

UJAMAA SOCIALISM: TRENDS AND IMPACTS ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN STATES

Adekunle Alaye, PhD.

Fellow, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria.

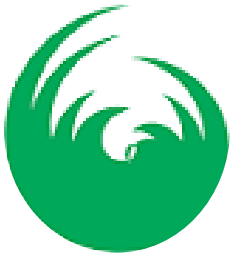
Abstract: The study aims to review the holistic impacts of one of the classical and Pan African Political theories (breed socialism) of Julius Nyerere, known as Ujamaa Socialism. It is an African grown political economy theory with the fundamental philosophy of liberating Postcolonial African States, from the perennial trends of colonialism and imperial invasion of African countries by their white colonialists. In the contextual discourse, meticulous effort shall be made to examine the key theories of Ujamaa Socialism, its vision and the impacts. Hence, the legacies it left to the furtherance of Postcolonial African socio-economic development cum political liberations of the Postcolonial African States. We shall explore Liberalism, Conservatism and Marxist theories to dissect the dialectical and historical understanding of Ujamaa Socialism as a core African made socialist ideology and its impacts from the era of Colonial and the Postcolonial African States. Liberalism envisions the ideal society to be one that embraces a wide range of individual liberties. These include, personal dignity, free expression, religious tolerance, right to own property, freedom of association, transparency of government, limitations on government power, the rule of law, equality, free market economy and free trade. Nyerere's vision of society was based on Ujamaa philosophy that essentially under-scored anti-capitalist socio-economic milieu. In this case, Nyerere's view tends to be at variance with liberalism. Hence, the conservative theory is examined. Conservatism is a term used to describe political philosophies that favour tradition and gradual change, where tradition refers to religious, cultural or nationally defined beliefs and customs. Nyerere's position on Ujamaa, tends to cohere with the conservative theory to some reasonable extent. First, he espoused Ujamaa as the basis for social and economic development. By Ujamaa, Nyerere meant three things: Work by everyone, fair sharing of resources collectively produced and respect for human dignity. Essentially, indigenous African communalism was to be adopted and adapted to post independent Tanzania and African States. The Marxist theory with relevance to Ujamaa Socialism, on the other hand explains the interpretation of society, considers competition for material resources and wealth as the main cause of conflict. The social classes emanating from possession of property creates antagonism between them, one of which becomes the dominant or ruling class. Nyerere's vision of an egalitarian society based on indigenous value system tends to reflect a Marxist social paradigm. He argues that precolonial African societies were classless and socialist. He castigates capitalist societies as 'man-eat-man societies'. However, Nyerere does not advocate for a revolution of the masses in order to embrace his African socialism. The foregoing reviews of theories depict a scenario where Nyerere's ideas relate more with conservatism and Marxism. Whereas he does not categorically state specific affiliation to any one of them, he tends to embrace certain tenets of the two theories. Therefore, Ujamaa socialism was a bold and innovative attempt to chart a new course for the Postcolonial African States, due to its in-depth understanding of African culture, history and politics. While it faced significant challenges and

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criticisms, its emphasis on communal values, self-reliance, and social equality has left a lasting legacy in the quest for African liberation and socio-economic development.

Keywords: Africa, Development, Communalism, Economy, Socialism, Ujamaa.

Introduction

"Colonialism not only imposed a system of economic exploitation but also attempted to dismantle indigenous cultures and social institutions."(Davis, 1981). During the 1960s and 1970s, many African countries were fighting for independence from colonial masters. The fight for liberation in Africa was a monumental and widespread independence for African nations psychologically, morally, culturally and spiritually (Fanon, 1961).

It was a time for immense courage and resilience as Africans across the continent stood united against oppressive colonial powers, determined to reclaim their autonomy and establish self-governance. Julius Nyerere at this time, just like others, emerged as one great leader who became a beacon of hope, advocating for liberation and self-reliance, inspiring generations to strive for a future free from external control and filled with dignity and sovereignty. The struggle for liberation in Africa symbolized the unwavering spirit of a people determined to shape their own destinies and create a better tomorrow for themselves and their coming generations (Fela Kuti, 1971).

This research aims to check the African breed socialism of Julius Nyerere known as UJAMAA SOCIALISM as a bedrock for African liberation. In it, meticulous effort will be made to examine the key principles of Ujamaa Socialism, its vision and the impact as well as the legacies it left to the furtherance of African liberation and development in its political, social and economic manifestations.

Julius Kambarage Nyerere, (13 April 1922 – 14 October 1999) was a Tanzanian anti-colonial activist, politician and political theorist. He governed Tanganyika as prime minister from 1961 to 1962 and then as president from 1962 to 1964, after which he led its successor state, Tanzania, as president from 1964 to 1985. He was a founding member and chair of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) party, and of its successor Chama

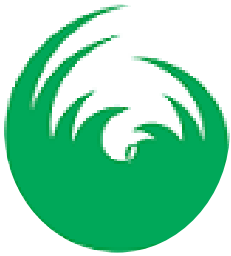
Cha Mapinduzi, from 1954 to 1990. Ideologically an African nationalist and African socialist, he promoted a political philosophy known as Ujamaa. (Roger & Trevor, 1995)

What is Ujamaa Socialism?

The Britannica explanation of socialism means a social and economic doctrine advocating for public rather than private control of property and resources. It emphasizes cooperation and social good over individual profit maximization. Shivji and Martin (2012) in their work Nationalism and Pan-Africanism noted that Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, is best known for his philosophy of African socialism known as "Ujamaa," which translates to "familyhood" or "brotherhood" in Swahili. Nyerere believed that African liberation was not just about political independence from colonial powers, but also about achieving social and economic liberation for the people.

Another view on Ujamaa states that, Nyerere's vision for African liberation through Ujamaa socialism placed significant emphasis on political freedom and self-determination in intricate detail. Political freedom entailed the fundamental right of African nations to autonomously govern themselves without external interference, ensuring sovereignty in decision-making processes and governance structures. On the other hand, self-determination focused on empowering African countries to independently shape their destinies, determine their political frameworks, and pursue socio-economic development without external pressures or influences. These core principles were pivotal in Nyerere's vision of a liberated Africa where nations could assert their independence, uphold their sovereignty, and forge their unique paths towards progress and prosperity.

Nyerere's version of Ujamaa socialism was based on the idea of collective ownership and community cooperation, with an emphasis on self-reliance, equality, and solidarity.



Nyerere believed that African countries could not truly achieve liberation and development if they continued to rely on capitalist economic systems that perpetuated inequalities and exploitation with his words giving a stern warning that "Socialism is not only a way to ensure economic justice for all, but also a means to achieve political freedom and the liberation of our continent from the yoke of colonialism and imperialism".

Nyerere's vision of Ujamaa socialism was seen as a way to prioritize the needs of the African people, promote economic equality, and empower communities to take control of their own development. By emphasizing the importance of communal ownership and cooperation, Nyerere believed that African countries could break free from the legacy of colonialism and build a more just and equitable society where individual potentials will be maximised. Julius Nyerere's Ujamaa socialism is viewed by many as a bedrock for African liberation because it offered a unique and alternative vision for development that prioritized the interests of the African people and sought to build a more equal and just society. Julius Nyerere's concept of Ujamaa socialism is indeed a significant topic when discussing African liberation movements noting that " we (Africans) have to build a Socialism that is uniquely African".

Nyerere believed that this approach was more suitable for African societies than Western capitalist models or Soviet-style socialism. He argued that African societies had long practiced communal living and shared resources, and Ujamaa was a way to modernize these traditions while fostering economic development and social equality. (Nyerere, 1977).

Theoretical framework

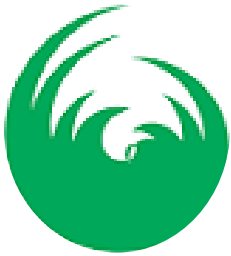
The Liberal theory

Liberalism envisions the ideal society to be one that embraces a wide range of individual liberties. These include, personal dignity, free expression, religious tolerance, right to own property, freedom of association, transparency of government, limitations on government power, the rule of law, equality, free market economy and free trade. It is incumbent upon government to uphold

these freedom in order to guarantee stability and peace. In addition, liberalism tends to encourage representative democratic governance. Here, the elected representatives are guided by the rule of law under the overall guidance of the constitution. Enshrined in the constitution are the rights and freedoms of the individual which must be safeguarded by the government. Within the liberal milieu, it is evident that the enjoyment of individual freedoms and rights often infringe on other peoples' freedoms leading to tensions and conflicts. For instance the right to accumulation and ownership of property promotes social stratification. In addition, liberalism enhances capitalism. Nyerere's vision of society was based on Ujamaa philosophy that essentially under-scored anti-capitalist socio-economic milieu. In this case, Nyerere's world view tends to be at variance with liberalism. Next, the conservative theory is examined.

Conservatism Theory:

It is a term used to describe political philosophies that favour tradition and gradual change, where tradition refers to religious, cultural or nationally defined beliefs and customs. The term is derived from latin, con servare, to preserve; "to protect from loss or harm". Since different cultures have different established values, conservatives in different cultures have differing goals. Some conservatives seek to preserve the status quo or to reform society slowly, while others seek to return to the values of an earlier time. Conservatives focus on preservation of the status quo. Within the status quo, a given order is supposed to be tirelessly conserved. For instance, conservatism considers society to be an organic unit that is hierarchical in nature. Social classes are, therefore, complementary and ought to be preserved. Conservatism is usually propagated by the elite who employ state machinery to protect and preserve the status quo in society. Nyerere's world view tends to cohere with the conservative theory to some reasonable extent. First, he espoused Ujamaa as the basis of social and economic development. By Ujamaa, Nyerere meant three things: Work by everyone, fair sharing of resources collectively produced and respect for human dignity (Hinzen and Hundsdorfer, 1979). Essentially, indigenous African communalism was to be adopted and adapted to



post independent Tanzania. In addition, Nyerere advocated for the adoption of indigenous values such as respect for the wisdom of the elders.

The Marxist theory

The Marxist interpretation of society considers competition for material resources and wealth as the main cause of conflict. The social classes emanating from possession of property creates antagonism between them, one of which becomes the dominant or ruling class. The ruling class controls not only the means of material production but also the ideas of the epoch. In essence state machinery, state ideology and even religion are used to maintain the status quo.

Soon the contradiction between the forces of production and social relations become apparent leading to a class struggle that result into the overthrow of the dominant class. Here, the victors become the ruling class (Harrison-Barbet, 2001).

The Marxist vision of the ideal society is one that involves true community in which the individual will be able to cultivate his gift and achieve personal freedom. Nyerere's vision of an egalitarian society based on indigenous value system tends to reflect a Marxist social paradigm. In his book titled "Ujamaa- the basis of African socialism" (1968), he argues that pre-colonial African societies were classless and socialist. He castigates capitalist societies as 'man-eat-man societies'. However, Nyerere does not advocate for a revolution of the masses in order to embrace his African socialism. The foregoing reviews of theories depict a scenario where Nyerere's ideas relate more with conservatism and Marxism. Whereas Nyerere does not categorically state specific affiliation to any one of them, he tends to embrace certain tenets of the two theories. Next, an examination of Nyerere's view on education for self-reliance is undertaken.

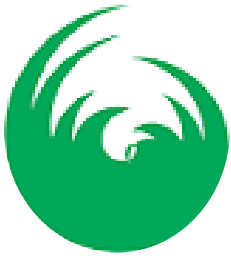
The term self-reliance comprises two distinctive words. "Self" and "reliance". In this case a look at each of their meaning is important. Self in ordinary usage of the term may refer to the human being as "the agent" or the "I" of the individual human being. It has to do with the individual's conception of his soul and body as being

distinct from other souls and bodies (Blackburn, 1994). From a philosophical perspective, three broad theories emerge with regard to the self. These are: materialism, spiritualism and existential phenomenology. Materialism and spiritualism belong to the essentialist's conception of the human person. Self in this regard is conceptualized as a thing, substance or an essence. In answer to the question, what entity does 'self' consist of? Materialists contend that it is virtually composed of matter. It refers to the empirical body with all its perceptions (Hume, 1978). On the other hand, spiritualists perceive man as a soul. Here, self-comprises the spiritual element of man. These being the case, the essentialist view of the human person pose a dilemma. In addition, he/she is basically a body or material. Such a dichotomy necessitates an attempt to reconcile the two positions. Such an attempt is evident in existential phenomenology. For instance, leading existentialists such as Heidegger and Hursell emphasize consciousnesses of things as they appear to the human person. As such, the material and spiritual/idealistic nature of the human person converge in order to make sense of reality.

Ujamaa Socialism and Impacts on Tanzania's Development

African Socialism and the concept of Ujamaa. Ujamaa, which means "family hood" in Swahili, was Julius Nyerere's vision for Tanzania's development based on socialist principles. The Ujamaa policy aimed to create a collective society where people lived and worked together in communal villages known as ujamaa villages. Under the Ujamaa system, Tanzanians were encouraged to pool their resources, share labor, and collectively own and manage land, fostering a sense of communal responsibility and cooperation. The goal was to achieve self-reliance, reduce inequality, and promote social cohesion.

The impact of Ujamaa on Tanzania's development was significant. While the policy faced challenges and criticisms, it led to improvements in rural infrastructure, agricultural productivity, and access to basic services for many Tanzanians. Ujamaa also emphasized education and



healthcare, contributing to social development across the country.

However, the Ujamaa policy also had its limitations, including issues with implementation, productivity challenges in collective farming, and constraints on individual entrepreneurship. Despite these challenges, Ujamaa remains a central part of Tanzania's history and continues to shape discussions on development strategies and social policies in the country.

Nyerere's Theory in Promoting Unity among Postcolonial African States

Pan-Africanism is a movement that aims to unify and uplift people of African descent, advocating for solidarity and cooperation among African nations. Nyerere was a staunch advocate of Pan-Africanism, a movement that aimed to unify African countries and promote solidarity among African peoples. He believed in the power of collaboration and cooperation to address common challenges faced by African nations (Shivji and Issa 2012).

Nyerere played a key role in supporting liberation movements in other African countries, offering both moral and material assistance. ¹He was actively involved in mediating conflicts and promoting peaceful resolutions to disputes among African nations. Nyerere's diplomatic efforts were instrumental in fostering unity and cooperation on the continent. As the President of Tanzania, Nyerere provided a platform for Pan-African discussions and initiatives, hosting conferences and meetings that brought together leaders from across Africa to discuss issues of mutual interest. His commitment to African unity was evident in his advocacy for regional integration and collective action to achieve economic and political independence for African nations.

Nyerere's efforts in promoting unity among African nations left a lasting impact on the continent, inspiring future generations of leaders to work towards a more united and prosperous Africa. His legacy as a Pan-Africanist continues to influence discussions on African unity and cooperation to this day.

Ujamaa as a bedrock for African liberation

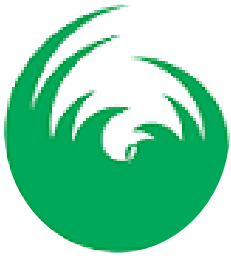
Ujamaa, in its postulation sought for various meeting points for Africans to decide their fate and the bedrock of this philosophy are explained below.

1. Promote Unity and Self-Reliance: Nyerere emphasized the importance of national unity and reducing dependence on foreign aid. He believed that true liberation could only be achieved through self-reliance and the collective effort of the people. Practice of shared social wealth and the work necessary to achieve it. Ujamaa literally means familyhood...Ujamaa also stresses self-reliance in the building, strengthening and controlling of the economics of our own community. The assumption here is that we must seize and maintain the initiative in all that is ours, and that we must harness our resources and put them to the best possible use in the service of the community

Ujamaa also stresses self-reliance in the building, strengthening and controlling of the economics of our own community. President Nyerere has said self-reliance in Ujamaa means "first and foremost... that for our development we have to depend upon ourselves and our own resources." The assumption here is that we must seize and maintain the initiative in all that is ours, and that we must harness our resources and put them to the best possible use in the service of the community. This, he says, does not mean denying all assistance from or work with others but of controlling policy and shouldering the essential responsibility for our own future.

2. Reject Colonial Legacies: Ujamaa sought to dismantle the economic and social structures imposed by colonial powers, which often prioritized the interests of a few over the needs of the many. By returning to communal values, Nyerere aimed to create a more just and equitable society. (Pratt, 1999)

3. Empower Rural Communities: A key aspect of Ujamaa was the establishment of village collectives where people would work together in agriculture and other enterprises. This was intended to enhance productivity, improve living standards, and reduce the urban-rural divide. As well he



believed that land and key resources belongs to the community including collective production and distribution of goods and overall, focus on agricultural development as the basis of the economy, creation of Ujamaa villages for communal farming, aim to prevent rural-urban migration and exploitation and the rejection of individual accumulation of wealth. (Coulson, 2013).

4. Foster African Identity and Pride: Ujamaa socialism was also about reclaiming African identity and pride. Nyerere encouraged the use of indigenous languages, cultural practices, and traditions as a way to strengthen national identity and cohesion.

Principles of Ujamaa Socialism

1. Social Equality: Nyerere believed that socialism should ensure that all members of society had equal access to resources and opportunities. This was a direct response to the inequalities perpetuated by colonial rule. It grows out of the fundamental communal concept that social wealth belongs to the masses of people who created it and that no one should have such an unequal amount of wealth that it gives him/her the capacity to impose unequal, exploitative or oppressive relations on others. Sharing wealth is another form of communitarian exchange, i.e., sharing and cooperating in general. But it is essential because without the principle and practice of shared wealth, the social conditions for exploitation, oppression and inequality as well as deprivation and suffering are increased.

2. Collective Ownership: Ujamaa emphasized the collective ownership of land and resources. Nyerere argued that land should be owned by the community and used for the benefit of all, rather than being concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or foreign corporations. Moreover, President Nyerere states, that Ujamaa rejects the idea of wealth for wealth's sake as opposed to wealth for the well-being for all. And he notes that Ujamaa is "a commitment to the belief that there are more important things in life than the amassing of riches, and that if the pursuit of wealth clashes with things like human dignity and social equality, then the latter will be given priority." In the context of improving and insuring the well-being of the people, "the creation of wealth is a good thing and something we shall have to increase." But he concludes

that "it will cease to be good the moment wealth ceases to serve (humans) and begins to be served by (humans)." Nyerere (1969).

3. Self-Reliance: Nyerere stressed the importance of Tanzanians relying on their own efforts and resources. This was both an economic strategy and a psychological one, aimed at fostering a sense of national pride and independence.

4. Education for Self-Reliance: Nyerere placed a strong emphasis on education as a tool for empowerment. He believed that education should be relevant to the needs of the community and should prepare individuals to contribute to the development of their society.

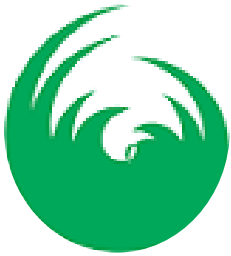
Implementation of Ujamaa

1. Villagization Program: One of the most ambitious aspects of Ujamaa was the villagization program, which aimed to move people into collective villages where they could work together on communal farms. The idea was to pool resources and labor to increase agricultural productivity and improve living standards.

2. Nationalization: The Tanzanian government nationalized key industries and services, including banks, insurance companies, and major export crops. This was intended to ensure that the profits from these industries were used for national development rather than being siphoned off by foreign investors.

3. Education and Health: The government invested heavily in education and healthcare, building schools and clinics across the country. These services were provided free of charge to ensure that all Tanzanians had access to basic needs.

In terms of economic development, Nyerere pursued a policy of socialism and self-reliance known as "Ujamaa." This approach focused on collective ownership, communal labor, and equitable distribution of resources to foster economic growth and social equality (Ivaska and Andrew 2004). Nyerere's vision for economic development centered on rural development, agricultural cooperatives, and community-based initiatives to empower Tanzanians and reduce poverty.



Overall, Nyerere's post-independence policies in education, healthcare, and economic development were guided by his vision of creating a more equitable and prosperous society for all Tanzanians. His initiatives laid the groundwork for social progress and nation-building in Tanzania, leaving a lasting impact on the country's development trajectory.

Challenges and Criticisms of Ujamaa

1. **Economic Difficulties:** Despite its noble goals, Ujamaa faced significant economic challenges. The collectivization of agriculture did not lead to the expected increases in productivity, and the economy struggled with inefficiencies and resource shortages.
2. **Resistance and Coercion:** Many Tanzanians were resistant to moving into Ujamaa villages, preferring to stay in their traditional homes. In some cases, the government resorted to coercive measures to relocate people, leading to resentment and criticism.
3. **Bureaucratic Inefficiency:** The nationalization of industries led to a bloated and inefficient bureaucracy. Corruption and mismanagement were significant issues, undermining the goals of Ujamaa.

Legacy of Ujamaa

1. **Social Cohesion:** Despite its economic shortcomings, Ujamaa succeeded in fostering a strong sense of national unity and social cohesion in Tanzania. The emphasis on communal values and mutual support helped to create a relatively stable and peaceful society.
2. **Education and Health Advances:** The focus on education and healthcare led to significant improvements in literacy rates and public health, laying the foundation for future development. This eventually proved effective on some African countries like Nigeria.
3. **Inspiration for African Socialism:** Ujamaa remains an important example of an attempt to create a uniquely African form of socialism. It has inspired other African leaders and thinkers to explore alternative development models that prioritize social justice and community well-being.

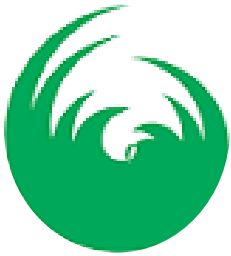
4. **Debates on Development:** Nyerere's Ujamaa has sparked ongoing debates about the best path to development for African countries. While the economic outcomes were mixed, the principles of self-reliance, social equality, and collective ownership continue to resonate in discussions about sustainable and inclusive development. Inclusive is the agricultural activities that Ujamaa advocated for. Though it seems primitive but Africa is known to be the one of the best rated continent to produce food based on its land mass and good land. Encouraging local production will increase Africans voice in the world system and not only in politics but in economy which is the substructure of all superstructure.

Conclusion

Julius Nyerere's Ujamaa socialism was a bold and innovative attempt to chart a new course for Tanzania and, by extension, for Postcolonial Africa due to its in-depth understanding of African culture, history and politics. While it faced significant challenges and criticisms, its emphasis on communal values, self-reliance, and social equality has left a lasting legacy in the quest for African liberation and development. With various contributions from many scholars, it has been proved by many works that ujamaa socialism is of African breed just like other African leaders philosophy and has proved to be a principle through which other truths can be derived such as political liberty, economic freedom, cultural stand and strong relationship between Africans and African heritage. Nyerere's leadership and policies indeed sparked both admiration and criticism. While his initiatives like Ujamaa and commitment to Pan-Africanism left a lasting impact on Tanzania and African politics, criticisms regarding authoritarianism, economic policies, and handling of conflicts also shaped discussions around his legacy. Nyerere's complex legacy underscores the nuances of leadership and the challenges of governance in a diverse and evolving political landscape.

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