuwepo chuoni hapo, taarifa ya Wizara ya Elimu ilieleza jana. (Mzalendo March 13th 1990)

“The government has closed the University of Dar es Salaam since yesterday due to ‘**unusual conditions**’ which have developed on the campus, the Ministry of Education statement said”.

In this sentence only one noun phrase is quoted. We assume the rest is a paraphrase of what the statement says. The third mode is indirect discourse (ID) which appears as a subordinate clause signalled by subordinating conjunctions of reported speech such as *kwamba* (that) and *kuwa* (that). The following sentence illustrates this mode.

*Taarifa hiyo iliyotiwa saini na Katibu Mkuu wa Wizara ya Elimu, Ndugu Wilfred Mwabulambo ilieleza **kuwa** kufuatia uamuzi wa kikao cha juzi cha Kamati ya Utendaji ya Baraza la Chuo, serikali imelikubali pendekezo la kufunga Chuo hicho mara moja. (Mzalendo March 13th 1990)*

“The statement which was signed by the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Ndugu Wilfred Mwabulambo said **that** following the decision of the Executive Committee of the University Council passed two days ago, the government has accepted the recommendation to close the University at once”.

The statement is not quoted but referred to using the subordinating conjunction *kuwa* (that). The fourth mode is indirect speech which is unsignalled (UNSIG) such as found in the following sentence:

Uongozi wa Chuo Kikuu cha Dar es Salaam katika taarifa yake iliyotolewa jana mchana uliwataka wanafunzi wote wawe wameondoka Chuoni hapo saa 12 jioni hiyo jana. (Mzalendo March 13th 1990).

“In its statement issued yesterday, the administration of the University of Dar es Salaam instructed the students to vacate the campus by 6 pm yesterday”.

What the university administration said is not quoted, but rather paraphrased without subordinating conjunctions. The four modes just identified tell the reader about something said, appearing as direct discourse (DD), slipping direct discourse (SDD), indirect discourse (ID), or free indirect speech (unsignalled, UNSIG).

In table 3 below is shown how frequently the discourse of participants in the crises, namely, the students, the university administration, the government (excluding the President), and the President, is represented.

Table 3. Discourse representation

Mode	Students	University Administration	Government & Party	President
Direct Discourse	0	2	3	3
Slipping DD	3	0	1	5
Indirect Discourse	0	4	6	8
Unsignaled	0	4	0	8
Total	3	10	10	18

The table shows that the President and his government are heavily quoted and reported with a total of 28 representations. The University administration also is well reported with 8 representations. The voice of the students, however, is almost absent with only 3 representations.

The table does not provide a complete picture, however. For one, it does not reveal an interesting feature about the students' representation, namely, all three partial quotes contain the same words and are preceded by the same editorial caution: *walichokiita* "kujiongezea mishahara na marupurupu kwa wabunge" (what they called "excessive increase in benefits that members of parliament had passed for themselves" – Uhuru March 6th and 7th 1978; Mzalendo May 13th 1990). As noted earlier, the word *walichokiita* (what they called) is not used to introduce any other quotation, partial or complete. This word neutralizes any strength the quote may have. It says, "this source is not reliable". Another consideration is the length of the quotations. For example, the lead story of March 6th 1978, was about the expulsion of 350 students from colleges in Dar. The story is about 200 words long. Of these, about 150 are the one long unbroken quotation of the government statement. In the table above, I have entered the story as having one DD from the government, and one SDD from the students. The use of government statements and official communiqués is a feature that was very prevalent in the state- and party-owned media throughout Africa especially in the 70s and 80s (Ruijter 1989; Pratt 1996).

Omission of the student voice, indeed the voice of civic organizations, is a major strategy of disinformation for the government- and party-owned media in Tanzania. The students are denied access to public discourse, they are denied an opportunity to explain things from their own point of view. Since the students' memorandum in 1978 was never published, the government statement was the only source, indeed the only credible source of information. Equally missing from the 1978 coverage was the brutal repression by the police who intercepted and later arrested the peaceful student protesters. Another effect of the one-sided story is to present the government action and position as the only legitimate action or position.

The reading public does not get to know what is really going on. Glaring information gaps are left unfilled. For example, after reading the main story of May 13th 1990, the question that a reader should come out with is: What exactly were the students' demands? What was so urgent that required the attention of the President? These are questions that are not addressed at all. One would expect the writer or editor to help their readers to get answers to these fundamental questions. The omission is not an accident but deliberate. The writers knew what the students demanded. It is presented in one sentence:

Miongoni mwa madai ya wanafunzi katika mgogoro huu wa sasa ni kuongezewa posho na kuongezwa kwa bajeti ya elimu.

“Among the demands in the current crisis are increase in allowances and increase in the education budget”.

This sentence indicates that the reporter is aware of the grievances of the students and decides to de-emphasize them. In a story of over 1000 words, the writer devotes only 19 words to represent the reason why students held an extended *Baraza* and why they wanted to see the Chancellor.

Uhuru and **Mzalendo** make a great effort to support the government in crises. In his public speech reported in **Mzalendo** (May 20th 1990), President Mwinyi alleged that the students were used by Tanzania's enemies to instigate chaos and unrest. **Mzalendo** does not even comment on the conspicuous gap in information: Who are these enemies? This ridiculous cliché is fed into the unsuspecting public with great effect.

The gaps make the government story the only truth especially when there are implicit suggestions about the childish behaviour of students. No doubt the newspaper stories performed a specific political function, namely control of information. Chilton and Schäffner (1997) refer to this provision of very limited information, dissimulation. Only the voice of the government and the university administration is heard. It appears to me, therefore, that the flyers that the students circulated following the president's refusal to meet with the students was a form of counter discourse rather than an example of mere indiscipline.

I have shown that a study of discourse representation indicates that students had no access to public discourse about their grievances or their actions to press for their demands. Furthermore, the newspapers which were controlled by the ruling party reported negatively on the students and very positively on the government. The effect of this was to legitimize the government action as the only rational action, and to delegitimize student action as unreasonable and indefensible. One could wonder why the government had reacted so strongly to a seemingly minor or inconsequential student action in 1990. **Mzalendo**'s coverage, and indeed government action, can only be understood in the wider context of power struggle in efforts to increase democracy at the University and in the country as a whole. A narrative of these aspects of the crisis is in order here.

4. PARTY ALMIGHTY! DISCOURSE PRACTICE AND SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT

Many of the characteristics of the coverage by the two newspapers are due to its ownership, and the sociopolitical environment in which they operated. In this section, I address these two aspects, and attribute the weaknesses of the papers to centralization of power in the hands of the state and the party, and situate the crises in the context of democratic struggles of civic organizations, in this case, the student organization.

At the time of the two crises, Tanzania had a single party system. Since independence in 1961, the ruling party has sought to centralize power in its own hands. Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) and later its successor *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (Revolutionary Party - CCM) declared itself supreme and outlawed opposition parties. The authoritarian tendencies are manifest in the crises at the University, the protests by students and the media coverage of various events and issues.

The government and the party had a monopoly on the media. CCM is the proprietor of **Uhuru** and **Mzalendo**. **Mzalendo** had the largest readership of about 115,000 while **Uhuru** had a readership of 100,000 (Europa Publications 1991). The fact that they are written in Kiswahili makes them accessible to the majority of the people, who are literate in the language. **Mzalendo** is published on Sundays as a sister to **Uhuru**, which comes out six days of the week. In terms of the size of the audience, **Uhuru/Mzalendo** were second only to Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam which broadcast to the entire nation on shortwave bands.

During the same period, other popular news sources were government-owned **Daily News/Sunday News**, government owned Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam, and SHIHATA (Tanzania News Agency), a government-owned news agency. Their reporting of the crisis was very similar and therefore, the effects of **Uhuru** and **Mzalendo**'s coverage should not be considered exclusively their responsibility. As Kasoma asserts, "experience has shown that when African governments own the media, they invariably also control them by making them publish or not publish certain information" (Kasoma 1995: 539). Indeed this is a feature of mass media shared by many countries in post-colonial Africa (Kasoma 1995, 1997; Ruijter 1989; Pratt 1996; Ziegler and Asante 1992).

The monopoly of the party and the government in the media ensured that the political elite maintained dominance in public discourse. The private media were very weak. The **Family Mirror**, which was the most critical of the government in 1990, was a fortnightly newspaper. It could be two weeks before a different version came from this paper to challenge the government narrative. By then, the official story would become dominant and accepted as the truth. In absence of any other source of information on the crisis, the government and party media such as **Uhuru** and **Mzalendo** were, in the eyes of the public, the embodiment of truth. Recall that in the May 13th 1990 story, only one sentence refers to the cause of the crisis from the point of view of the students. The

effect is that the voice of the students is extremely weak, overwhelmed by the official explanation. The other effect is to make the students appear unreasonable since the President and the government had done so much for the students.

Another example of undemocratic behaviour of the nationalist government was the abolition of independent civic organizations. The establishment of a one party system occurred at the same time as the abolition of autonomous civic organizations such as the cooperative unions and trade unions. In their place the party established various organizations under its umbrella such as the Cooperative Unions of Tanzania (CUT), National Union of Tanganyika Workers (NUTA) and later *Jumuiya ya Wafanyakazi Tanzania* (JUWATA – Tanzania Workers' Union), and Tanganyika Parents Association (TAPA). Even professional organizations were often instituted as bureaucratic extensions of the government. For example, teachers affairs were handled by the Unified Teaching Service (UTS), a unit in the Ministry of Education. Needless to say, the interests of the different communities were not sufficiently served.

The 1978 crisis was in part a result of a growing mass of students who were being equipped with tools for critical analysis of social and political issues. The University of Dar es Salaam had a world reputation of being a radical university which attracted world renowned scholars such as Walter Rodney, the author of the internationally acclaimed *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. However, there was no mechanism to engage the public in such critical discourse. And when the students took very critical issues to the public in the form of the memorandum to the **Daily News**, not only did the **Daily News** refuse to publish it, but the media obviously ignored the students' concerns and conspired with the government to publish the malicious government statement.

The 1978 protest was organized by the University of Dar es Salaam students and involved students from neighbouring colleges because they had the same concerns. They were protesting against what they considered a departure from the declared goals of building a socialist society and increasing unresponsiveness of the government to people's problems. They were determined to point out the ever-increasing signs of what Fanon (1963: 153) described as neocolonial indulgence of the nationalist leaders. The fact that students from three colleges were joined in the protest was a big threat, because it represented a core of young intellectuals who were highly conscientized, and who could spread their ideas to the public. This fear was expressed in the government statement which not only fabricated the story that students were refusing to go to work in rural areas, but also that the students wanted to instigate riots (**Uhuru March 6th 1978**). Ironically, it was the government with its paramilitary police who attacked the peaceful students and supporters that resulted in a near riot situation. The banning of Dar es Salaam University Student Union by the government, and the placing of student affairs under CCM Youth League was designed to control students through centralization of power in the party.

From the establishment of the University of Dar es Salaam in 1971, there was growing dissatisfaction with governance at the institution causing students and faculty to press for democratization of university administration and student body. According to the act that established the university, the governing body is the University Council. The

majority of the members of this council were non-academics who did not know how to run such an institution. Top executives such as the Vice-Chancellor, The Chief Academic Officer, and the Chief Administrative Officer were all appointees of the president. Often the appointments were made without input from the academic community at the University. Academics often felt the executive officers did not run the university as an academic institution. Often the university executives were inept and unresponsive to those they were supposed to serve.

The ineptitude was further compounded by the centralized student government. As noted earlier, the student government was part of the youth wing of the ruling party, Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) since 1978 (see Section 1 above). The youth wing was in charge of student governments in all colleges and universities. Nominations for leadership positions were conducted by the youth wing which vetted all candidates aspiring for positions in the student body, throwing out those who did not show strong allegiance to the party. It became abundantly clear that the student government under the youth wing was incapable of solving serious problems the student community was facing, especially problems related to resources and representation. For example, in August 1988, students temporarily suspended their MUWATA government and set up an interim government in order to fight for lower food prices in the cafeteria commensurate with their meal allowances. The interim government successfully organized a student *Baraza* and forced the university administration to lower food prices (**Uhuru** August 27th 1988). A similar suspension had occurred the previous year on another issue with very satisfactory results on the part of the students. It was obvious that the autocratic system run by the ruling party had no interest in the well-being of the students and had to be replaced. However, replacing the system was sure to impinge on state control of politics and student activism at the university.

At the same time the government was putting a tighter squeeze on expenditure following International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions. This meant more hardships for the already impoverished university and its degenerating physical plant. Due to rapid inflation, most university faculty were paid less than \$100 a month resulting in an unprecedented exodus of Tanzanian professors. Student allowances were too small to support student needs such as books and stationery. Therefore, the problem was basically that of access to resources, an access the students and their professors were denied. Workers and farmers were also denied access to resources. This explains the solidarity the students expressed in demanding for better remunerations for their professors and better prices for farmers' crops.

Uhuru and **Mzalendo**, as party newspapers, had vested interests in maintaining the status quo. They were part of the establishment and their coverage is an example of political action intended to safeguard their privileged access to resources and position. They accurately perceived the implicit calls for solidarity with the farmers and workers, but labelled them as student ploys to rally support for their unreasonable demands and to instigate riots. The students posed a remarkable challenge to the order established by the party when they suspended MUWATA and when they demanded accountability on the part of the government. In essence the students were demanding freedom of association

opposing the party-established mode of operation. It was part and parcel of the demand for better representation.

I noted earlier that the students were angered by the President's decision not to meet with the students after his return from abroad. They had attempted to have a dialogue with him and had hoped to have more access to resources to improve their learning environment and for the whole education system. The President's refusal meant there was going to be no public discourse on the critical issues they had raised. The flyers that were circulated on campus, including the infamous *Mzee Punch*,⁴ became forms of protest discourse similar to graffiti.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I set out to illustrate how party-owned newspapers in Tanzania, **Uhuru** and **Mzalendo**, covered student protests at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1978 and 1990. I have argued that the protests were part of demands for greater access to public resources for the students and the public, and also demands for democratic reforms. The two papers, which were part of the establishment in the one-party state, had a vested interest in reporting the events according to the point of view of the government because they preserved their privileged positions. Thus, the newspapers portrayed the students as puppets of unnamed foreign enemies and as disobedient, spoiled children. The President and the government appeared as very fair and considerate and as hurt by the students' action prompting them to take appropriate measures to discipline the students.

This picture, I argue, is conveyed by various means including thematization in the headlines, frequent mention of students and relatively less about the government, exclusion of the students point of view while quoting heavily from the government and the university administration, lexical choices which associate students with negative action and behaviour while according the President and his government very positive words and processes, and omission of some information which is otherwise essential in getting a better understanding of the crises. The coverage emphasizes the power of the state by highlighting its control.

The study of coverage reveals not only the bias of the newspapers, but also that they actively misinformed the public by revealing almost nothing about the students' grievances. The unreasonable and outrageous government action in 1978 when the police brutalized peaceful students, and the millions of shillings lost due to a year-long closure, should have been matters of public concern. But, since the public was not informed, the government position became the only legitimate position. The

⁴ *Mzee Punch* was a secret organization that originally made satirical commentary in the form of wall literature on various social and political issues affecting the students and the nation. In the 1980s, however, this form of counter discourse degenerated into a cheap juvenile pornographic medium lacking direction and compunction, specializing in harassing women on the University of Dar es Salaam main campus.

government's agenda was to neutralize not only the student community, but also the entire university as a centre for activism. If one looks at how the newspapers covered protests by other civic organizations, one would find similar characteristics.

Ungar and Gergen (1991) noted two tendencies of American media coverage of Africa. One is that Africa is only marginal in American news, and when it is reported, the focus is on the negative: famine, natural disasters, political upheavals. Among the reasons for this marginalisation is that there is no news available and the potential sources in Africa lack strong journalistic traditions. This is understandable considering that for years the majority of the media were owned by authoritarian regimes which turned them into outlets of their official communiqués. With growing private media in Tanzania, new traditions are being established which are beginning to provide counter discourse. However, the grip CCM has in spite of the multiparty system cannot be underestimated. After years of exposure to biased coverage of civic organizations, the public has a hard time comprehending other sides of stories from private media. The government and CCM versions remain dominant in public discourse. This calls for further studies of media discourse in the multiparty era.

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