

POPULAR HISTORIES OF INDEPENDENCE AND UJAMAA IN TANZANIA.



A mini thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MA in

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

The Department of History, University of the Western Cape.

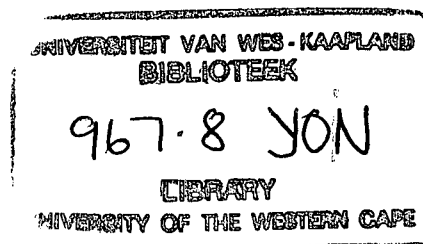
Supervisor: Professor Teresa Barnes

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THESIS



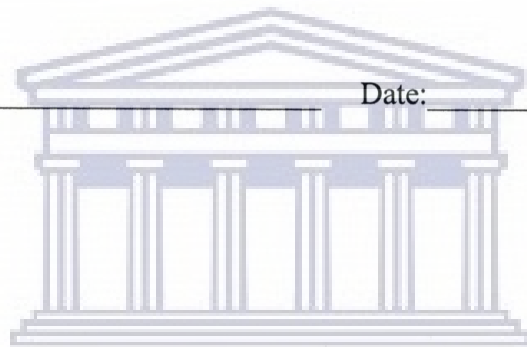
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DECLARATION

I, Mzukisi Yona, declare that this is my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledge by complete reference.

Mzukisi Yona

Date: _____



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DEDICATION

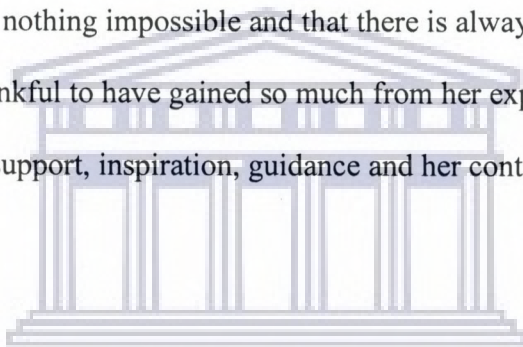
To my lovely daughter, Sibanye Yona



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Let me first thank my Lord and Creator for giving me strength to complete this thesis. I would like to thank and praise him for being with me every step of the way. This dissertation would not have seen the light of day without the guidance, encouragement and incredible support I received from my supervisor Professor Teresa Barnes. Her intellectual input and patience facilitated the completion of this thesis. Her patience has proven to me that there is nothing impossible and that there is always a light at the end of uncertain tunnel. I am thankful to have gained so much from her expertise and experience and I also appreciate her support, inspiration, guidance and her contribution towards this thesis.



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My profound thanks go to my family especially my mother and my brother for standing by me throughout my academic endeavours. The role my mother played in my life is immeasurable. She had been there for us since the day our father left us in this world. My mother taught us how to read and write before we even start schooling. I am very proud to say that my academic achievement is the culmination of my mother's hard work. My brother also played a significant role in my life. I sincerely thank him for supporting me

financially. I was one of those unfortunate students who did not get a bursary for my university career, but my brother was always there to help me. There is no doubt in my mind that without him I would not have reached this stage in my life. When things were turning dark he was my only hope. He stood firmly behind me through thick and thin.

To my wife Philela (Nokwanda), I would like to express my deepest appreciation for her constant support, love, sacrifices and understanding. Thanks for allowing me to frequently leave you and work towards the completion of this work. I know that it was probably not easy to allow me to go but you also shared my desire to finish this thesis. I hope we will spend many coming fruitful days and years together. Sibanye, I am deeply sorry my daughter for not spending enough time with you.

I am indebted to many people for their contribution towards the execution of this study many of whom are not mentioned by name due to space constraints.

Lastly, and most importantly, I dedicate this work to my father who have passed away and can not share the joy of my accomplishment. He left us very early in our lives.

Father, you may be gone but you will never be forgotten.

ABSTRACT

It is now forty years after the start of African Socialism, or *Ujamaa*, in Tanzania. This study examines to what extent Tanzanians still tell their national history in ways which feature the important themes of social change that were introduced by President Julius Nyerere and his political party after independence: increasing equality, popular participation, egalitarian values and self-reliant economic development. The intention of the study is to see to what extent these ideas are still important in the ways that Tanzanians today tell their national history. The study is based on oral history interviews, with Tanzanian expatriates living in Cape Town, and is supplemented by secondary sources on the post-independence and *Ujamaa* periods. It argues that memory can be affected by current events.

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a stylized classical building with columns and a pediment.

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KEY WORDS

Independence

Ujamaa

Socialism

Africanization

Oral history

Memory



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Popular histories of independence and Ujamaa in Tanzania.

Chapter One: Introduction

The main question that this study will explore is: how do histories of the early independence period of their country that are now being told by expatriate Tanzanians compare with the histories that were being written at that time? The intention is not to judge the credibility of oral history, but rather to explore how memory is affected by current political, economic and social changes after the event. Another objective is to explore the perspectives of oral histories that are being told today.

This study investigates the changes in post-colonial histories of Tanzania, in order to portray how the current changes have affected the memories of expatriate Tanzanians and how they remember the independent history of Tanzania. A. Portelli has written about how memory may be affected by the changes that occur after the event. He argues that "the fact remains however that today's narrator is not the same person as took part in the distant events which he or she is now relating. Nor is age the only difference. There may have been changes in personal subjective as well as in social standing and economic condition, which may induce modifications affecting at least the judgement of events and the 'colouring' of the story" (Portelli: 1981:210). Thus, this study will explore how memories of an important national moment have changed over time.

Tanzania was among the first African countries to achieve independence from colonial rule on the African continent, and it was achieved peacefully. Its aim after independence was to regain an African social system which had been lost under colonial rule. The first president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere declared his intention to build (or rebuild) African socialism, which was given the Swahili name, *Ujamaa*. Tanzania looked to the past to inspire ways forward in the present. This study explores how people who have been affected by these events remember them today, after approximately four decades. The intention of the study is to see to what extent these events are still important in the ways that Tanzanians today tell their national history.

This study also portrays how memory is influenced by subsequent personal experiences and social changes which may probably offer different ways of making sense of past experience. If subsequent events affect memory this shows that memory is not static. It is not something that automatically produces common or similar facts about a particular event.

Background of the study

The 1960s constitute the most important political decade in the history of decolonization in Africa. Jean Bottaro has noted, “The independence of most African countries was restored and over forty countries became self-governing nations” (Bottaro: 1999:178). A number of colonies obtained formal political independence from their colonial masters during this decade. Tanzania became an independent sovereign state on December 9,

1961. Thus a half century of foreign domination came to an end. Tanzania had firstly been colonized by Germany and it was called German East Africa. Due to the inhospitable climate and limited range of known available and exploitable resources the Germans decided that Tanzania was only suitable for 'exploitation-plantation' and not for settlement (Mohiddini: 1981: 40). Thus, unlike other fellow Europeans in neighbouring African countries, the Germans in Tanzania preferred to exploit the resources of the country without permanently settling there.

The Germans followed their own form of "indirect rule" (as a variant of colonial rule in Africa), and did not change the system of farming the peasants practised. Mohiddin argues that "Although the Germans opted for land exploitation as their modus operandi of colonial exploitation, they did not in the same process destroy the already existing cash-crop peasant farming" (Mohiddin: 1981:41).

Tanzania was a German colony until 1918, when it was handed over to Britain by the League of Nations, following the defeat of German in the First World War. As noted above, Tanzania was under British rule until 1961. Julius Nyerere was the first president of this newly independent country. He was also the leader and the founder of TANU (Tanganyika African National Union). Thus, TANU became the ruling party in what was then called Tanganyika before it merged with Zanzibar to form Tanzania in 1964. TANU had been in existence since the colonial era, having been formed in 1954. After its inception in July 1954 TANU became the most dominant political party in Tanzania.

The new TANU government faced many difficult problems that had been inherited from the colonial government. These problems included the high rate of unemployment and poverty. Tanzania was very poor and economically underdeveloped. The economy depended mainly on underdeveloped agriculture. Major products included coffee, cotton and sisal.

The lack of economic development, high rate of unemployment and the habit of borrowing led to a high level of poverty. Low states, “Tanganyika (later became Tanzania) entered the 1960s as one of the poorest and least developed of African countries. Tanganyika was a simple agricultural society in which the production of non-marketed staple food stuffs was by far the most important form of economic activity” (Low:1967:76).

Very few people were educated and this led to a very high rate of illiteracy. The growth of the economy entirely depended on these people who had few skills because of the lack of training. The economy was also typically colonial. It was dependent on the production of subsistence foodstuffs and primary commodities for export. The existing infrastructure was mainly found in the main cities and was geared towards the transportation and export of raw materials.

The new government also faced the problem of uniting the different ethnic groups which had been divided during the colonial regime. Nyerere worked very hard, uniting the people in order to work together as a nation. He believed that if the people were united,

the economy would develop. According to Susan Geiger “the first challenge that confronted Nyerere and the political party, TANU, was to engineer and create out of the ethnically differentiated society a cohesive nation, a nation with a strong national identity” (Geiger:1986:48).

Overall, in the post independent period, however, the economy was not growing well. Although workers and peasants were still very poor, a few people like African traders, big farmers and top TANU and government officials, were getting richer. Foreign capitals and their governments still seemed to control many aspects of economic life in the country (Crouch: 1986: 28).

A few years after independence, Nyerere realised that there had been little improvement in the economy since the take over from the colonial government. He believed that drastic changes were needed to be introduced so as to change the economic situation. He wanted Tanzania to be self-reliant so that people could enjoy the fruits of independence. He argued that “independence cannot be real if a nation depends upon gifts and loans for its development” (Nyerere: 1968:239).

One of the factors that contributed to the economic problems in Tanzania was that, one of Nyerere’ objectives after independence was to help in the liberation of other African countries. He liberated Uganda from the dictatorship of Idi Amin. He also helped to liberate South Africa from the system of apartheid. As early as 1961, for example,

Nyerere threatened that Tanzania would not join the Commonwealth if South Africa were permitted to keep its membership in the organization (Crouch: 1986:30). Tanzania became an important rear base for the guerrilla armies of the African National Congress and Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. Nyerere argues that “we can enjoy freedom while other countries in Africa are not free. Tanzania must help those countries. Tanzania is not yet wholly free; because Africa is not wholly free” (Nyerere: 1968: 34).

To overcome the economic problems that Tanzania faced, Julius Nyerere introduced *Ujamaa* or African socialism. Just after independence, Nyerere left someone else as head of government. He went back to his village, to write a pamphlet which he called *Ujamaa*, the basis of African Socialism. He then travelled around the country describing and explaining his ideas on *Ujamaa*. The first major *Ujamaa* policy was nationalization. Under this policy all existing industries were nationalised including retail business employing a large number of people. This was meant to lead to the public ownership of the means of production. Secondly, *Ujamaa* included the policy of self-reliance. This policy meant that the development of the country and the building of socialism must be dictated by the needs of Tanzanians. This policy was against the usage of money as the basis for development. It said that Tanzania should stop depending on foreign aid. Thirdly, *Ujamaa* included education for self-reliance and also free education. Under this policy, free education was provided for primary schooling. More money was spent on primary education and the emphasis of education was on agricultural skills and pupils were to help on community work like farming, during school hours. Finally, came the

Africanization policy. This policy meant that more Africans should be employed in the public service and the economy should reflect the demographics of the country.

In rural areas, Nyerere proposed the establishment of socialist villages which were popular known as *Ujamaa Vijijini*. These kinds of villages constituted the ideal society envisaged by Julius Nyerere. This new society would be the opposite of the individualistic method of farming which had been encouraged during the colonial period.

Nyerere and TANU were not against the idea of foreign investment or foreign aid by the IMF/World Bank in Tanzania but they wanted the kind of investment that would benefit the people of Tanzania. Nyerere argues that “we want capital investment in Tanzania not because we like factories. We want capital investment simply and solely because we want to improve the lives of the people of this country. We want private investment on our terms” (Nyerere: 1967:145).

The central aim of the policy of self-reliance was to avoid the involvement of international capitalist institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank in the economic development of Tanzania. But by the late 1970s, under the pressure of falling commodity prices and the international oil crisis, Tanzania could not escape the need to ask assistance from these big financial institutions. According to O’Neill “There was enormous pressure on the government to negotiate a recovery programme involving the International Monetary Fund and World Bank” (O’Neill:1990:16).

Review of the literature

Alessandro Portelli's article entitled "What makes oral history different" deals with oral history as a narrative. He argues that "the importance of oral testimony may lie not in its adherence to fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism, and desire emerged. Therefore there are no 'false' oral sources" (Portelli: 1998"68).

Similarly, Luisa Passerini discusses Italian memories of the fascist period (Passerini: 1998:53). I found these ideas very useful in my study of African nationalist memories.

Many of Nyerere's speeches and writings have been published, which therefore serve as primary documents. The examples are: 'Freedom and Unity', 'Uhuru na Umoja', 'Freedom and Socialism', 'Freedom and development', 'Uhuru na Maendeleo', 'Socialism and development' (Nyerere: 1952: 56).

There is a lot of written material about Tanzania, TANU, *Ujamaa* and Nyerere. The emphasis of many authors has been on describing and explaining the meaning of *Ujamaa*. There were also those who criticised the controversial policy of *Ujamaa*. Here I present opinions of various authors as to give a clear picture of *Ujamaa*.

Freyhold portrayed *Ujamaa* as a policy solution to the economic problems of the country and also something that would bring the principle of human equality. Under this policy people were to share equally the resources of the country and also the equal distribution

of production. According to Freyhold “everybody had a right to be respected, an obligation to work, and the duty to assure the welfare of the whole community. The individualistic search for wealth and security at the expense of others was denounced” (Freyhold: 1979:1).

Freyhold continues to say that “One of the advantages of co-operatives labour is that it allows planning. Each individual peasant may be a quick or slow worker, strong or weak, healthy or ill in any particular season- in a group these individuals differences cancel each other out and lead to a predictable quantity and quality of labour which can be supplied by the group”(Freyhold:1979:2).

When Nyerere was explaining the nature of the nature of the *Ujamaa* villages, he stressed the fact that participation in these villages should be voluntary. These would be a “voluntary association of people who decide of their own free will to live together and work together for their common good. They, and no one else, will decide how much of their land they will cultivate together from the beginning. They, and no one else, will decide how to use the money they earn jointly. They, and no one else, will make all the decisions about their working and living arrangements” (Nyerere: 1968:283).

Most literature about *Ujamaa* explains and describes these policies but there are also those that are very critical of *Ujamaa*. Abrahams criticised the planning and the implementation of *Ujamaa* policies, arguing that “the moves to new village sites were often accompanied by the destruction of existing houses” (Abrahams: 1985:7).

When criticising TANU's policies, especially the policy of Africanization, Coulson states that "colonial institutions were Africanised without great changes in what they did or how they did it". He went on to say that "Industrial development plans relied on Western multinational companies" (Coulson: 1971:1). This was contrary to what *Ujamaa* was intended to do, which was self-reliance and not to depend to foreign aid for economic development.

Lofchie Micheal believes that *Ujamaa* failed to develop a viable socialist strategy. He states that "by 1974 the production of basic food stuffs was so inadequate that Tanzania had to resort to massive food inputs." Michael continues to say that "food crisis and famine proves this failure and that food shortage in Tanzania was a product of the policies of *Ujamaa Vijijini* (rural socialism)" (Michael: 1967:457).

Nyerere admitted as much in one of the speeches in which he reflected on the progress made by *Ujamaa* policies after ten years. Nyerere states that "ten years after the Arusha Declaration Tanzania is certainly neither socialist, nor self-reliant. The nature of exploitation has changed, but it has not been altogether eliminated. There are still great inequalities between citizens. Our democracy is imperfect. A life of poverty is still the experience of the majority of our citizens" (Nyerere: 1979:27).

Building a new society was not an easy task. The villagization policy provides a good example. The *Ujamaa* villages were intended to create co-operatives which would be socialistic in nature. These were to be classless societies where all people would be equal

in all aspects of life. However, Shivji and others have argued that these villages did not do what they were expected to. Instead they created a very wide gap between the rich and the poor people as a new class of rich peasants emerged (Shivji: 1986:147).

The people who were centrally involved in the *Ujamaa* villages, the peasants who were the producers were alienated from their products and they were not involved in decision-making with regard to their production. Shivji states that “the producers of many agricultural products were not taken seriously and were alienated”. He continued, “The producer has been alienated from the organization handling his produce. This disregard of the producer’s interests further aggravates the producer’s suspicion of being exploited by the state’s monopoly organization” (Shivji: 1986:147).

This was contrary to the *Ujamaa* policies which emphasised that in these villages there was supposed to be no exploitation and that all people would work together for the benefit of all. The product would be divided according to work done. Prosperity would be shared by all who worked instead of being enjoyed by a few.

Research questions

The major and crucial research question the study seeks to answer is whether Tanzanians still tell their national history in ways which feature the important themes of social change that were introduced by Julius Nyerere and his political party after independence. These themes were: increasing equality, popular participation, egalitarian values and self-

reliant economic development. The study will explore how the post-independent political situation has influenced the way these Tanzanians narrate their history.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to assess and evaluate the perspectives of Tanzanians about *Ujamaa* and also the post- independence history of their country. It is also to investigate the changes in popular national histories of Tanzania. It also to examine the idea that memory is affected by current political, social and economic circumstances.

Significance of the study

The issues examined in this study are very important to our country, South Africa, in several respects. It could be argued, for example, that South Africa's "A Better Life for All" is kind of African socialism, and therefore, the experiences of Tanzania are extremely relevant in a comparative sense. Just like the people of our neighbouring countries, we inherited many problems from the previous regime. We need to make policies that will address all those problems. Also, just as in Tanzania the inherited gap between the rich and the poor in South Africa is very wide. This country can provide South Africans with particular perspectives on our problems and these may help us as we are trying to redress the imbalances of the past.

This study is also intended to contribute to these ongoing historiographical discussions about oral history, evidence and memory. It will situate these debates in the context of contemporary East African history.

Methodology

This study is based primarily on oral history interviews. Twelve Tanzanians who are studying in Western Cape higher education institutions were selected for interviews. The main reason for their selection is because they grew up in Tanzania and some of them had experienced the *Ujamaa* policies. They had also studied these policies at school, so they have an in-depth knowledge of *Ujamaa*. I asked each respondent individually for interview permission.

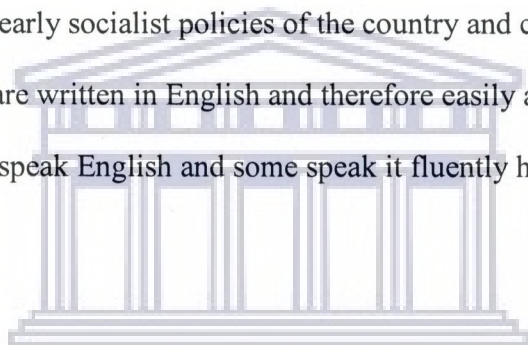
Interviews were personally conducted by the researcher. The purpose (solely academic) of the study was explained to the respondents and also the importance of their participation. Each respondent was asked to sign a consent form before commencement of any form of interview. The researcher used a digital voice recorder. All the respondents understood the questions and no problems were encountered.

Confidentiality was again assured to the individual respondents. They were asked not to give their real names if they so wished. Each respondent was interviewed separately and in a different venue. Interviews were conducted in English as all the respondents speak English fluently. The interviews lasted for approximately thirty minutes each.

The study is supplemented by secondary sources on the post-independence and *Ujamaa* periods.

Limitations of the study

Because of the financial constrains, I was not able to go to Tanzania in order to acquire primary data. Moreover, my inability to read Kiswahili did not allow me access to information contained in local-language newspapers. But, however there are many secondary sources on the early socialist policies of the country and copies of some of its key polices, all of which are written in English and therefore easily accessible. However, the fact that interviewees speak English and some speak it fluently helps me greatly in the research.



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Chapter Two: Independence and Ujamaa come to Tanzania

This chapter will discuss *Ujamaa* mainly in relation to its implementation in the villages of rural Tanzania. It will also provide a summary of the planning and the establishment of the *Ujamaa* villages. In order to show the role played by *Ujamaa* in the villages it is necessary to discuss the period before independence so as to portray the changes that followed.

The colonial period

Both German and Britain had done little to develop Tanzania's economic self-sufficiency. The colonial economy was geared towards exporting minerals and raw materials and cash crops (Yeager: 1982: 9).

Tanzania's economy was structured in such a way that it would benefit the economies of colonial states. The primary objective of the colonial states was the exploitation of minerals and cash crops. Mohiddin argues in addition that "the administrative framework so established provided the justification for economic exploitation" (Mohiddin: 1981:11).

People who were practising subsistence farming were forced to become labourers in the colonial plantations and because of the number of settlers who arrived there (in the British period) was a shortage of land for local people to practice farming in some areas. Agricultural practice by Africans deteriorated. Freyhold argues that "The influx of white

settlers, who soon occupied the best stretches of land in the area and turned many of the inhabitants into seasonal labourers, helped to accelerate the decay of the remaining social institutions”(Freyhold:1979:8).

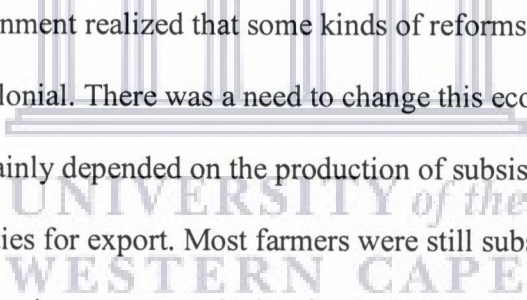
The post-Independence period

In the early years of independence, there was not much economic change. The economic situation was still the same as pre-independence period; there was the continuity instead of change. This was partly because of the fact that senior and middle-level civil service positions were still filled by foreign officers. Clyde Ingle argues that “Rural development efforts of the immediate post –independence period are marked more by continuity than change: In one sense this was to be expected; the pre-independence plans and techniques were still much in force. Indeed, in most cases, the personnel responsible for development policy and implementation were the same” (Ingle: 1972:48).

TANU and Nyerere, however, had promised to change things immediately after independence for the benefit of the peasants. In his speech titled “The challenge of Independence”; Nyerere states that “Our whole existence has been controlled by people with an alien attitude to life, people with different customs and belief. They have determined the type of economic activity. They have shaped the present generation of Tanganyikans, more than any other influence” (Nyerere: 1967:133). The main objective of TANU and Nyerere was to root out this kind of practice.

President Julius Nyerere, in a speech given in the TANU national conference titled 'Ten Years After Independence' highlighted the fact that at independence, the status of the poor people had not automatically changed and that economic independence had not been achieved yet. What he said they had achieved was a political independence only. Nyerere argues that "In December 1961, Tanganyika did not attain economic power –and certainly not economic independence. We gained the political power to decide what to do; we lacked the economic and administrative power which would have given us freedom in those decisions" (Nyerere: 1973:263).

Ujamaa



Nyerere and TANU government realized that some kinds of reforms were needed. The economy was typically colonial. There was a need to change this economy to reflect the independent era. It still mainly depended on the production of subsistence foodstuffs as well as primary commodities for export. Most farmers were still subsistence producers. Nyerere realized that Tanzania was not producing for the benefit of the country so that it could develop economically: "almost all the monetary sector had grown in accordance with the needs of foreign countries" (Nyerere: 1973:264).

This foreign control of the means of production was rapidly moving away from Nyerere's original vision of an egalitarian and democratic society. His reaction was to introduce a policy which would reiterate and embrace the basic principles of socialism. Nyerere and

TANU wanted to build a society in which all members would have equal rights and also equal opportunities. This was to be a society in which all members could live at peace with neighbours without being exploited or being exploiters themselves.

After five months, just after the official end of colonial rule in Tanzania, in April 1962, Nyerere issued a pamphlet which was called *Ujamaa* which was to define the political philosophy of the new government. *Ujamaa* was then emphasised during the Arusha Declaration in 1967. When explaining Arusha Declaration, Nyerere argued that “the Arusha Declaration is also a commitment to a particular quality of life. It is based on the assumptions of human equality, on the belief that it is wrong for one man to dominate or to exploit another” (Mohiddin: 1981:82).

Nyerere confirmed and emphasised the commitment of the TANU government on the principle of human equality and also made an appeal to the people to return to traditional values where everybody had a right to be respected and where everyone had an obligation to work.

The main policy that was to achieve this kind of socialism according to Nyerere was *Ujamaa*. *Ujamaa* is the Swahili word means ‘familyhood’. This was the basis of African socialism. This kind of socialism would resemble the African traditional life style in pre-colonial African society. When describing *Ujamaa*, Hyden states that “(a) respect-each member of the family recognising the place and right of the other members; (b) common property- acceptance that whatever one person has in the way of basic necessities, they

all have; and (c) obligation to work- every member of the family, and every guest who shares in the right to eat and have shelter, taking for granted the duty to join in whatever work needs to be done” (Hyden:1980:98).

Andrew Coulson quote Nyerere when he argues that ‘*Ujamaa*’, then, or ‘familyhood’, describes our socialism”. This socialism he was referring to was opposed to capitalism, which always intends to build a functioning society on the basis of the private appropriation of profit. *Ujamaa* policy intended to build a society free of exploitation and conflict.

The emphasis of *Ujamaa* policy was unity. People lived together and they worked together; and the result of their joint labour belonged to the family as a whole. Everyone would have a fair share in every product. The language that was emphasized was ‘our food’, ‘our land’ and our ‘cattle’.

Ujamaa comprised a number of policies, and these were self-reliance, villagization, Nationalisation, Africanization and the policy of socialism. These policies were implemented in order to change Tanzania into a socialist country in which there was no exploitation.

Large enterprises were nationalised and there was a ban on private capitalist activities. The government took control of all the means of production and this was regarded as one of the essential features of a socialist state. Nyerere was aware of the fact that, for this

system to be successful it entirely depended on the leaders. Mohiddin quoted Nyerere saying that “The successful implementation of socialist objectives depends very much upon the leaders because socialism is a belief in a particular system of living, and it is difficult for the leaders to promote its growth if they do not themselves accept it” (Mohiddini: 1981:84).

One of the major objectives of the Nationalisation policy was to end the exploitation of workers and peasants. Banks were nationalised, the insurance companies and a number of large firms that were involved in the food industry were also nationalised. In fact, all the big companies were to be under the control of the state. Government also acquired majority shareholdings in a number of firms. Included in the list of nationalised companies were the foreign banks operating in Tanzania. The president had, according to the law, a right to requisition land from private owners if the land was judged to be suitable and required for public projects (Abrahams: 1964:11).

Ujamaa and villagisation were married and the concept of *Ujamaa* villages emerged from the two. These villages would consist of small groups of very committed farmers who worked together equally. An *Ujamaa* village was an organisation of poor peasants trying to prove that they could change their predicament by simple working hard. These people would not be compelled or forced to form these villages but they would form them voluntarily. These villages would be free societies where people would live in peace with one another.

The sick, the old, the orphans, widows, unmarried people would be looked after by the community as a whole. No member of a village would suffer and remain poor while other members of the village were in a better economic situation. This was emulated from traditional African society.

When describing *Ujamaa* villages, Nyerere stated “It would be a meeting of the villagers which would elect the officers and the committee, and a meeting of the village which would decide whether or not to accept or to amend any proposals for work organization which the committee had drawn up the light of general directions given by earlier meetings” (Nyerere: 1973:268) The villagers are free to always take a collective decision in all matters. These villages were intended to be socialist organisations created by the people, and also governed by the people who are living and working in them. The villages could not be created by outsiders or by people who were not directly living in them and they could not be governed from the outside. Everybody in the *Ujamaa* villages would be a worker except the ill, young and old people.

The *Ujamaa Vijijini* policy stressed the fact that for these villages to be successful the first thing to do was to develop people, not things, and people would then develop things. People would then develop themselves to the benefit of the whole community.

Freyhold states that “completed *Ujamaa* will be achieved when the needs of any member are the responsibility of all, when the community will provide food, shelter and a wide

range of social services to its members” (Freyhold:1979:74). Thus, there would be interdependence and co-operation in the *Ujamaa* villages.

According to the policy, the socialism practised in the *Ujamaa* villages would inevitably transform the country to become more democratic and more socialistic in nature. Here people would not only govern their own lives directly in village matters, they would also play an active and effective role in the running of their country. Because Tanzania was a predominantly peasant society in which farmers in the rural areas continued to work on the land, land was used as the only basis for the country’s development. It was the responsibility of government and TANU members to go to the villages to persuade people to move their houses into a single village, next to all the necessities like water.

Mohiddin argues that “it was these *Ujamaa* villages which were the key to the realisation of Tanzania’s policy of socialism and self-reliance” (Mohiddin: 1981:138). It was imperative that the government and TANU both work very hard to assist in the establishment of these villages. Every kind of assistance was to be given.

One of the advantages of these villages was that they always produce a quality of products because of the amount of labour involved in the production process. The *Ujamaa* villages consisted of different characters of people with different natural talent. People complemented each other and were equally committed. The co-operatives in these villages made work much easier because people were performing the same duty simultaneously. According to Freyhold “combination of labour often gives the process or

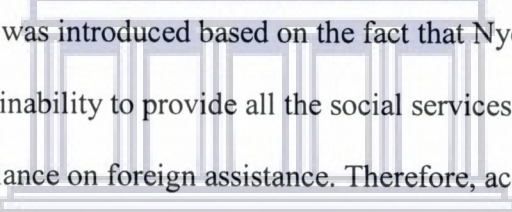
the result of the labour completely different quality: five men can lift a tree which one cannot lift at all and ten people could lift a tree without any physical exertion. Even more important for *Ujamaa* villages is what could be called the ‘complementation effect’ each individual adds his work to the whole work, while only the work is useful to each individual” (Freyhold: 1979:22).

Ujamaa Vijijini (socialism in villages) was thus fully introduced in the rural areas just after the Arusha Declaration in 1967. According to this policy, peasants were to move from their original scattered and small settlements into larger villages. TANU and Nyerere believed that this would make things much easier to provide people with schools, clinics and villages. When in these villages, these people should build co-operative system of farming. But at first *Ujamaa Vijijini* was thus a movement of workers trying to establish themselves as communal peasants. Later, people established these villages for the sake of attracting government aid because *Ujamaa* villages, in the initial stage were financially supported by government. Freyhold argues that “most people were already living in villages so it was not a matter of moving anywhere but a matter of starting some productive venture which would be acknowledge as being in the spirit of *Ujamaa Vijijini*” (Freyhold:1979:44).

Before TANU and Nyerere proclaimed the policy of ‘*Ujamaa Vijijini*’ there were already TANU Youth League settlements which were practising communal cultivation. The main purpose of doing this was to compete and eventually dismiss the plantation owners from other countries. Freyhold states that “these settlements had been formed mainly by

politicised sisal workers who had longed to get rid of foreign plantations-owners”
(Freyhold: 1979:43).

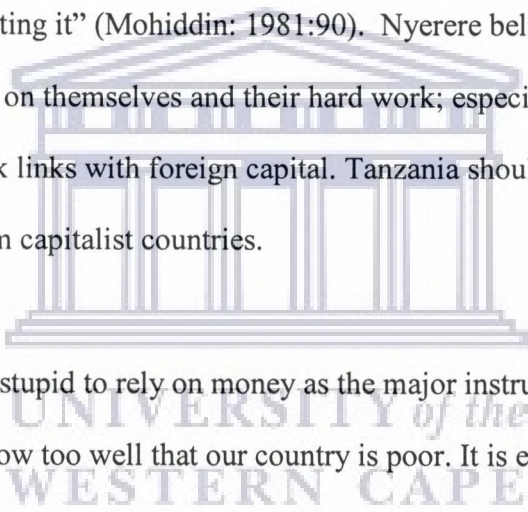
The Arusha Declaration proclaimed that the development of the country must be based on self-reliance. Therefore, the strategy for the development of the country as well as the building of socialism should be determined and dictated by the needs of the people. All the strategies that were to be applied should first and most importantly meet the needs of poor Tanzanians and also help in the building of socialism. Self-reliance policy was seen as the policy that would help in the building of socialism (Mohiddin: 181:89).



The policy of self reliance was introduced based on the fact that Nyerere and TANU acknowledged Tanzania’s inability to provide all the social services needed by people and also the dangers of reliance on foreign assistance. Therefore, according to TANU and Nyerere there was a need to emphasise the role of agriculture on the economic development of the country. The rural areas were seen as the only area that could help in the development of the country.

This was because of the fact that Tanzania at that time was not an industrial country. So, the socialism Nyerere introduced was to be based on the land and workers. Nyerere argued that “Tanzanian socialism must be firmly based on the land and its workers. This means that we have to build up the countryside in such a way that our people have a better standard of living, while living together in terms of equality and fraternity”
(Nyerere:1977:10).

Industrialisation as the major strategy by which socialism could be built was rejected precisely because TANU and Nyerere believed that Tanzania was predominantly an agricultural country and also it did not have the means for such a development strategy. Nyerere also rejected the view that Tanzania could not develop without foreign aid as it would affect their political, economic or social policies as they would be compelled to meet the needs of the foreign donors. Mohaddin quoted Nyerere arguing that “we shall not depend upon overseas aid to the extent of bending our political, social or economic policies in the hope of getting it” (Mohiddin: 1981:90). Nyerere believed that Tanzania and its people should rely on themselves and their hard work; especially their farming and also they should break links with foreign capital. Tanzania should stop taking much foreign aid especially from capitalist countries.



Nyerere argued that “it is stupid to rely on money as the major instrument of development when we know too well that our country is poor. It is equally stupid, indeed it is more stupid, for us to imagine that we shall rid ourselves of our poverty through foreign financial assistance rather than our own financial resources” (Nyerere:1968:238).

Tanzania’s education system was changed to meet the needs of the kind of society that was envisaged by TANU and Nyerere. The Arusha Declaration also proclaimed Education for Self-reliance and emphasised the fact that education should be structured to meet the needs of the people in rural areas. TANU perceived education as something that will popularise their ideas of socialism. Susan Crouch argues that “education was

perceived by the leadership as a means to popularise the ideas of socialism and self-reliance” (Crouch: 1986:46).

This new system of education aimed to teach pupils a sense of commitment to the community to instill self-reliance and dignity among the individuals and encourage their involvement in the building of the country. The life of the community and that of school should be integrated and each school should have its own farm or workshop for training purposes and also to encourage self-reliance.

More money was spent on the building of primary schools. Primary education was free and this alone encouraged a large amount of children to attend school. Learners were taught the importance of agriculture and practical skills. Learners, after primary school had already acquired agricultural skills. Students had to help with community work like farming, during school hours. The policy of education for self-reliance emphasised the fact that there should be a link between school and communities. According to Nyerere “all schools must be economic communities as well as social and educational communities” (Nyerere: 1973:298).

The policy of Education for Self-reliance also emphasised the fact that teaching at all levels should become appropriate to the needs of the people and of Tanzanian society taken as a whole. In the primary schools and especially in secondary school the emphasis should be given technical and agricultural training. Thus, most schools were now specialising in agriculture, science or technology.

Another important educational development which was relevant to the growth of socialist attitude was the new method of entry to University. Only students who had been working in villages and factories were eligible to go to University. The admission of these students depended upon character references from their work-mates and it also depended upon academic qualifications.



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Chapter Three: Socialist Histories of Ujamaa

The focus of this chapter will be on what historians have written about *Ujamaa*. This will also include different views and perceptions of *Ujamaa* policies and how these authors have portrayed the *Ujamaa* period in their written work.

Perspectives on Ujamaa

Ujamaa was a radical and controversial policy which elicited a range of responses from historians. There are some who supplemented their work with the oral evidence and some who based their work on written material. These two schools of thought have always produced something different. The timing of writing has often had an impact on what one has written. So, one's opinion is sometimes determined by time. Some historians have depicted *Ujamaa* as policy which brought significant changes in the lives of Tanzanians, while there are those who believe that *Ujamaa* policies worsened the situation instead of fulfilling its promises. Many writers choose to provide an assessment of Tanzania's experience in rural development.

Among the writers who praised the record of *Ujamaa* in agricultural production is Susan Crouch. She argues that in post-colonial Tanzania "agricultural production continued to rise and the majority of peasants were left to cultivate the land in the traditional way". (Crouch: 1986:27) The freedom given to peasants to cultivate without government interference motivated the peasants to produce more food.

Although she is critical about some *Ujamaa* policies, she is particularly impressed by the policy on Education for self-reliance. She portrayed this policy as having made an impact on the development of people and its endeavour to reduce the rate of illiteracy in the country. Unlike other writers who choose to focus on the failures of *Ujamaa* she discussed both the successes and the shortcomings of *Ujamaa* policies. She traced the problem of the high rate of illiteracy back to the colonial era, unlike some who blame the growing number of people who are illiterate on the post-independent government.

The period after independence, before the Arusha Declaration of 1967 have been portrayed by some historians as a difficult time in people's lives. Susan Crouch is among those who believe that this was a hard time for the people of Tanzania; she states that "the social and economic conditions of Tanzania remained the same as during colonial times" (Crouch: 1986:15).

Mohiddin discussed positive results brought by policy of Education for self-reliance. He emphasised that it had positive consequences in terms of developing people. He argues that "for the first time pupils would be practically involved in the kind of activities that most of them would probably be engaged in after leaving school - i.e. some form of agricultural work" (Mohiddin:1981:135).

Mohiddin believed that the new education system in independent Tanzania was much better than education offered during colonial era. He praised the TANU government for replacing colonial education with Education for Self-reliance. He states that “the education system built during the colonial era was not conducive to the kind of society envisioned by Nyerere” (Mohiddin: 1981:134).

The period after the Arusha Declaration marked the turning point in the history of Tanzania. This is the time when the government was prepared to play an active role in the economic development of the country. The aim of government was for the improvement in the agricultural sector. Paul Collier states that “the Arusha Declaration inaugurated an era of major agricultural policy interventions. The outcome of these interventions was a massive transformation of the rural areas between 1967 and 1980”.

Some historians believe that *Ujamaa* policies achieved the objectives they initially intended to deliver. Among those is Collier who believes that “*Ujamaa* improved the living standards of peasants” (Collier: 1986:7). These policies, according to Collier made a positive impact on the lives of the people.

Other historians have different views of *Ujamaa* because of the fact that they wrote their works in later times. I have noticed that time could influence one’s opinion. The majority of writers who wrote and published their work when Nyerere was in power in Tanzania differed with those who wrote and published their work a decade or more after Nyerere had resigned as the president of Tanzania.

Nindi's article in O'Neill's book titled *Capitalism, Socialism and the Development Crisis in Tanzania* is a perfect example. He is one of the critics of *Ujamaa* policies based on research conducted in the 1990s. He emphasised that the implementation process of the policies was very slow and that people were not adequately trained to sustain the *Ujamaa* villages. These policies, according to Nindi, made no impact in the lives of the peasants.

Paul Collier, whose work was published in the 1980s, and who started his work in 1979 praised *Ujamaa* policies especially the rural development policies. He argues that "Many observers pointed to the achievements in the provision of social infrastructure as outstanding successes which improved the quality of rural life" (Collier: 1986:7). The differences between the two writers show the fact that really; time and conditions have an influence and can shape people's opinion.

The recent publications on Nyerere and *Ujamaa* are generally more harsh about his policies. Seemingly people have begun to reassess the historical record. Their memory is always affected by economic, social and political conditions of their time. People view the past through the eyes of their current predicament. One of the examples is the journal written in 2004 by Leander Schneider. Schneider states that "the policy of *Ujamaa*/villagisation failed to improve the lives of peasants in Tanzania" (Schneider: 2004:348).

The majority of current writers on *Ujamaa* focus on the shortcoming of its policies and pay little attention to any success of TANU and Nyerere policies. These writers ignore the fact that *Ujamaa* policies played a crucial role in improving the lives of many poor people in Tanzania. The main topic taken up by these writers is the difficulty around the implementation of the *Ujamaa* villagization policy.

Rural problems

To TANU and Nyerere, *Ujamaa* villages were the key to the realisation of Tanzania's policy of socialism and self-reliance. O'Neill quoted Nyerere arguing that "it is to be the establishment of *Ujamaa* villages and other form of co-operative production that we look for real transformation of the countryside both economically and socially" (O'Neill:1990:35).

The common positive point from all historians who wrote about *Ujamaa* policies is that these policies encouraged feelings of national unity among the people of Tanzania. It also, to some extent, closed the gap between poor and the rich people and it installed the element of commitment and responsibility in the people. The *Ujamaa* policies helped people to realise that they could be more self-reliant.

The major problem was with the implementation of the policies. The officials were acting contrary to what President Nyerere was expecting. But some writers like Schneider have the view that Nyerere should also share the blame for putting much pressure on the

officials to convince people to create the new villages. This led to these officials to use coercive means. Schneider states that “One may accuse Nyerere of a great degree of political naivety for not expecting the predictable outcome of the pressure he exerted on his officers and for failing to at least draw the consequences when these outcomes became apparent” (Schneider: 2004: 368).

The villagisation process, which was to be a free association of people, who were to decide on their own to form an *Ujamaa* village, had been changed to a compulsory process. The government officials were now speaking for the people, taking decisions for the peasants. According to Schneider “the issue of living in *Ujamaa* villages [was] now an order of the party” (Schneider: 2004:371).

Schneider and others have discussed the fact that coercive means were often used to force the peasants who refused to be relocated to the new *Ujamaa* villages and who resisted the idea of cooperation in some of the villages. Schneider continue to say that peasants who did not comply with *Ujamaa* policies were not just quietly convinced and told about the importance and advantages of staying in these new *Ujamaa* villages but were forced to leave their places of birth (Schneider: 2004: 345).

Schneider believes that the coercive measures used to move people to the new villages portrayed an authoritative side of Nyerere’s rule; thus he portrays Nyerere as a president who had an element of a dictator. What is lacking in Schneider’s discussion is that he only focuses on Nyerere, ignoring the fact that there were TANU officials who were

tasked to monitor and give guidance on the implementation of *Ujamaa* policies. These were the people who were directly involved in the establishment of these new villages.

Hyden raises something very important, which is not common in the written history of *Ujamaa*: the point that government took time to convince people to create *Ujamaa* villages and the president himself took a personal lead by creating what was called 'Operation Dodoma'. This was a government-planned programme to move all people in that area into new villages with the hope of developing these into communal places of work. Hyden states that "to the TANU leadership the growth of villages appeared so slow that its promise to transform the rural areas was in danger of losing credibility" (Hyden: 1980:102).

According to Hyden the president spent a long time living in Chamwino, one of the first *Ujamaa* villages to be set up. He visited other settlements and encouraged the peasants to comply with the new policies. The president did similar visits to other regions (Hyden: 1980: 103).

When government officials realised that many people in the rural areas were reluctant to participate in the new villages and were not complying with government policies, they, in many cases opted to use coercive means and instruct people to obey and follow the policies of government. People were even punished for not participating. Freyhold states that "the district councils passed a resolution to the effect that 'any person not

participating in development projects should be punished by six strokes” (Freyhold: 1979:36).

One factor which contributed to the failure of the new villages was that people who were forcibly moved to these villages against their will did not then show much commitment to the development of their new villages. Schneider argues that “the compulsory nature of resettlement also undermined the potential of there developing among people a commitment to their new ‘community” (Schneider: 2004: 357).

Freyhold continues to say that “In 1967 the regional commissioner of Tanga declared that in a speech to the district council ‘the time of persuading citizens to work for their benefit is finished. It’s necessary from now to enforce them to work hard. The government will take severe steps with those who are not willing to work in the jobs that they have been instructed to do” (Freyhold: 1979:36).

Nyerere was aware that some government officials were forcing people to create the new villages that would comply with the *Ujamaa* policies and also to cultivate the crops of not their choice. When he realised this, he warned those who were perpetrating this kind of act that “we make a big mistake if we try to force people to produce certain amounts or even cultivate certain acreages of cash crops” (Nyerere:1973:273).

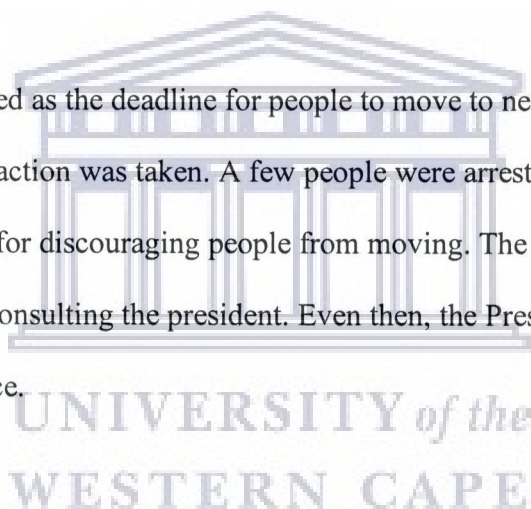
All the new villages had representatives from government and some from the ruling party. These people were monitoring the processes and the implementation of *Ujamaa*

policies. They were also expected to give a report back to government and TANU. They were not expected to interfere in the decisions taken by the villages.

Schneider continues to say that “as history of *Ujamaa*/villagisation goes on to show, the ideas of ‘participatory’, communal-based, grassroots, and ‘agency-centered’ development are not as novel as one might think” (Shneider:2004:371). The authoritarian practice of development contradicted participatory ideas and led to enforced participation.

Voluntarism was now abandoned.

April 5, 1969 was reported as the deadline for people to move to new villages of their own free will before any action was taken. A few people were arrested, apparently for obstructing progress and for discouraging people from moving. The government officials were doing this without consulting the president. Even then, the President was still opposed to the use of force.



This use of force was against the policy which initially stressed the voluntary movement of people into the villages and also based on persuasive socialist techniques. This was contrary to the kind of villages Nyerere envisaged (O'Neill:1990:28).

Some writers blame the rich farmers, some government and party officials for not showing interest in development. The rich farmers were reluctant to leave their farms and join the collectives. The government and party officials were not fully committed in

assisting in developing the *Ujamaa* villages. O'Neill states "that Nyerere acknowledged the attitude of rich farmers and government and party officials as an obstacle to development" (O'Neill:1990:30).

Another contributory factor to the failure of the *Ujamaa* villages was their size. The smaller the size of the village, the better it performed. It has been agreed that the small villages were better organised on the lines of *Ujamaa* and the people were highly motivated to live and work together. The majority of the bigger villages found it difficult to succeed. They experience lot of problems like how to organise the division of labour and how to manage compensation (O'Neill:1990:32).

The published material contains no solutions attempted to the problems experienced by larger villages. Moreover, several studies reveal that the success of *Ujamaa* villages was often linked with local leadership, usually of one man. There are not many studies available which have shown or discovered how democratic participation was made effective in villages.

From a review of the existing literature it is evident that not all *Ujamaa* villages were democratic. In some villages the elected leaders were taking decisions for the people. In most cases, the peasants saw no reasons to complain because they were used to this situation from the colonial era. Taking their own decisions was something unusual for them.

Evidence from other studies indicate that in as much as *Ujamaa* contributed in terms of unifying Tanzanians, to some extent it has also contributed to the disruption of traditional social practices in most parts of Tanzania. Although in Tanzanian societies there had been the spirit of brotherhood and interdependence, there was also an element of autonomy and self-subsistence of the family production. O'Neill is one of the writers who has mentioned this: "*Ujamaa* living also contributed to a certain amount of disruption of the deeply held social practices embedded in many parts of Tanzania" (O'Neill:1990:33).

It has also been argued that what was lacking in these new villages was the accommodation of individual and family needs. The chief concern of the villages was the collective needs of the community. The government and party officials repeatedly told people that Tanzania was a nation of co-operative farmers and that this objective would need a 'fundamental' change in social organisation of Tanzania as well as traditional life style. (O'Neill: 1990:33).



Some writers have not blamed the failure of *Ujamaa* on Tanzanians but on the international organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Ergas argues that "a number of international organisations, in collusion with transnational companies, did push for the abolition of *Ujamaa*". (Egars: 1980:34) Ergas also quotes John Hatch who asserts that "the World Bank not only told President Nyerere that he would have to modify his socialist policies as the price of his country's economic survival (but) virtually threatened to withdraw current and future aid unless he suspend his *Ujamaa* programme" (Egars: 1980:34).

Writers who criticise *Ujamaa* include Michael Lofchie and Ergas. Both claim that Tanzania's policy of rural collectivisation was a failure. Ergas in particular gives four internal causes which led to the failure of *Ujamaa* village policy: (a). "the exploitation of the peasantry by the bureaucrats and rich farmers- (b). the lack of education and skills of the peasantry; (c). the myth that communal traditions favour socialism; (d). the great food shortage which hit the country between 1973 and 1975" (Ergas: 1980:387).

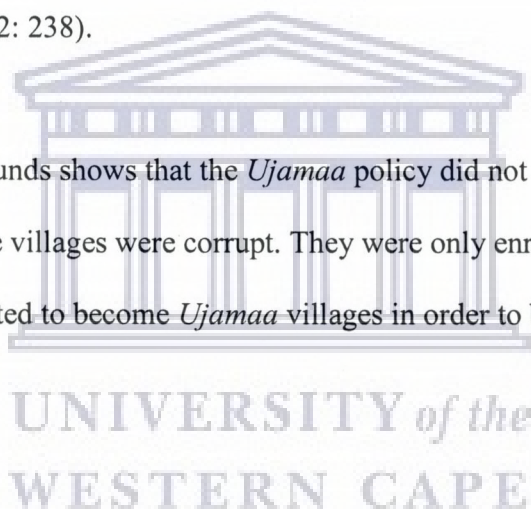
The big international companies and the World Bank were prepared to invest in Tanzania, but if certain conditions are met. It only depended on TANU and Nyerere to decide whether to abandon *Ujamaa* policies and opt for the conditions laid by the transnational institution.

But the aid that they promised to offer Tanzania was in the form of money. Nyerere had rejected the indispensability of money as the only fundamental basis of development. He argued that "we made a mistake in choosing money-something we do not have- to be the big instrument of our development. We are making a mistake to think that we shall get the money from other countries; first, because in fact we shall not be able to get sufficient money for our economic development, secondly, because even if we could get all that we need, such dependence upon others would endanger our independence and our ability to choose our own political policies" (Nyerere: 1968:236).

The new villages were built on the belief that there was a link between living together and working together. The idea behind this was that living together would automatically lead to working together and vice versa. O'Neill states that "although living together may lead to working together the reverse is also possible" (O'Neill:1990:36).

Coulson argues that "some villages were created by local leaders to use as stepping stones to further their political ambitions". Many of these villages broke up when village funds were mishandled. Some villages were *Ujamaa* in name, but only so in limited ways in practice (Coulson: 1982: 238).

The mismanagement of funds shows that the *Ujamaa* policy did not fail but the people who were in charge in the villages were corrupt. They were only enriching themselves. Some of the villages wanted to become *Ujamaa* villages in order to benefit from the *Ujamaa* projects.



Chapter Four: Oral traditions of Ujamaa

This chapter will present the views of Tanzanians who are staying in Cape Town about *Ujamaa* policies. The interviewees were all students at Western Cape higher education institutions. They were interviewed in English, and each interview lasted about thirty minutes. The names below are pseudonyms given for the purpose of my research.

The chapter will also compare these views to those expressed in one of the main socialist histories of Tanzania. Written by Arnold Temu and I N Kimambo, it is, *A History of Tanzania* (Nairobi, East African Publication House, 1969).

Table 1: Tanzanian Interviewees

Name	Date of birth	Course of study
K	1961	Phd (electrical Eng)
Maraa	1975	Phd (Chemistry)
Freer	1983	BA
Maria	1983	BA
Pm	1954	Phd (Linguistics)
Julius	1982	LLM
Chris	1959	Phd (Linguistics)
J.A.	1978	Pharmacy
Marc	1975	MSC
Robert	1980	BA
Nola	1968	Phd
San	1967	Phd

The older interviewees experienced *Ujamaa* policies personally but all of the interviewees learnt these policies in their primary and secondary school. I found that they have in-depth knowledge of the *Ujamaa* policies. Those who were not there during

Nyerere's time heard this history from their parents and grandparents. Their families had all been, in one way or another, affected by *Ujamaa* policies.

Few of the interviewees had directly benefited from some *Ujamaa* policies, in particular free primary education which was under the umbrella of the policy for education for self-reliance. Some of them were old enough to see the implementation of these new policies. Among the interviewees there are some who are the employees of universities in Tanzania.

They all came to South Africa primarily to pursue their studies. They had three main reasons for choosing to study abroad. Some of the degrees they are pursuing here are not offered in the universities back home; and there are very few universities in Tanzania. Finally, some had been granted sponsorship to study abroad.

There was a direct link from their personal lives to the policies of *Ujamaa*, as they attributed the shortages of university places in Tanzania to the fact that both Nyerere and the current government ignored the higher education. Some argued that TANU and Nyerere did not pay much attention to the building of secondary schools and universities. His focus was on building primary schools so that people could obtain the basic agricultural skills (Nyerere: 1968:388). However, the interviewees did not particularly blame Nyerere for doing that because they believe that what he was doing was in line with his party policies.

I have argued that in most cases in an oral interview, the interviewees turn to look and interpret past events with the eyes of the current predicament. Tanzanians were not exceptions. What they mention as lacking in Nyerere's government, the building of secondary and tertiary schools was not a top priority then. Their thinking is based on today's priorities because secondary and tertiary education, just like primary education, is on top on the list of priorities today.

The people I interviewed all still rate Nyerere very highly. They believe that he was best president Tanzania has ever produced. Even those who criticised some of his policies still regard him as one of the great statesmen of Africa. Some of them do not directly criticise him for the failure of some of his policies, they, instead criticised the implementation of the policies and the people who monitored and assisted in the implementation. Nyerere has been regarded by many as someone who brought unity and a sense of brotherhood to the people of Tanzania. These people believed that Nyerere also assisted other countries in Africa to obtain their independence.

One of the interviewees said, "Mwalimu (teacher) was very close to the people. He was the man of the people, he loved poor people and he did not enrich himself like other African Presidents. He did not die rich. Nyerere would spend a day with poor people trying to familiarise himself with the daily life of the poor people" (Interview with K: 03 March 2008).

This reminds me of Alessandro Portelli's point about what interviews can reveal. Portelli argues that "Interviews often reveal unknown events or unknown aspects of known events. They always cast new light on unexplored areas of the daily life of the non-hegemonic classes" (Portelli: 1981:99). In documented histories of Tanzania and Nyerere, little has been written about Nyerere as leader and as a person. The primary focus has always been on his economic policies.

One thing I have noticed about oral history and interviews is that when you pose a question, the answer is not confined to your question. Interviewees often go beyond the confines of the question. For example, when I asked them about the economic conditions before independence in Tanzania, the interviewees often jumped and talked about Nyerere and TANU. Portelli states that "The importance of oral testimony may lie not in its adherence to fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism, and desire emerged. Therefore, there are no 'false' oral sources" (Portelli: 1981:97). In the case of my interviews, I think the fact that they seem to have forgotten the relationship of colonial history to post-colonial history means that the colonial history is fading in their memories because they dwell more on the post-colonial history which seems to be in their memories now.

When I asked them if their perceptions of 'African socialism' have changed over the past few years the common answer was yes, it has changed and African socialism is not relevant today. They say that the capitalists now rule the world. This kind of answer reflects the political, economic and social predicament of today's world. Portelli states

that “changes which may have subsequently taken place in the narrators socio- economic standing, may affect, if not the actual recounting of prior events. This does not mean that they do not remember them clearly, but that there has been a change in their political opinions” (Portelli: 1981:69).

Some interviewees believed that it would not be easy for Tanzania to sustain African socialism alone in the hostile capitalist world. They agree that the idea was good but because Tanzania was in a very bad economic situation at the time, it was not to be easy to continue with *Ujamaa* successfully.

This conforms to the idea that people always see the past in relation to the present and also what we think and believe about what is going on now. Most interviewees are judging *Ujamaa* policies with the current situation in Tanzania and in the world - just as Grele has noted “The present impinges upon the memory of the past” (Grele:1985:251).

Passerini explores how the memory of Fascism and Nazism affects the lives of people and how they choose to remember or forget aspects of the past in the reconstruction of the past. This is evident in this study because when I asked the interviewees about the achievements of *Ujamaa* they often dwelled on the fact that it brought unity among the people because the answer to another question was that there was limited economic achievement.

There is also a question of nostalgia for those who experienced *Ujamaa* and appreciate the good work done by Nyerere and TANU in transforming the economic system of Tanzania. They always answer the questions through the concerns of today. For example, when I asked them the question, “Has the general view of the meaning of independence in Tanzania changed?” The answer was always about how good *Ujamaa* was as compared to the current economic situation. Grele noted that “When we asked people to discuss [a past event] and they do so, they speak from the perspective of today. It is not that they consciously attempt to fashion the past to present concerns but it is inevitable that answers are infused with those concerns” (Grele: 1985:251).

The way the past is viewed sometimes has consequences for the way the present is structured. I have also noticed this in the interviews. The interviewees compared the past and the present and some of them have a view that if the current government could only copy what was done in Nyerere’s time, things would be better. Chris, who, although he was too young to experience *Ujamaa* policies strongly believed that if the current government could introduce some of Nyerere’s policies and perspectives on the benefits of a “traditional African way of life” things could change economically (Interview with Chris: 10 March 2008).

When asked about people’s expectations when TANU and Nyerere came to power after Independence, the common answer was that, everyone anticipated at the time that life would be better. The economic status of the people would improve and there would be an improvement in the standard of living. But there was a range of answers to the question

of whether or not these high expectations had been met. Five of them said yes because roads, hospital, schools had been built.

Trevor Lummis argues that “It is known that when memory fails it is the most recent memories which go first” (Lummis: 1969:109). The interviewees, when they realise that they do not have much information about a particular interview question, often dwelled on the recent events. When I asked them about the similarities between post-colonial Tanzania and post- apartheid South Africa, some compared these two countries based on the current situation unless I insisted on asking the exact question and I could see that deviation. The question is because he/she could not remember the event clearly.

The interviewees who were born in the 1980s felt that *Ujamaa* benefited the few, the chiefs and those who were in power. Their feeling is that *Ujamaa* left them behind technologically. When I asked them if they would prefer *Ujamaa* now, the common answer from this generation was no.

When I asked this generation what they learnt at school about *Ujamaa*, they replied that these policies were in their history books and they learnt them as part of history. All the policies are explained in the history textbook. They argue that even today’s curriculum provide enough space for *Ujamaa*.

On the other hand, the generation of 1950s and 1960s, just like many of the documented and written materials still believe that TANU and Nyerere policies are still relevant

today. The problem according to these people was the ways that policies were implemented by government officials. This is the generation that benefited from Nyerere's policies. The policy that they specifically benefited from is Education for Self Reliance. They learnt a lot about *Ujamaa* at school. Their school curriculum was created based on *Ujamaa* policies. It was integrated into all the learning areas.

I found that the answers to my questions had an element of inconsistency. The interviewees' memories struggled when we were discussing the period immediately after independence. This was especially clear when I asked the question about whether people's expectations were met or not. They had contrasting answers. I found that memory was very sharp and reached its highest pitch regarding the period of 1967, during the Arusha Declaration, when *Ujamaa* policies were implemented. So this shows that there is no consistency in the way they remember events from the time of independence, 1961 to 1967 where the memory seems to be more sharp. Passerini, when referring to interviews about Italian Fascism states that "Inconsistent answers are such that in the sense that they manifest a discrepancy with what are considered the main historical events and processes" (Passerini: 1979:60).

Some interviewees claimed that there was no freedom of expression in the rule of law in Tanzania during Nyerere's time. They also raised the question of the one party state and they concluded that this contributed to the failures of the TANU and Nyerere government. But on the other hand, they mentioned the fact that Nyerere managed to end

tribalism in Tanzania and built a united country. They all agree that *Ujamaa* built a sense of togetherness, and respect for one another.

The interviewees had different views about villagization. Some of them were not affected by this policy as it was not implemented in all the villages of Tanzania. There are those who blamed the failure of this policy on how it was implemented by local leaders. Some blamed the whole idea of bringing the policy in the first place. K, one of interviewees argues that “villagisation policy was a good idea by Nyerere’s government but the people who were implementing it did not do what Nyerere wanted them to do” (Interview with K: 03 March 2008).

Maraa, whose village was directly affected by villagisation policy on the other hand, believed that the vilagisation policy was a failure in his community and it did not benefit the poor people. The primary reason according to Maraa, was the fact that people were moved from their areas of birth and some people were not poor but they were forced to form part of the collectives. This, according to Maraa eventually led to the failure of these new villages (Interview with Maraa: 04 March 2008).

P.M, who was in his late teens during *Ujamaa* policies believed that villagisation was a good, but badly implemented policy. He said that this excellent policy was altered by officials to such an extent that it made people suffer. This was because, he continued, government officials began to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor people. People were instructed to build new villages and were not told and advised on how the

new villages should function and what was expected from them (Interview with PM: 8 March 2008).

P.M went on to say that one of the contributory factors to the failure of the new villages was precisely because the people who formed them had little agricultural experience. Some of these people moved from the cities with no farming experience in order to form the *Ujamaa* villages. Coulson has a similar view: “some villages were formed by groups of unemployed from the towns, with little experience of farming” (Coulson: 1982:238).

Chris, one of respondents, viewed villagisation as a policy which contradicted itself. He believed that this policy created a class of rich peasants. These were the people who were related to the leaders in those villages. These people gained more power in the villages. Collier concurs with Chris when he states that “the peasants acquired power within the organisational structures of villages. This group behaved as elite” (Collier: 996:9).

When I asked the interviewees about Nyerere as a leader and as a person, even those who were critical of some *Ujamaa* policies agree say that he was a good leader, a man of integrity and a kind of leader who cared for everybody, rich or poor, educated or not. They painted a picture of a very strong person.

A socialist history and post-socialist memories

The book by Temu and Kimambo, *The History of Tanzania* has been chosen for this study to compare the socialist history and the memories of Tanzanians in the post-colonial era. This is a social history book which portrays Tanzania's history. Temu and Kimambo's book starts from the colonial period and also reviews the period after colonisation. The authors paid a great deal of attention to the period of the TANU government and the *Ujamaa* policies. P.M and Chris, who remembered this book and many others about the post-independence period in their primary and high school, mentioned the fact that the emphasis of these books was on teaching them the success of *Ujamaa* policies and how it had united people.

One of the similarities between my respondents, and the Temu and Kimambo book is that they all concur with the fact that *Ujamaa* policies succeeded in eradicating individualistic thinking which was planted in people's mind during the colonial era. They also concur with the fact that individualism which was common before independence created the very wide gap between rich and poor people. P.M, when comparing the colonial and post-colonial Tanzania mentioned the fact that *Ujamaa* brought equal distribution of wealth and he continues to say that this restored respect and dignity for everybody in the community.

Temu and Kimambo concur with P.M that things were much better in post-colonial Tanzania because of the eradication of individualism. They believe that individualism

benefited few individuals and those were the educated. They argue that “most of those who had been absorbed into these privileged economic groups had gained this status through education, an education provided on the western model which emphasized European values and the idea of individual achievement” (Kimambo and Temu: 1969: 242).

K also emphasised the fact that *Ujamaa* brought collectivisation which benefited everybody including the poor people. He continued to say that collectivisation bridged the gap between poor and the rich people and this brought back the old style of classless African traditional society (Interview with K, 3 March 2008).

The main difference between Kimambo and Temu and my respondents was on the policy of Africanisation. The respondents unanimously agreed that this was a good policy and it granted opportunity for Africans to take the centre stage and control their lives and play a significant role in the development of the countries economy. People, according to the respondents were given key positions in government.

Temu and Kimambo, on the other hand acknowledge all the advantages of the Africanization policy and emphasised the fact this policy gave opportunity to take control of the country; however, it had some disadvantages. They argued that “the replacing of the colonial administration in 1961 did not mean a complete break with the British or with their institutions. To be sure, it was at first more a change of personnel in the top echelons of the government and the civil service than a change of our institutions,

attitudes and thinking” (Temu and Kimambo: 1969: 213). The institutions left by British were not created to develop Tanzania in the interests of Tanzanians.

Lionel Cliffe, in Kimambo and Temu states that “it is important to stress that decolonization is not merely a process of finding African replacements to carry on the institutions of government. The colonialists during their occupation had left a stamp on the economic, social and cultural life of the country which was not automatically erased with the coming of political independence. Even the political structures were largely creations of the British” (Cliffe in Kimambo and Temu: 1969: 241). Cliffe also adds that the civil service had been recruited and appointments, promotions and dismissals were made on the basis of the norms of the British bureaucracy.

It is interesting that in some perhaps limited ways, the socialist history of Temu and Kimambo is more critical of socialism than post-socialist memory. The reason for this is probably because the book was written and published during the era of Nyerere. They were able to identify the shortcomings of socialism. The post-socialist memory is less critical of socialism because to it, it looks better when compared to the capitalist system currently practised in Tanzania.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This study has revealed that historical memory is easily influenced by the current predicaments. In this study, the way people narrated past events was affected by current political, economic and social conditions. *Ujamaa* has been narrated through the eyes of today. The way Tanzanians tell the history of *Ujamaa* differed according to the age of interviewees. The study has also found that the history of *Ujamaa* is still important to Tanzanians.

I have found Portelli's ideas very powerful especially his discussion of the changes which may have subsequently taken place in the narrator's life, which may affect the way the narrator tells his or her story. It helped me to analyse the answers from my respondents and try to find the changes after *Ujamaa* and if they have affected the narration of events.

One of the examples is when I asked PM if his perception of "*Ujamaa* and African Socialism in Tanzania has changed over the past few years". Part of his answer was that "*Ujamaa* was a brilliant idea and it was exceptionally good at that period but I doubt if it can produce good results today because of globalisation" (Interview with PM, 8 March 2008). This indicates that PM's thinking is influenced and shaped by current global economic situation.

What I have found from all the respondents and Portelli has also mentioned this, is that the interviewees change rhythm in the same interview (Portelli: 1998: 65). The change of the rhythm is caused by the attitude which is determined by the subject being discussed. I

have noticed the fact that if the discussion is about what the respondent is not so clear about, the rhythm changes. But if the subject on discussion is clear to the respondents, the rhythm changes and he/she will speak more freely. For example if any one particular *Ujamaa* policy was not implemented in his/her region you will find that the respondent do not dwell much on that but the flow of the interview would change when the policy affected his region.

One of the great achievements of Nyerere and TANU was to form a union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar, which took place in 1964. These two regions had been governed separately during the colonial period. After the unification, the new country called Tanzania emerged. I think this is a good lesson to all the countries of the world. Too many countries, especially in Africa, are ravaged by war because of artificial colonial boundaries. Not everybody supported the unification of Zanzibar and Tanganyika but Nyerere managed to convince the people to be part of this merger. To some extent Nyerere succeeded in creating an egalitarian and self-reliant society. He succeeded in creating a more classless society in Tanzania. This was the society of working people where everybody was a worker. Nyerere argues that “the whole rural society must be built on the basis of the equality of all Tanzanian citizens and their common obligations and common rights. There must be no masters and servants, but just people working together for the good of all and thus their own good” (Nyerere: 1967:147).

The gap between rich and poor people was almost closed as peasants became members of the collectives and some were members of *Ujamaa* villages. Yeager states that “gross economic inequalities were no longer present in a system that had gained control of the major means of production and income distribution. The ratio between the highest and lowest government salaries had been reduced from seventy to one in 1961 to about fifteen to one in 1975” (Yeager: 1982: 71).

This policy eventually created unity among the people. Although not everything expected was delivered but it brought some important changes to the lives of the people. The peasants were far off better than in the colonial period. TANU achieved its goal of attaining self-government based on the principle of majority rule and which managed to eradicate racial and ethnic divisions employed by the colonial regimes.

Nyerere built a society in which all have equal rights and equal opportunities, a society in which people could live in peace with one another and also in which no would be exploited or exploiting others. This was a society where people were willing to share knowledge with other people.

A number of schools and health centres were built so that people could receive access to education and health care. Millions of rural people enjoyed access to clean piped water. An increased number of children entered primary school. According to Yeager “Progress had also been made in providing basic health and educational opportunities for all Tanzanians. By 1978, 7.7 million rural residents enjoyed easy access to piped water; half

the almost 8,000 villages had dispensaries; and nearly 950,000 children had entered primary school-twice as many as in 1967.”(Yeager: 1982:71)

Racial discrimination was eliminated in education services, health, in social life and in wage rates was also eradicated. Nyerere succeeded in Africanising the public services (Nyerere: 1973:270).

For the first time, the public service reflected the demographics of the country. Africans were appointed and promoted in preference to anyone else. Only positions held by foreigners, which required scarce skills were left to those people and they were told to teach locals so that they could take over when they have acquired those skills.

The urban areas were growing rapidly, so government’s emphasis shifted to the improvement of the public service. People were then encouraged to stay in the countryside in order to form the co-operatives and the *Ujamaa* villages. The living conditions of the people in the rural areas improved. This resulted to an increase in life expectancy from 37 to 41 years. The infant mortality was much better than 1957, it was now between 160 and 165 per thousand live birth (Yeager: 1982: 34).

As TANU and Nyerere’s policies succeeded in improving the economic conditions in Tanzania, however, there were some shortcomings which emanated from the implementation of *Ujamaa* policies. Not everything done during the implementation of the policies was done properly. The problem of exploitation still existed in the co-

operatives. O'Neill argues that "there were people within the co-operatives who were exploiting the poor peasants". (O'Neill:1990:31)

Maria, one of the respondents in this study said that some of the villages were too large, so that it was not easy to control them. These co-operatives were not effective. There was also the problem of the resource constraints. It was even not easy to discipline each other in the big villages. The smaller villages were performing much better because it was easier to control them (Interview with Maria: 4 March 2008).

It has been argued that the villages experienced problems on the rights of members in community property; how to organise the division of labour, what principles of compensation to adopt and lastly, how to manage compensation. In most villages decisions were taken by few individuals (O'Neill: 1990: 33).

One of the factors that contributed to the failure of some *Ujamaa* villages was the fact that unemployed young people from the towns were taken to the villages to form part of the collectives although they had little experience of farming. They all found it difficult to achieve good production levels (Coulson: 1982: 238).

The question of richer villages was not addressed when preparing for the creation of the *Ujamaa* villages. These are the people who had the most to lose because they had to abandon whatever they had to join the collectives. Obviously, these people could not give their full support to the establishment of the new villages (Freyhold: 1979: 44).

Some have questioned the authenticity of the democracy that TANU and Nyerere promised to bring to Tanzania. People were not participating in the making of decisions. The decisions made by government and then taken to the people for implementation without initially involving the people (O'Neill: 1990: 23).

When comparing memories and nationalist histories I have found that there are more similarities than differences. All the respondents have positive memories of Nyerere and *Ujamaa* policies. The nationalist histories, on the other hand have portrayed *Ujamaa* in a way that will show the readers how good the policies were - although there were also elements of critical analysis. From the interviewees and nationalist history's portrayal of *Ujamaa* policies one can conclude that these policies did not fail but, as the interviewees have argued, people who were implementing the policies were to be blamed for not doing what Nyerere and TANU instructed them to do. Even those, among respondents who do not praise some of the policies put the blame on those who were implementing the policies.

This study has also revealed that there are more similarities in how the expatriate Tanzanians told the history of the early independent Tanzania and the histories that were written at that time. Both have portrayed Nyerere as a good president who had the love of his people in his heart. Even those who depicted *Ujamaa* negatively do not blame Nyerere but the officials who were tasked to monitor and help implement the new policies.

The study is very relevant to South Africa and I think this country can learn a lot from Tanzania's experiences. As South Africa is recently coming from a very notorious oppressive government and a society with vast economic, political and social imbalances, one would advise us to emulate what Nyerere did when Tanzania achieve independence. South Africa can learn on the achievements and shortcomings of Tanzania after Independence.

This is a very challenging period in South Africa as the country, for example, is currently experiencing the unfortunate problems of xenophobia against the foreigners. Tanzania experienced an ethnicity problem which I think is similar to xenophobia and there is a commonality between these two as they are both driven by hatred. Nyerere successfully dealt with ethnicity. His approach stood the test of time. South Africa can learn many things from Nyerere and the *Ujamaa* period. For example, South African can learn from the strategies Nyerere used when dealing with the problem of ethnicity.

Appendix

Interview questions

1. Please describe: where and when were you born?
2. When did you leave Tanzania, and why?
3. What was the economic situation in Tanzania before independence?
4. What did people in your family or community expect the TANU government to do when it came to power?
5. Did the new government meet their expectations? If yes, how, and if no, why?
6. What do Tanzanian school children today learn about *Ujamaa*? What did you learn when you were at school? If there have been changes, how would you explain that?
7. Has the general view of the meaning of independence in Tanzania changed? In what way (s)?
8. Was your family affected by any of the *Ujamaa* policies? If so, which ones and how?
9. Has your perceptions of “African socialism in Tanzania” changed over the past few years?
10. What did *Ujamaa* achieve?
11. What are your opinions and memories of Nyerere as a leader and as a person?
12. What are the differences and similarities between post colonial Tanzania and post-apartheid South Africa?

13. Are there any other relevant questions about independence and the *Ujamaa* years that I have not asked you?

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Interview schedule

Name	Place of birth	age	Place of interview	Dte of interview	Gender
K	Mbeya region	47	Cape University of Technology	03-03-08	M
Maraa	Dar es Salaam	33	University of the Western Cape	04-03-08	M
Free	Kagera region	25	University of the WesternCape	06-03-08	F
Maria	Kilimanjaro region	25	University of the Western Cape	07-03-08	F
PM	Dar es Salaam	51	University of the Western Cape	08-03-08	M
Julius	Tanga region	26	Cape University of Technology	09-03-08	M
Chris	Mbeya region	49	University of the Western Cape	10-03-08	M
JA	Kilimanjaro region	30	University of the Western Cape	12-03-08	M

Robert	Tanga region	28	University of the Western Cape	13-03-08	M
Nola	Dar es Salaam	40	University of the Western Cape	14-03-08	M
Sah	Kagera region	41	University of the Western Cape	15-03-08	M
Marc	Kilimanjaro region	33	University of the Western Cape	17-03-08	M



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