

THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE IN UJAMAA

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Introduction

The origin of Ujamaa was traced back to the foundation of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), a mass party founded by Julius Nyerere in 1922 with its assertion that Tanzanians should be free to govern themselves and determine their own destiny as a people. It achieved this by mobilizing Tanzanians to demand independence from British Government, and it became independent on 9th of December 1961 with Nyerere as its first prime minister.¹ On 9th of December 1962, Tanzania became a Republic, with Nyerere as its first president. Nyerere's Government began moving step by step towards ujamaa immediately after independence as the party declared the Ujamaa as the official policy of the ruling party in 1967. The policy described ujamaa in terms of attitude of family-hood or brother-hood and proceeded to express specific socialist practices.

Ujamaa: Family-hood or Brother-hood.

In Ujamaa: essays on socialism, Nyerere argued for a specific conception of socialism. Nyerere depicted ujamaa as “an attitude of mind... which is needed to ensure that people care for each other's welfare.”² This is the attitude of “brotherhood or familyhood.”³ He admitted that there is a very close link between caring for one another and the attitude of brotherhood or familyhood. Care for one another can only be guaranteed if people view each other as brothers and sisters or as members of the same family. This is what Nyerere means when he concludes: “Ujamaa ;then or family-hood' describes our socialism” and that the foundation of the ujamaa is to be based on African Cultural Traditions.”⁴ It was not only this expression of African foundation that led Nyerere to believe that ujamaa differed from other strands of socialism. He cited two further reasons. Firstly, Ujamaa was “opposed to capitalism,”⁵ which according to him, seeks to build a happy society on the basis of the exploitation of man by man. Secondly, Ujamaa was also “opposed to doctrinaire socialism,”⁶ which he saw as a form of socialism that “seek to build a happy society on the philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man.”⁷ Nyerere's ujamaa was opposed to scientific socialism or Marxism on the ground that Marxism legitimizes class conflicts. To conclude it can be said that the foundation and the objective of African socialism is the extended family-hood and the true socialist does not form alliance with brethren for the extermination of non-brethren, he rather regards all men as his brethren, a member of his ever extending family. This is what Nyerere propounded as one human brother-hood and the unity of Africa.

Nature of Extended Family and its Foundations in Africa

Anthropologists have shown that Traditional African Societies were composed of many groups of various sizes, the basic unit or group was the extended family. The clan was

bigger and consisted of more than two extended families. Tribe was a bigger still as it were composed of numerous clans but biggest was ethnic group comprising many tribes. All members of an ethnic group were linked by common ancestry. Extended families are usually made up of a “large number of people related by descent in one line from a living or recently dead common ancestors.”⁸ There are two types of extended families.” The first is a type where status and property are inherited through the paternal line while the second is the one in which status and property is inherited through the maternal line.”⁹ But paternal family prevailed in Africa. This coming together of the paternal groups form the community. Nyerere referred community as a group of people who live together and work together for the common good of all.¹⁰ The ties that united people is that they are relatives bound by common ancestry. There are functions that are being carried out by the extended families which are of great influence in ujamaa. The task of ujamaa is socialization. It was an institution where a person was born, raised, socialized and educated. It was in extended family that an African child was indoctrinated.¹¹ The role of extended family was also to protect life in a sense of defending its members from dangerous situations that can threaten life such as uncertainties of weether, sickness, the depredations of wild animals and cycles of life and death.¹² It was impossible for individual to survive alone. Another task of extended family was to produce material goods. In traditional societies, productive activities were related to an ethnic group. The basic unit of production in traditional Africa was the extended family, they were self contained economic and social unit because they depended on their own labour force and on their own resources.¹³ Their basic goods of land were food, land and cattle, they lived together, they worked together and the result of their joint labour was the property of the family as a whole.

Colonialism, Reason for Disappearance of attitude of Family-hood

There were numerous effects of colonialism which led to the disappearance of attitude of African socialism. Some of which are racism, disappearance of attitude of brotherhood and the individualism. Racism is an epistemological concept with belief that there are different kinds of human beings with different attributes. It distinguishes people on basis of the colour of their skin. It believes that some races are superior to others. It was the colonists that divided citizens along racial lines with Europeans as the superior, and the rest inferior ones like Indians and Africans. European race was the race that enjoyed more privileges, rights, educational and employment opportunities than other races in the territory. They had monopoly of political power and kept others in a state of social and economic inferiority.¹⁴ Throughout the colonial periods, almost all aspects of African Traditional Culture were undermined and this led to disappearance of the spirit of brotherhood, the spirit that motivated people in community to care for one another, to work together and live together. Nyerere believed that before the arrival of colonists, Africans were communitarian in their way of thinking and living as a member of a genuine community.¹⁵ But during colonial period, central practices of brother-hood such as co-operation, care for one another, respect to one another, obligation of everyone to work and communal ownership of properties was undermined by the educational system that was offered which encouraged capitalism and individualistic instinct of mankind.¹⁶ This led Nyerere to think that future policy, such as ujamaa or the attitude of brother-hood should

be restored which would enable people to care for one another and which was the foundation of community in traditional Africa.

Ujamaa as a Political Ideology

Ujamaa was a political ideology formulated as a policy governing the state and it was more concerned with political, social and economic organizations of the state. The purpose of formulating this ujamaa

ideology was to create unity in the state, to establish a classless society and to build a new work ethic. This ideology was formulated to curb the situation of division in the state such as class conflict and laziness. There are three main sources of division in Tanzania, these are tribalism, religious fanaticism and racism. Tribalism: It is a practice of segregating people on the basis of their tribes. During colonialism, all tribes were united in the quest for independence but as soon as it was achieved, unity between them began to crumble. This was learnt from the colonist, some tribes with most educated members or the other with more population thought they deserve more privilege and power in government than others. An ideological function of ujamaa regarding this particular division was to eradicate tribalism. Government took measures to do this. The first was to abolish chieftaincy, diverting allegiance away from tribe to the nation, adoption of one language to be used as an official language. The ideology of ujamaa proclaimed that all human beings and all Tanzanians in particular were equal irrespective of tribe. The only tribe in the country is Tanzanianism. And this means the nationalization of ujamaa. These Tanzanians belong to one country, Tanzania, where they were all equal members of the society with equal rights, duties and opportunities. In universalization, Ujamaa was also idealized as brotherhood of man such that a true socialist is one who “regards all men as his brethren, as his ever extending family.”¹⁷ In order to build unity among people of different religions. Nyerere preferred ideological tactics rather than violence. One is religious tolerance which provided all religions with freedom of others, in doing this; he secularized it from public offices as “every citizen has the right to freedom of...religious belief.”¹⁸ Racism was also traced back to time of colonialism and the concept did not disappear immediately after independence, rather Africans started segregating foreigners as a form of revenge. On the ideological plane, racism was rejected. Nyerere rejected racism by positing that “socialism is not racism.”¹⁹ This means that socialism has nothing to do with racism. The ideology of ujamaa was a belief in the equality and in the familyhood of all human beings. All humans whether red, white, black or yellow are all equal members of society, with equal rights and duties, therefore; race does not exist. The removal of evidence of class domination in society was also one of functions of ideology of ujamaa. First step was the denial of its existence and second was to nationalize the major means of production. The third was the establishment of leadership code of ethics and the last was creation of ujamaa villages.

Conclusion

Nyerere demonstrated that the ideology of ujamaa had at least two main functions: Integrative or cohesive functions and transformative functions. Establishing the integrative functions of ujamaa, the sources of division which was in existence in the country were examined, followed by the role Nyerere's ujamaa played in addressing

them. This was the means with which he unified the tribes, religious differences and the races, he also transformed the society by dissolving class domination, Individualism and capitalism by enforcing communal policies as their party ideologies, this was achieved through creation of ujamaa villages as an economic and social communities where people live together and work together for the good of all. Having learnt the need for unity as was the case in the ancient time in Africa, when people lived together and worked together as one family-hood, struggle to break the thread of colonialism was achieved and an ideology was brought out to destroy the vices of separation, capitalism, exploitation, antagonism and conflicts with which colonialism came. This ideology is that we came to recognize that the same socialist attitude of mind observed from the tribes in Africa as the same family members, should be extended to the larger communities in Africa, and even to all African continents and to also be extended to the whole of mankind for the lasting peace to reign and this socialism is to be inscribed into people's mind without any detriment to their kinds of social institutions and cultures.

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