

UJAMAA: A Gift from Tanzania to Africa
A Critique of Current Social and Political Systems in African and *Ujamaa* as an Alternative

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Abstract

Despite the majority of African countries having been independent for over fifty years, the progress and development that many observers anticipated would come once African countries gained their independence has been slow, even stagnant, and in some cases there has been a decline. The lack of distinctly African thought to guide and inform development policies and interventions plays a significant role in Africa's lack of growth. This study will examine and analyze *Ujamaa*, a philosophy pioneered by Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, as an attempt to devise an African framework to address the continent's unique challenges. This study will be guided by a neo-Marxist theoretical orientation. The aim of this thesis is to contribute towards Africa's quest for true independence, freedom, and a solution to its immense challenges from a uniquely African perspective.

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Special thanks also go to my beautiful wife Jessica Nkongolo whose love, companionship and wisdom enabled me to complete this project.

Nkongolo, 2016.

I am Debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise.

(Romans 1:14, KJV)

List of Abbreviations and Definitions

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CCM	Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Party of the Revolution)
Haki Elimu	Right to Education (Tanzanian NGO)
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Global North	Developed countries, formerly labelled 'First World', primarily located in the Northern Hemisphere
Global South	Developing countries, formerly labelled 'Third World', primarily located in the Southern Hemisphere
KANU	Kenya African National Union
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
Tanganyika	Became Tanzania in October 29, 1964 after the Union of Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in April 26, 1964.
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union.
Uhuru	Freedom
U.K.	United Kingdom
UN	United Organizations
U.S.	United States of America
Vijijini	Rural area
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Introduction: Context and Thesis Statement

After approximately fifty years of independence, most African countries remain poor if not poorer than they were when they first became independent.¹ The hope that once independence was achieved African countries would rise out of poverty has faded away. Poverty, civil wars, disease, and corruption continue to ravage the continent. Meanwhile, that ‘development’ which has been achieved has been markedly uneven – both geographically as well as socially.

Many of the problems facing African countries today can be traced back to the time of European colonization of the continent, and before, such as the era of slavery. Not only did slavery first strip the continent of its most productive segments of society setting it on a perilous trajectory, but later, the colonial conquest created and entrenched vast social and economic inequalities. The colonial government became an apparatus of exploitation, corruption, and self-interest. Colonialists exploited the masses: they lived in bigger houses, drove nicer cars, and earned more money, using their positions to enrich themselves and their colonial home countries.

Although waving the banner of democracy and civility as they entered Africa, the interventions and activities undertaken by colonialists in the ‘interest’ of Africans were self-serving. Education is one such example. African education systems were designed by the colonial governments to serve their imperialist purposes. As Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, observed,

The education provided by the colonial government in the two countries which now form Tanzania had a different purpose. It was not designed to prepare young people for the service of their own country; instead it was motivated by a desire to

¹ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1974), 14.

inculcate the values of the colonial society and train individuals for the service of the colonial society.²

Not only were people who attended schools during colonialism trained as servants to the colonial government, but colonial education created a separation between the ‘formally educated’ and the masses. African values and ways of knowing and relating were systematically overwritten. Historically, in indigenous Tanzania, those with more knowledge or skills were expected to use their education, which was not necessarily formal, for the benefit of society. During colonialism, most of the ‘educated’ came to identify themselves more with the colonialists and looked down on those without formal education: they considered them inferior and ignorant. Education became a privilege and a way to earn more money, rather than a way to serve others.³ It became a tool of exploitation and self-service, doing little to advance the well-being of the people and country.

Similarly, working for the government, a ‘democratic’ institution, even following independence, was an avenue for serving one’s own selfish interests rather than pursuing the common good as the title ‘public servant’ would imply. Following independence, those who took over from the colonialists became new colonialists; they not only continued to exploit others in their own self-interest but became *compradors*- unconsciously acting as agents of foreign countries and as such furthering Western economic and political interests.⁴ Thus, the issues we see today can be traced back to ‘interventions’ and conquests into the continent decades and even centuries ago; they have not just emerged as a result of activities over the past fifty years.

² Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMAA: Essays on Socialism* (Oxford University Press, 1974), 46.

³ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 142.

New, post-independence interventions introduced into Africa with good intentions of bringing ‘development’ have also for the most part failed to have a positive impact. These quick solutions that have been injected in recent decades have failed to have the widespread and lasting impact intended, be it in the social, political or economic spheres. For instance, in the case of education, even new initiatives are arguably imported products from Western countries entering the continent via international ‘development’ agencies, many of which I would argue are contemporary agents of imperialism. The issue was and remains that even those initiatives and services intended for good, when not sufficiently informed by African values or focused on African countries’ unique needs, can have a negative, or at best, negligible impact.

As another example of good intentions generating poor outcomes, consider how financial aid and loans provided to African countries have resulted in massive debt as well as dependence. Julius Nyerere observed that dependence has jeopardized African independence and established a new form of colonialism: neo-colonialism. Western countries provide African countries with financial, material and human assistance determining what African countries can or cannot do.⁵ This also applies to other interventions introduced into Africa by Western governments and multilateral organizations such as the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). It is no secret that Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) mandated by the IMF with the intention of resolving African problems have had disastrous outcomes.⁶ Through these initiatives

⁵ Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMAA: Essays on Socialism* (Oxford University Press, 1974), 23.

⁶ The UN’s current Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), still have the same requirements as SAPs such as privatization, capital market liberalization, market-based pricing, free-trade which are imposed as conditions for aid (Gregory Palast, “IMF’s Four Steps to Damnation | Business | The Guardian,” accessed December 27, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2001/apr/29/business.mbas>).

health care services and education quality have deteriorated while unemployment rates have skyrocketed.⁷

Meanwhile, politically, it is doubtful that the Western forms of government and democracy introduced and promoted in Africa have born much fruit. Corruption and civil conflicts have increased, people have become alienated from their governments, and leaders are rarely accountable to their people. We must consider whether a different form of government and democracy would change these outcomes.

What, ultimately, is the root cause of the apparent stagnation and decline in African development that I have discussed above? Considering the examples cited here we must ask whether a distinctive ‘African philosophy’ can provide concepts to help guide policies and solutions to African problems. In this study, I will argue that the main cause of African stagnation and decline is the lack of a distinctive African social and political philosophy to guide the policies and interventions intended to address African problems and challenges. I contend that African issues must be addressed and resolved by Africans themselves through African thought, rather than external parties and Western thought. I maintain that most of the externally imported solutions do not work and have not been working in Africa and as such, Africans must look for home-grown solutions to addressing their own problems. *Ujamaa*, as conceived by Tanzania’s first president Julius Nyerere, was an attempt to do just this and still has the potential to address challenges faced by African countries. However, it needs to be refined so that it can be relevant in the face of contemporary (21st century) issues.

In this thesis, I will explore and analyze Nyerere’s concept of *Ujamaa* as a basis for African development from a primarily neo-Marxist perspective. *Ujamaa*, a Swahili word which

⁷ Issa G. Shivji, *Where Is Uhuru?: Reflections on the Struggle for Democracy in Africa* (Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 2009), 22.

denotes ‘familyhood’, is a distinct form of African ‘socialism’ as a complete social, political, and economic philosophy. As Nyerere argued, *Ujamaa* intends to “achieve development without sacrificing equality and humanity.”⁸ It combines indigenous African social and political thought and Western thought with the aim of addressing the challenges and problems faced by Tanzania after achieving its independence from Britain in 1961. I will argue that *Ujamaa* has the potential to address and resolve those challenges and issues, such as inequality, corruption and ethnic conflict, which are chronic problems across the continent.

The focus of this study will be Tanzania, the country where the *Ujamaa* philosophy emerged and was tested. However, I believe that *Ujamaa* can be adopted and adapted by other African countries as well. This is first because most African countries have common histories: pre-colonialism, colonialism and post-independence. Second, most African countries face similar problems such as corruption, poverty, disease, dependence, debt and exploitation. Moreover, African countries across the continent have been the subjects of neo-colonialism and imperialism. Because most African countries are poor and are heavily dependent on foreign aid, they have in common that they have had very little say in directing their own affairs.⁹ In spite of these shared experiences, if *Ujamaa* were adopted by other African countries, it would need to be adjusted according to the unique needs, values, and priorities of each country.

I will develop my thesis across four chapters. In the first chapter, I will explore and discuss Western liberal democracy which African countries have been forced to adopt as a condition for receiving foreign assistance and support from the international community. I will

⁸ Donatus Komba, “Contribution to Rural Development: *Ujamaa* & Villagisation,” in *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*, ed. Colin Legum and Geoffrey Mmari (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1995), 36.

⁹ Oswaldo de. Rivero B., *The Myth of Development: Non-Viable Economies and the Crisis of Civilization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 37.

show that the Western form of liberal democracy, has many weaknesses and limitations. As such, if democracy is to be successfully adopted in the African context it must be adapted and supplemented by other African thought such as *Ujamaa*.

The question of democracy will be discussed in depth because the nature of politics and a country's system of government is crucial in shaping, guiding and ultimately determining the direction and pace of its development. Employing an African concept of democracy which accounts for Africa's unique challenges is of a paramount importance. The kind of democracy fitting in Africa is, as Nyerere believed, that which enables people to take charge of their own affairs (participatory democracy) where people are not only voters but are part and parcel of the decision-making processes as well as the implementation of those decisions. Arguably, corruption, which is one of the biggest challenges in Africa, would have been significantly reduced if a more participatory democracy were in place. When people are active and engaged citizens, there is greater accountability of government officials. Active citizenship bridges the gap between the leaders and the people. While accountability will help reduce corruption, the closeness between leaders and their people will ensure that the leaders are well informed of the realities and priorities of their people. It is only out of this that more relevant interventions can emerge.

Moreover, Western democracy puts little emphasis on issues of social justice such as poverty, exploitation and inequality which are essential for democracy to flourish. Although Western-style democracy has its benefits, in the African context it has been reduced to merely being the form of state which holds elections (with varying degrees of legitimacy).¹⁰ However,

¹⁰ William Niemi, "Karl Marx's Sociological Theory of Democracy: Civil Society and Political Rights," *The Social Science Journal* 48 (2011) 39-51, 40.

democracy should be defined by more than simply holding elections within a multi-party system. I believe that citizens are only able to fully exercise their democratic rights and participate actively in governance when issues of social justice are addressed. Thus, I will also provide a normative definition of democracy against which to contrast and evaluate liberal democracy and the form of democracy promoted through *Ujamaa*.

The second chapter will consider the issues of colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism. Here I will argue that African countries have been the victims of a form of imperial and colonial interference that has not only affected their development but also put their freedom, autonomy and democracy in jeopardy. Although some of the interventions introduced in Africa are well intentioned, there are equally as many initiatives introduced with the blatant imperial goal of economic exploitation. I will therefore further argue that multilateral organizations such as the United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO) as well as other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been used to facilitate the imperial and colonial interests of Western countries, and in particular the United States of America. Although the UN, IMF, WB, their affiliated institutions and other NGOs have made notable contributions, such as the reduction of HIV/AIDS and other diseases in Africa, their impact has otherwise been largely negative. Not only do multilateral organizations determine the kind of policies (which often are negative) ¹¹ poor countries must

¹¹ Here the intention is not to dismiss all NGOs as imperial and with malicious intentions. Many NGOs acknowledge their past errors and the damage done by their programs and interventions. An increasing number of NGOs are adopting more participatory approaches aimed at including local thought in their work. However, relations of power remain a barrier in carrying out truly participatory activities and programs. Donors retain a stronger position in major decisions as I will elaborate in Chapter Two. The Canadian Revenue Agency's guidelines require Canadian charities to maintain 'direction and control' in their activities outside of Canada which is an example of how such imperial dynamics of power have been institutionalized in donor and NGO relationships. Whether participatory approaches will yield genuine partnership and locally generated and influenced ideas, can only be judged over time. What is important is for NGOs to acknowledge that answers to Africa's problems will not come from external agents. African thought and the people must be enabled to take the lead in informing and orchestrating the change needed.

implement as conditions for assistance, grants, and loans, but these organizations have been used to distract people by targeting the symptoms of their misery rather than the systemic roots of them. Instead of addressing the root causes of poverty, such as injustice, inequality and exploitation in trade, they more often focus on providing short-term relief and aid. As James Petras observes, “When millions are losing their jobs and poverty spreads to important swaths of the population, NGOs engage in preventative action: they focus on ‘survival strategies’ not general strikes; they organize soup kitchens not mass demonstrations against food hoarders, neo-liberal regimes, or US imperialism.”¹² Moreover, since these organizations are funded by Western countries including the US, they cannot contradict the interests of these countries even when those interests have a negative impact on the poor countries. Understanding the role played by these organizations in furthering imperialist and capitalist interests, and the corresponding negative impact this bears, will help African countries, such as Tanzania, rethink their relationships with these organizations, and will also highlight the importance of adopting *Ujamaa* - especially its Self-Reliance dimension.

The third chapter will explore and discuss *Ujamaa* as a viable alternative to Western interventions and initiatives in Africa. I maintain that the Western, internationally validated anti-poverty strategies and interventions that are the ‘industry standard’ have produced very limited positive results in Africa and even at times have had a negative impact. As such, African countries need to generate their own Africanized ‘strategies’ and ‘interventions’ to address their own challenges. I am proposing that *Ujamaa* can be used as such a model. In this chapter, I will present Nyerere’s philosophy of *Ujamaa* and draw attention to non-African philosophical influences on it such as neo-Marxism, primarily as embodied within Catholic Social Teaching

¹² James Petras, “NGOs: In the Service of Imperialism,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 29, no. 4 (1999): 429–40, 431.

and Fabian Socialism. I will explain what *Ujamaa* is and why Nyerere considered it important to opt for this philosophy instead of Capitalism or European Socialism. I will then discuss four ideas which are fundamental to an understanding of the philosophy of *Ujamaa*: equality; no-party democracy, Self-Reliance and villagization.

Although Capitalism creates wealth and prosperity, Nyerere believed that its success is dependent on inequality and exploitation.¹³ What is basic and central to African socialism or *Ujamaa*, as I will discuss, is equality of all people regardless of their sex, ethnicity, or social status. According to Nyerere, even if one embodies all principles of socialism to its fullest, but does not view all people as equal and work towards making equality of all people a reality, then one is not a socialist. He writes,

For socialism the basic purpose is the well-being of the people, and the basic assumption is an acceptance of human equality. For socialism there must be a belief that every individual man and woman, whatever colour, shape, race, creed, religion or sex, is an equal member of society, with equal rights in the society and equal duties to it. A person who does not accept this may accept many policies pursued by socialists; but he cannot be a socialist. Nor can any organization which is based on inequality justify the support of socialists, whatever its political or economic practices.¹⁴

As this quote reveals, true socialism cannot be established in the absence of equality. To these ends, I will also address issues of inequality faced by the LGBTQ+ community, a group that was not explicitly addressed by Nyerere in his discussion of *Ujamaa*.¹⁵

¹³ Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Nyerere and Africa: End of an Era. Biography of Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922-1999) President of Tanzania* (Atlanta, Ga.: Protea Pub, 2002), 40.

¹⁴ Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMAA*, 79.

¹⁵ Mr. Hubert Fichte from *Frankfurter Rundschau* argues that in his interview with Julius Nyerere on the question of homosexuality and Nyerere maintained that homosexuality is alien concept in Africa and as such cannot be defended. Nyerere's remarks were never officially published, although the author claims to have Nyerere's remarks in his notes. However, Nyerere, as far as I am aware through my research, has never made such remarks public as other African leaders since have done. The fact that Nyerere never made such remarks public or refused to allow such remarks to be public, perhaps indicates his reluctance to exclude the LGBTQ+ community. Another explanation may be that he did believe in LGBTQ+ rights but because it was quite a controversial topic at the time he did not want comments about it to detract from his larger goal of implementing *Ujamaa* aimed towards the

Democracy, according to Nyerere, was also essential to building a just and prosperous society in Tanzania. As such, in this section, I will examine the extent to which no-party (sometimes referred to as single-party) democracy is possible today and consider some of the dangers of adopting this form of democracy. Assuming that single-party democracy is no longer desirable, except in ethnically divided places such as Rwanda and Burundi, I will examine how a multiparty system can be appropriated to the African context in a way that employs some of the features of a no-party system such as active citizenship, as was practiced in Tanzania under *Ujamaa*.

The concept of Self-Reliance was also integral to Nyerere's philosophy of *Ujamaa* as it was essential to realizing true independence. Although Tanzania continued to accept and ask for aid, it resolved under *Ujamaa* that its development would not depend on or wait for external funds. The development plans established were to be funded by money generated from taxes and through the sale of its production. The call of Self-Reliance was thus to Tanzanians as well as Africans more broadly, to depend on each other and their own resources. (Hence the formation of the Organization of African Unity and African Union which aimed at increasing solidarity and cooperation among Africans as a means of becoming self-reliant.) The goal was also to advocate for African thought to inform the formulation and implementation of its own development initiatives.¹⁶ In this section, I will suggest that Self-Reliance will not only give African countries

common good and benefit of all. A final explanation may be that he simply never made the remarks claimed by Fichte. Regardless, I believe that democracy must account for the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community and strive towards equality for them.

¹⁶ The OAU was established in 1963 (it became the AU in 2001) under the influence of African statesmen such as Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah with the purpose of promoting, unity and solidarity of African states while safeguarding the sovereignty and independence of its members and shielding them from imperial and colonial exploitation. Unfortunately, the Union has been ineffective and has not been able to accomplish its goals. As Martin Guy among others has pointed out, the present African Union which is modeled after the European Union it is not fashioned with African needs and realities in mind ("History of the OAU and AU | African Union," accessed February 12, 2017, <https://www.au.int/web/en/history/oau-and-au>.)

the power to set their own priorities and formulate solutions to their own problems but also free them from imperial and colonial dominance, enabling them to be more truly democratic.

The last dimension of *Ujamaa* that I will consider is the concept of villagization or *Ujamaa Vijijini* as it was called in Tanzania. Under *Ujamaa* the central government established village communities with local governments where people would meet and discuss social, economic, and political matters directly with one another and their leaders, and in turn communicate their resolutions to the central government which would then find ways to address them. Moreover, within these villages people were expected to work and live communally. Villagization was first a way to increase production. The contention was that when people work together in communities they are able to produce more. Further, villagization aimed at tackling the problem of isolation, because people were scattered across the country, often in remote locations, and it was difficult for the central government to provide social services such as agricultural expertise, education and health care. Unfortunately, the villagization process proved was unsuccessful for a number of reasons, which included the lack of government funding to establish these villages and provide them with social services, as well as the fact that people were not sufficiently consulted in the establishment of villages with the result being that in some areas coercion and force was applied in order to ensure people would move. In spite of the above issues, I believe, and will elaborate upon below, that villagization, as communal living and working, when encouraged by the state but allowed to emerge organically, can be a good platform for addressing development issues.

Finally, the conclusion will offer an in-depth analysis of the ideas covered thus far and consider how *Ujamaa* can be adapted from Nyerere's original conception of it to provide Africa with a viable solution to its contemporary issues. Although throughout the thesis I will address

some of the criticisms levied against Nyerere and *Ujamaa*, and reasons contributing to its breakdown (limited success), the more in-depth analysis and discussion will be provided in the final chapter. I will also identify the many successes of *Ujamaa* which are often overlooked, such as political stability in Tanzania which is not to be taken for granted in Africa. Moreover, I will explain why if *Ujamaa* were given enough time to mature, under better circumstances, with less external interference, it would have been able to produce the intended outcome of development ‘without sacrificing justice and humanity.’ Lastly, I will discuss ways in which *Ujamaa* can be revived and enacted as an alternative to both Capitalism and Marxism today. Although *Ujamaa* can learn from both Capitalism and Marxism, I believe that because it is a distinctly African conceived philosophy, which takes into consideration Africa’s history and realities, it is better positioned to provide viable solutions to Africa’s contemporary problems and challenges.

The reader will notice that I have often used the United States as an example of Western practices. The choice is based on its unmatched influence in the developing world and the damage it has inflicted. In the first and second chapters, in addition to examples from African countries, I have also drawn examples from India, Iraq and Vietnam which are outside the continent of Africa. I believe that these examples provide a clearer and more effective picture of Western imperial activities in developing countries because they are better documented and are more familiar to a Western ear. As such they help shine a better and more clear light on the arguments I have put forward.

Chapter 1: Liberal Democracy and Its Limitations

1.1 Introduction

Democracy is undeniably vital in achieving peace, stability, trust, legitimacy, and it is therefore an important factor in realizing development and the well-being of a society. However, the kind of democracy capable of creating the space where development and human well-being can be attained, is the question that needs to be addressed. In this chapter, I will argue that liberal democracy as one of the Western initiatives often imposed on African countries has not only failed to create conditions in which development and human well-being can be attained in Africa but has also failed poor people in Western countries. Liberal democracy as practised by Western countries and as is being adopted by some African countries has failed to shield poor people from exploitation, inequality, promote active and engaged citizenship, as well as promote human wholeness. In fact, African countries are aware that liberal democracy has many limitations and are doubtful that it will help them flourish. As I will elaborate below, most African countries have adopted liberal democracy primarily because it has become a condition by which they, as poor countries, are legitimized and can access loans and foreign aid.¹⁷

In this chapter, I will first offer a normative definition of democracy as a basis for assessing the ‘democraticness’ of Western liberal democracy and later (in Chapter three) democracy as envisioned within *Ujamaa*. I will then discuss how the very manner by which democracy has been introduced into Africa is undemocratic and since it is not informed by African values and thought it has largely produced negative results. I will begin by highlighting why the Western mission of advancing democracy in developing countries is suspect. I will argue that the intention of Western countries is not to advance democracy as such but rather to

¹⁷ Issa G. Shivji, *Where Is Uhuru?* 24.

advance neoliberal economic policy. Under the guise of democracy, they are advancing capitalist interests which benefit the corporations who fund their own elections.¹⁸ The connection between Western liberal democracy, neoliberalism, big money in politics, and poverty and injustice will become increasingly clear over the course of this chapter. This is significant as it will demonstrate how and why Western intervention in Africa is primarily self-serving; and it highlights why if Africa is to experience positive development, it must rely on its own solutions and interventions.

Following the discussion of undemocratic democratization, I will discuss representative democracy as a hallmark of Western liberal democracy, as well as the place of financial power in liberal democracy. Representative democracy, which is a central feature of the Liberal or Western style of democracy that has been imported into Africa with limited success. The challenge posed by the representative form of democracy is the fact that it has been used to alienate the people from their leaders. Although representative democracy is intended to provide a venue through which collective grievances, needs, and priorities can be communicated and addressed, often leaders are far removed from the people they should be representing. Rather than accurately representing and advocating for the needs and priorities of their constituents, they present their own opinions which may represent only a small elite segment of society. As long as the leaders are not instructed by the people, not only will their efforts be self serving, as the policies they pursue and enact will fail to address the real (root) issues faced by the masses, but there exists a lack of accountability and the opportunity for misconduct of the government officials and politicians. I will argue that, the relationship between the leader and the people must be restored in order for democracy in Africa to flourish. As I will show in Chapter Three,

¹⁸ Michael. Parenti, *The Face of Imperialism* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2011), 7.

democracy under Ujamaa has the potential to bring about this restoration. In the third section of this chapter, I will discuss the way in which wealth in liberal democracies such as the U.S. has been distorting the democratic process and as such has been damaging the well-being of the people.

Lastly, I will explore the connection between democracy, poverty and injustice. I aim to show that Western liberal democracy, as one among many imported initiatives, has ignored and failed to address social injustice issues which are essential to ensuring people become active and engaged citizens. Issues such as poverty, and exploitation which breeds poverty, not only discourage people from becoming politically active and engaged, but also make people susceptible to political manipulation and corruption. This is why it is necessary for the government to play an active role. The lack of government regulations and activism on behalf of ordinary citizens allows exploitation and inequality to prevail which not only harms the well-being of citizens but also puts democracy in jeopardy.¹⁹ As Sheldon Wolin has pointed out, the success of democracy depends very much on the ability of the government to address social injustices.²⁰ The presence of poverty, lack of education and access to health services not only gives power to those with the financial strength to further exploit but also hinders the poor from fully and actively participating in processes of decision-making.

In summary, the aim of this chapter is first to demonstrate that foreign interventions are often ill-intentioned. Specifically, I will argue that the intentions of these interventions are to further the economic interests of western countries. Secondly, I will show that even when these interventions are introduced with good intentions they are likely to fail because they are not

¹⁹ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Democracy Incorporated : Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), 195.

²⁰ *Ibid.*,

informed by the values, priorities of Africa and as such do not sufficiently tackle the needs and realities of the continent as well as the systemic causes of them. The point is to show that Africans must generate their own interventions and solutions to address their challenges rather than adopting western solutions.

1.2 Defining Democracy

The theme of democracy, as will become evident, is central to my discussion of why foreign interventions have failed in Africa, why African thought must inform African development initiatives, and why *Ujamaa* as one such example is an ideal prototype. For these reasons, it is essential to have a shared understanding of a normative definition of democracy as we move forward.

What I refer to as democracy, is a system of government in which power and authority is situated with the people. It is rule by the people through active participation in governance and decision-making. A truly democratic government must strive to remove all barriers that discourage and hinder citizens' active participation. As Pope John Paul II, stated in the compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church,

Democratic government, in fact, is defined first of all by the assignment of powers and functions on the part of the people, exercised in their name, in their regard and on their behalf. It is therefore clearly evident that every democracy must be participative. This means that the different subjects of civil community at every level must be informed, listened to and involved in the exercise of the carried-out functions.²¹

In line with Pope John Paul, I will argue that to achieve a just, free and flourishing society, all citizens must be able to fully exercise their power as the rulers. As such, there must be

²¹ John Paul II. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, accessed March 3, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html#Participation%20and%20democracy, 190.

favourable conditions which allows for such participation to take place. The government must seek to remove all obstacles which prevent its people from becoming active and engaged citizens. As I will elaborate further, full participation requires social, political and economic conditions which make such participation possible. Inequality, injustice, and poverty prevent citizens from exercising their democratic rights. Thus, any democratic government must aim and strive to address and eliminate such barriers. This is what *Ujamaa* aimed to do for, if democracy is to truly be “the government of the people, by the people and for the people”²² as Abraham Lincoln described, then participation is essential. Moreover, active participation will ensure that the goals and activities of the government are generated by the people and are reflective of their needs and priorities. This, then, is a key ingredient to successful interventions; and as I contend, why *Ujamaa*, for which this form of democracy is a cornerstone, is a prime model of how to approach African problems from a distinctly African orientation.

In contrast to the above, the ‘liberal democracy’ or ‘Western democracy’ to which I refer is that form of democracy practiced in Western countries, and particularly the US. This democracy is characterized by multiple parties, periodic elections, and a representative form of government. Individual rights and freedoms, rule of law, and lack of regulation and intervention by the government in the market are valued. Furthermore, in liberal democracies, wealth and financial capability is becoming an increasingly significant influencing factor in electoral processes. In practice, Western democracy has become inextricably linked with Capitalism and neo-liberalism. Features such as freedom of speech, periodic elections, and multiple parties are, at least theoretically, good. However, the way these features have come to be interpreted and

²² President Abraham Lincoln, The Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863), in *This Fiery Trial: The Speeches and Writings of Abraham Lincoln 184*, (William E. Grenapp ed., 2002).

embodied in Western political systems and are now being adopted worldwide are evidently damaging.

The question of whether the failure of liberal democracy lies in the deficiencies in its theory or the fact that its institutions do not live up to its own principles is debatable.²³ But it is evident that these principles have been given a capitalistic interpretation and have amounted to what Sheldon Wolin called ‘managed democracy.’²⁴ He explains:

Managed democracy is centered on containing electoral politics; it is cool, even hostile toward social democracy beyond promoting literacy, job training, and other essentials for a society struggling to survive in the global economy. Managed democracy is democracy systematized. The United States has become the showcase of how democracy can be managed without appearing to be suppressed.... The regime ideology is Capitalism.²⁵

This quote highlights the supremacy of the economy and capitalist interests to Western democracy, which has been largely reduced to ensuring the existence of democratic processes and institutions. In contrast, as Issa Shivji has pointed out, genuine democracy, must empower and promote citizens’ active engagement and participation as well as pay attention to issues of equality and justice.²⁶ As I will argue in this chapter, liberal democracy has failed to address or attend to issues of inequality and injustice as well as promote and empower active citizenship which is essential to ensuring accountability. Moreover, leaders are failing to implement the will of the people as you would expect in a democratic society.

To the above point, the representative configuration of liberal democracies has effectively eliminated the need for active citizen engagement in politics. Instead, ‘representatives’ are said

²³ Frank Cunningham, *Theories of Democracy: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), 52.

²⁴ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Democracy Incorporated*, 140.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁶ Issa G. Shivji, *Where is Uhuru?*, 4.

to hold the knowledge of people's needs and priorities and can therefore speak on their behalf. As Sheldon Wolin has noted, "elections have replaced participation."²⁷ This is exacerbated by the fact that money has become such a vital component in democratic processes, allowing those in power to completely ignore the wishes of the people they should be representing and advocating for. Most politicians are unresponsive to the needs and wishes of the people; instead of advancing the causes of their constituents, they advance the causes of those who finance their election campaigns, who later exert pressure and influence to their own advantage. Genuine democracy, as I have stated above, requires active citizen participation where people have the ability and means to influence and inform the government and its decisions. The point here is that democracy should aim at increasing people's power to rule and active participation in governance. Liberal democracy in both Western countries and developing countries produce opposite outcomes to this; it robs people of the power to rule and influence the decisions of their government. Active and well-informed citizen participation will not only help inform the government of the people's needs and priorities but also functions as a tool to combat corruption and misuse of public office.

To reemphasize the main argument of this thesis, democratic processes in Africa must reflect and account for the unique needs and issues facing the continent and active engagement of citizens in decision-making and the implementation of decisions is therefore critical. Africa from the time of slavery, through colonialism to the present, has been the victim of foreign interventions and initiatives which have largely produced minimal or negative results. The democracy practiced in Africa must be Africanized to truly serve the needs of Africans. The

²⁷ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Democracy Incorporated*, 148.

importance of democracy to the well-being of a society, makes it necessary and central to a discussion of Africa's development.

1.2 Representative Democracy

In this section I will discuss and analyze the idea of representative democracy, which is a central feature of the liberal or Western style of democracy that has been imported into Africa with limited success. The challenge posed by the representative form of democracy, according to Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, is its dualism in that it both links the led to the leaders while at the same time separates them.²⁸ Although representative democracy is intended to provide a venue through which collective grievances, needs, and priorities can be communicated and addressed, often leaders are far removed from the people they should be representing. Rather than accurately representing and advocating for the needs and priorities of their constituents, they present their own opinions which may represent only a small elite segment of society. In the African context most representatives live in big cities and only visit their constituents occasionally, especially during or near elections. Far removed from the realities of their people, the policies they pursue and enact fail to address the real (root) issues faced by the masses.²⁹ The separation between the masses and their leaders also accounts for why many development initiatives from *within* do not bear much fruit. Instead of a leader having a dialogue with the people, they tend to make assumptions about what their needs are, or fall into the trap of only pursuing showy projects which will improve their reputation and are likely to benefit them in a bid for re-election. Another challenge is that elected officials are not necessarily educated or

²⁸ Antonio Negri & Michael Hardt, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 242.

²⁹ This separation between leaders and the masses is similar to what happens when the international community imposes initiatives in Africa.

experts in the areas they are making decisions about; this is why consultation with the people is essential to the success of a policy or intervention.

The implementation of ‘Education for All’ is an example of why active participation of the citizenry and consultation with them is essential. The government of Tanzania responded to the Education for All initiative adopted at the World Declaration on Education for All in 1990³⁰ by building hundreds of new primary schools and increasing the rates of enrollment at all levels of education. In particular, the number of girls registered has, in the years since, been very impressive. More than 98% of school-aged boys and girls start school.³¹ However, there is high level of absenteeism and the academic performance especially of girls has remained poor. Poor performance can be explained by several factors including the burden of household chores on girls as well as menstruation as a result of the lack of access to sanitary napkins.³² One of the solutions the government has employed to address the problem of absenteeism is harsh disciplinary measures such as suspension and flogging of children who miss school. If the government had done sufficient and proper consultation and dialogue with the people, they would have quickly discovered that school absenteeism and poor performance, especially in rural areas where these problems are most widespread, is not simply the result of a lack of interest and effort from students and their parents. Rather it is an economic and cultural issue. They would

³⁰ Julius Nyerere was calling for education for all decades before this.

³¹ “Statistics,” *UNICEF*, accessed February 7, 2017, https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/tanzania_statistics.html. (Although school enrollment has increased significantly to 98%, literacy rate has decreased compare to the time of Nyerere. The most recent data shows that the literacy rate in Tanzania is about 75% while it was over 85% during Nyerere’s leadership. This speaks to the success and effectiveness of home grown initiatives as compared to externally generated initiatives like the universal primary education policy.)

³² The lack of sanitary napkins (traditional fabric limits one’s movements) means girls cannot attend school during menstruation. So, if girls have their periods for an average of five days each month, they are absent for a significant amount of time in an academic year. Ultimately this affects their school performance.

have learned that the provision of sanitary napkins to school girls in rural areas, building wells in villages to reduce the time spent in collecting water, and a campaign to combat the stigma around menstruation, would have done much to mitigate absenteeism.

The above example highlights the need for active participation in the process of decision-making. However, in most representative democracies today there exists a comfortable gap between the leaders and the led. This serves to provide a sense of protection to the leaders, who have been given a mandate to represent and advance the interests of their people but in practice do not, and the distance between them means they cannot be held responsible for their inaction. Hardt and Negri write that “representation serves them as a kind of vaccine to protect against the dangers of absolute democracy; it gives the social body a small controlled dose of popular rule and thereby inoculates against the fearsome excesses of the multitude.”³³ Whether this is the intention of representative democracy is far from conclusive but there are countless examples from past and present of political representatives having ignored those they represent and instead using their legal mandates to advance their personal interests. In many African countries members of parliaments are paid huge salaries, drive fancy cars, and are exempted from paying taxes while their people lack schools, health care, and other basic necessities.³⁴ As a way of subduing the masses, they will periodically do something small which will then be magnified in the media to justify their positions as evidence of their hard work.

Ultimately, while representative democracy is appealing at a theoretical level, in practice it fails to achieve its objectives. For this reason, I strongly believe that taking democracy to the most local level through government decentralization is necessary to ensure citizens’ active

³³ Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Multitude*, 242.

³⁴ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 19.

participation in the processes of decision-making and the implementations of those decisions. In theory, Tanzania follows a local government system which has allowed each village to establish its own central government where leaders interact directly with their people and have communal meetings at which each person has an opportunity to express his or her ideas to the government.³⁵ However, the village executives and chairpersons who are the leaders at the lowest level, and are theoretically responsible for governing villages, have been deprived of much of their power. Their roles have been reduced to implementing central government mandates such as collecting local taxes, or playing the role of village elder assisting in matters of small social and personal conflict. I believe that African countries such as Tanzania must strengthen their local governments, as *Ujamaa* calls for and managed to do an extent, so that they can provide space for citizens to meaningfully participate in the process of decision-making. People's participation in decision-making will not only help inform and instruct leaders concerning their people's needs and wishes but it will also help reduce corruption significantly. It has been well-documented that when citizens are aware of what is being done by their government and they are part of that process, it becomes difficult for the leaders to abuse the power bestowed upon them.³⁶ In addition to strengthening local governments, the central government should also establish and strengthen other forms and forums for public dialogue for both individuals and organizations through which they can actively participate in governance. The government can strengthen academic institutions and local NGOs to become platforms and agents for collecting and disseminating public opinion between the government and its citizenry.

³⁵ A.N. Kweka, "One-Party Democracy & the Multi-Party State," in *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*, ed. Colin Legum and Geoffrey Mmari (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1995), 72.

³⁶ ⁴² Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo, *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 243-250.

Again, an African-adapted version of democracy must be conceived and employed if there is any hope of positive change, development and a breaking free from oppressive neo-colonial influences. For genuine democracy to flourish in Africa, Africans must adopt a model of democracy which bring the leaders and the people together rather than building a wall between them as which happens under representative liberal democracy. Leaders must be instructed and informed by the people who have elected them; and citizens must be actively engaged in governance matter. Decentralized democracy, as promoted by *Ujamaa*, has great potential to create the space for leaders and people to work together for the common good.

1.2 Democracy from Without

It is undeniable that democracy is not only desirable and essential in attaining development goals but also in creating and sustaining peace and stability in a society which allows for development goals to be pursued. If a society is to develop in a healthy way there must be democratic frameworks in place to allow its people to take full responsibility of their own affairs, determine for themselves what is important, as well as create just structures. When active participation, justice, and equity are lacking, the society cannot be said to be truly democratic: it will only benefit a privileged class while hurting the rest. liberal democracy, which has its origin in the West and emphasizes individual freedom, free market policies, political representation, multiparty systems, periodical elections, limited terms, and universal suffrage, has failed to give birth to just societies of equals and create the infrastructure where people can actively participate. Issa Shivji notes the following regarding the introduction of liberal democracy in African countries: “the form of democracy preferred in the context of globalization has had very disappointing results since it is not informed by any national consensus, lacks

anchorage in popular will or within popular constituencies and seems designed to undermine the sovereignty of weaker states.”³⁷

Despite its ineffectiveness and failures, African countries have embraced liberal democracy. This is not so much because Africans have faith in Western initiatives, but rather because acceptance of Western imposed initiatives has become more or less a condition for more aid, loans and grants.³⁸ The point here is not to suggest that democracy and good governance measures are unimportant. Rather, it is to show that when initiatives are externally imposed without being informed by the context and reflecting the ways of knowing and thinking of the people intended to benefit, they are likely to fail. Moreover, the very act of imposing initiatives, and in particular democracy, against the wishes of the people is unjust and undemocratic. I contend that as long as principles of equality, human rights and justice are observed, each society can pursue its own form of democracy and governance which reflects its needs and goals. As I have noted above, the very imposition of Western style democracy in Africa is a contradiction in its own terms. In contrast Issa Shivji outlines what democracy really should be:

Self-determination for the village community would mean the right to be consulted and participate in making decisions concerning them...while for those in a nation it could mean the right to have an independent state, and the right of self-determination for a people in a country would mean (to use *Mwalimu's* phrase) ‘to determine its own policies according to the requirements of its own historical experience, culture, and circumstances’ (Nyerere 1994). Self-determination thus encompasses the idea of ‘popular’ as the basis of both the constitution and exercise of social and political power – locally and globally.³⁹

³⁷ Issa G. Shivji, *Where Is Uhuru?*, 5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

The international community, which puts so much emphasis on democracy, has been treating Africans like children who need to be told what to do. The following example further illustrates this point:

Through donor pressure, the government of Tanzania was obliged to establish a Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance with aid from the Danish government. Among the first tasks was to build a gargantuan structure to house the commission and establish its infrastructure at a cost of over Tsh 1.5 billion (or roughly US\$1.5 million). (The people of Tanzania will never know how their government promotes ‘good governance’ in Tanzania.) Then another bureaucratic structure of civil servants headed by seven commissioners was set up drawing the usual salaries and numerous benefits. Moreover, there was another ‘benefit’ the government received as part of ‘good governance’ assistance a couple of years ago, the distinguished Finnish diplomat, Martin Althassari paid visits to Tanzania as an ‘advisor to the president’ on good governance, sponsored by the World Bank. Presumably, he made a report to the president (or the World Bank, who knows?) after consulting civil servants, a sprinkling NGO representatives, academics, the private sector etc.⁴⁰

Again, the point here is not to suggest that African countries do not need assistance or advice from Western countries. Rather, we must question the undemocratic and imperialistic manner by which Western countries impose their wills. The cost of establishing and maintaining the commission is huge, and it is likely that if Tanzanians were consulted they would have made better use of the money to address other development issues that are of greater importance to them, which perhaps may also have indirectly made positive strides in the area of ‘good governance’. Further, as is often the case with foreign aid, it comes with unfavorable conditions which are burdensome for the majority. It is questionable that a Finish diplomat who has had very little consultation with the majority and likely has very little (relative) knowledge of the country can come up with something meaningful regarding governance in Tanzania. Considering the importance of democracy and the right of self-determination, why did the World Bank, Finnish and Danish governments not hire Tanzanians, who have a better knowledge of the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 24-25.

country, as commissioners to advise the government of Tanzania, after conducting a thorough and comprehensive consultation with the people?

At this point it is important to note that the lack of consultation with citizens in decision-making does not always come from outsiders. Many African leaders have failed to empower their citizens to fully participate in making decisions which are important for the country. I am aware of the fact that popular participation of citizens has its own challenges and limitations, such as organizing public meetings and polls. However, that cannot be used as an excuse to hide information from the masses, especially concerning major decisions the country is about to make. Through constituent representatives, civil society, education institutions, and media houses, governments have means to seek public opinion. I believe that corruption and lack of accountability is the real reason behind secrecy and the dismissal of citizens' opinions.

Still, the fact that Western governments have taken the lordly role of deciding what is right and wrong in African countries contributes extensively to the absence of leadership accountability in Africa. That Western countries have the power to decide and legitimize leaders in Africa means that African leaders feel that they are first and foremost accountable to Western nations, especially donor nations, rather than their own citizens. Pleasing Western governments and the United Nations has become a top priority for most African leaders. When a leader has the endorsement of Western governments, and the election is declared 'fair and democratic' by Western election observers who only spend a few weeks in the country, then the leader is considered legitimate. Moreover, the fact that there are no African observers in Western countries' elections and African leaders do not have the political power to decide leadership legitimacy in Western countries, highlights the imperialistic and undemocratic nature of the relationship of the West to Africa.

On numerous occasions, Western countries, especially the United States and its allies, have both endorsed and installed undemocratic leaders in Africa while condemning and disposing legitimate and democratically elected leaders. The late Prime Minister Patrick Lumumba of the Democratic Republic of Congo was condemned, overthrown, and later killed under the direction of, and with assistance from, the Belgian government and CIA, in his place installing the dictator Mobutu Seseseko, who plundered the country's wealth and launched it into countless wars.⁴¹ This is also true of Uganda where under the directives and with the assistance of the Israeli government, President Milton Obote was overthrown and Dictator Idi Amin Dada was put in his place.⁴² These few examples demonstrate that Western countries cannot and should not be legitimizers of leaders in Africa. This is not to suggest that Western countries cannot condemn bad leaders in Africa or elsewhere. But there are far too many instances in which Western countries have been motivated by self-interest, such as access to minerals and natural resources. They have thus lost credibility and moral authority as defenders of democracy in Africa. In fact, I would argue that Western countries and institutions perpetuate global social injustice which undermines and prevents the practice of a true and healthy democracy both within African countries and throughout the world.

Moreover, the desire to receive 'legitimation' from without has destroyed the link between the leaders and the people of Africa. This has contributed immensely to corruption and the lack of accountability in Africa. It must be remembered that 'true democracy' can only come when there is a strong link between leaders and the people, when leaders are responsible and accountable to their people. As Anne Sassoon explains, "a fully democratic relationship cannot

⁴¹ Ibid., 21.

⁴² Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Nyerere and Africa: End of an Era*, 65. (Also see, Horace Campbell, *NATO's Failure in Libya: Lessons for Africa* (Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2012), 20-30)

be defined by a set of rules but only by a mode of conducting politics based on realizing the protagonism of the masses and aimed at the abolition of the division between leaders and led.” She further adds, “if this is to be accomplished then links between leaders and led are necessary if the divisions which exist are in fact to be overcome”⁴³ Democracy thus requires leaders to be accountable to their people first and foremost. Leaders must seek approval and direction from those who have elected them rather than seek approval from external governments and bodies. The people must be consulted by their leaders to determine their needs and priorities and any major initiatives must be approved by the public through various means such as public meetings, referendums, media polls, and via constituent representatives. When the relationship is fractured not only is true democracy in peril but leaders also lose their authority to lead.

1.3 Money and Democracy

From the discussion above, one might wonder why leaders who are not working to advance the interests of their people still manage to stay in power. The issue of corruption and bribery in the electoral process is a big part of the reason. Money is a decisive factor in determining who wins an election.⁴⁴ Money does not necessarily guarantee victory but its power cannot be underestimated. Political campaigns are costly; for example, a politician needs to pay his campaign team as well as create television and radio advertisements. This is why during the time of President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania campaign budgets were severely restricted.⁴⁵ Nyerere viewed money as an enemy to democracy, not simply because money could be used to

⁴³ Anne S. Sassoon, “Gramsci: A New Concept of Politics and the Expansion of Democracy,” in *Marxism and Democracy*, ed. Alan Hunt (New Jersey : Humanities Press, 1980), 92.

⁴⁴ Michael Negri & Antonio Hardt, *Multitude*, 262-263.

⁴⁵ Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMAA*, 36.

manipulate through campaigns, but also because most politicians acquired money from rich donors, who later exert control over them; even if not directly or explicitly.

Although wealth has always influenced politics to some extent, in liberal democracy, I will argue, the power of money, has become so influential that both electoral processes and government decision-making following after are heavily distorted. Political donors, or rent seekers as Joseph Stiglitz calls them, expect to receive favors once the politicians are in the office in the form of tax cuts, low interest government loans, subsidies, and lenient policies and laws.⁴⁶ Rent seeking is not only a problem in African countries but it is also very prevalent in Western ‘democratic’ countries such as the United State of America. Joseph Stiglitz, former World Bank Chief Economist, rhetorically writes:

Why American corn farmers, who were already the recipients of massive government handouts, receiving almost half of their income from Washington rather than from the “soil,” should receive still further assistance is hard to understand, and hard to reconcile with principles of a free market economy. (In fact, the vast preponderance of government money subsidizing agriculture does not go, as many believe, to poor famers or even family farms. The design of the program reveals its true objective: to redistribute more from the rest of us to the rich and corporate farms).⁴⁷

The reason the rich are often the primary beneficiaries of government policies, as the passage above suggests, lies in the fact that most politicians are supported by the rich who expect to be compensated for their financial support. When money is allowed to play such a decisive role in politics, democracy becomes a hollow sham. In the presence of extreme poverty and huge income inequality, the influence and power of money in politics becomes even more magnified.

⁴⁶ Joseph E. Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today’s Divided Society Endangers Our Future* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2012), 35.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

The use of wealth under liberal democracy, particularly during elections, must be curbed as a way to combat corruption but also to ensure that capable leaders, despite their financial statuses, have a chance to compete. This is essential for strengthening democratic processes in Africa. As Wolin has pointed out, the use of money has become a determining factor in who win the elections. Corporations and big businesses play a significant role in influencing the elections. Politicians are funded by corporations who later exert great influence on government decisions and reaps the benefits other benefits such as governments bailout and tax cuts. Wolin observes:

At stake are the conditions that serve forms of power antithetical; to democracy. The citizenry is reduced to an electorate whose potency consists of choosing among congressional candidates who, prior to campaigning, have demonstrated their “seriousness” by successfully soliciting a million dollars or more from wealthy donors. This rite of passage ensures that the candidate is beholden to corporate power before taking office. Not surprisingly, the candidate who raises the most money will likely be the winner. The vote count becomes the expression of the contributor.⁴⁸

Moreover, through lobbying activities, money also plays a significant role in influencing which policies, laws and initiatives are enacted. Policies pushed by the rich and massive corporations are rarely for the benefit of the poor. The marginalization of the poor through government policies is true not only in poor countries but also in developed countries such as in the United States where ‘democracy’ has long been established. As Joseph Stiglitz writes, “There are more than 3,100 lobbyists working for the health industry (nearly 6 for every congressperson), and 2,100 lobbyists working for the energy and natural resources industries. All, told, more than \$3.2 billion was spent on lobbying in 2011 alone.”⁴⁹ The big corporations supporting these lobbying

⁴⁸ Ibid., 140.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 119.

activities are generally concerned with furthering their own interests rather than the common good. This is an example of how ‘big money’ also influences democracy on a continuous basis.

Money has compromised democracy not only within countries but also within organizations. The IMF and World Bank proclaim themselves to be chief defenders of democracy and justice throughout the world. However, in both of these institutions voting power is based on monetary contribution. This gives rich countries, such as the United States, the power to dominate and advance its own economic interests,⁵⁰ which a ‘one country, one vote’ model would not allow. This reflects a propensity towards social injustice and mirrors the undemocratic and socially unjust relationship of Western ‘partners’ to Africa. With respect to democracy from without, there is an inherent hypocrisy in the very actors, be they countries and governments or international multilateral organizations and NGOs, who promote democracy but do not practice what they preach.

Money arguably corrupts. I contend that when money is used to advance corporate and individual interests at the expense of the majority it should be treated as a form of corruption because it distorts democracy. When politicians are elected, especially those funded by corporations, they seek to please them by pushing policies which are favorable to their donors – much in the same way that African countries implement policies and programs that have little benefit to their people in an effort to please international donors. In the United States, the power of money through lobbying activities continues to play a decisive role in government decisions. However, at present, lobbying in Tanzania is less of a formal activism than it is a discreet and corrupt activity. This is why Nyerere, through *Ujamaa* established strict laws forbidding politicians to spend huge sums of money on political campaigns. As well, *Ujamaa* forbade

⁵⁰ Michael Negri & Antonio Hardt, *Multitude*, 272.

leaders from owning large corporations and businesses for the fear that they would tend towards protecting and furthering their personal interests rather than national interests.⁵¹ Again, Western liberal democracy as it is currently practiced is capitalistic, thus oppressive, socially unjust and an enemy of democracy. The fact that economic interests are allowed to trump democracy, is an indication that western democracy and Capitalism are one and the same. Moreover, for the West to promote it when they are in an undemocratic and unbalanced power relationship with Africa is hypocrisy. I believe that if democracy is to take root in Africa, the use of money in influencing elections and government decision-making must be seriously curbed, just as Nyerere articulated in *Ujamaa*. I believe that nations following in Nyerere's footsteps must put laws in place to disallow or restrict businesses from self-serving political involvement as a way of ensuring politicians pursue the common good and popular interests.

1.4 Poverty and Injustice: An Enemy of Democracy

Money is not the only thing which has been undermining democracy. Poverty, has a similar effect. As Nyerere observed, poverty is not just the outcome of the absence of resources or means of creating wealth, but rather poverty can be strongly linked to the existence of injustice in a society. Nyerere writes, "poverty is not the real problem of the modern world, for we have the knowledge and resources that could enable us to overcome poverty."⁵² The presence of injustice and inequality not only creates conditions within which people can be exploited and taken advantage of, but also deprives them the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty. It must be understood that, as Jerry Windley-Daoust argues, "[p]overty is not merely the

⁵¹ Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMAA*, 36.

⁵² Julius Nyerere, "The Development of People and the Meaning of Service," in *Crucial Issues in Mission Today*, ed. Gerald H Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), 143.

lack of adequate financial resources. It entails a more profound kind of deprivation, a denial of full participation in the economic, social, and political life of society and an inability to influence decisions that affect one's life."⁵³

Although poverty can be measured in monetary terms, it is often the result of social injustice, either in the form of discrimination, exploitation, or alienation. In the United States of America for instance, it is apparent that poverty is distributed along the lines of race and gender.⁵⁴ Poverty levels have been increasing across all races.⁵⁵ Because different racialized groups have systematically been denied opportunities such as education and work, their economic situations reflect this. Their social and economic status in turn accounts for their lack of participation in the process of decision-making. An example from the African context are those who are openly homosexual. In most African countries homosexuality is illegal and in some countries, such as Mauritania, it is punishable by death.⁵⁶ Those who are openly gay have difficulty finding meaningful employment let alone aspiring to a political career. Similarly,

⁵³ Jerry Windley-Daoust, *Living Justice and Peace: Catholic Social Teaching in Practice*, 2nd ed. (Winona: Saint Mary's Press, 2008), 200.

⁵⁴ Bonnie Thornton Dill & Bruce B. Williams, "Race, Gender and Poverty in the Rural South: African American Single Mothers" in *Rural Poverty in America*, ed. Cynthia M. Duncan, (New York: Auburn House, 1992), 97.

⁵⁵ However, the number of Whites who are becoming poor is increasing now. There are many factors that account for this including the fact that poverty in general is increasing. To a great extent it could be attributed to Capitalism which knows no race with a single objective of maximizing profit at any cost including reckless lending and high cost of essential services such as health and education which indebted people. Moreover, the fact that most corporations are moving their factories and businesses to countries such as those in South Asia, leads to high rates of unemployment and hence poverty in Western countries. (Alana Semuels, "America's Slums Are Getting Worse As More People Live in Concentrated Poverty - The Atlantic," accessed December 27, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/08/more-americans-are-living-in-slums/400832/>.)

⁵⁶ Adam J. Kretz, "From Kill the Gays to Kill the Gay Rights Movement: The Future of Homosexuality Legislation in Africa," *Northwestern University Journal of International Human Rights* 11 (2013 2012): [i]-244, 210.

women, another highly marginalized group, because of the social and economic oppression they face, have difficulty participating in political activities.

The fact that socially discriminated groups end up in poverty mean that their opportunities to be actively engaged in politics, whether as a candidate or an engaged citizen, are severely reduced. This is not to suggest that one born in poverty has a zero chance of rising out of poverty or attaining a ‘meaningful’ position in society. There are cases of people such as Booker T. Washington who rose from poverty to become a great leader, educator, and civil right activist. But the Booker T. Washingtons are exceptions, not the rule; when one is born in poverty or a hostile environment his or her chances of becoming a politically active member of society are lessened from the start. Furthermore, individuals who view themselves as outcasts in society often feel that they do not matter in the society and as such they lack the motivation to participate in political activities. Living in poverty also means that an individual might need to work extra hours just to make ends meet and thus not have time to actively participate in political activities, either in the form of public discussions or even being able to access information needed to make informed decisions. In this sense poverty becomes a stumbling block for people to exercise their democratic right of becoming active citizens.

Consider the following picture of the economic situation in four African countries at the turn of the millennium.

Food shortages in Malawi are affecting more than 3 million children; In Zambia, severe rainfall deficits have resulted in a 42% drop in maize production from 2000. As a result, an estimated million Zambians face hunger; four million Angolans—one third of the population—have been forced to flee their homes; More than 11 million people in Ethiopia need immediate food assistance.⁵⁷

⁴² Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo, 1-2.

This passage quantifies only a fraction of the full extent of poverty in African countries. Zambia and Malawi are relatively peaceful countries but when one looks at countries which have been torn apart by war, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, the situation is more dire. It becomes difficult for people who are starving, suffering from fatal diseases such as malaria, and with no place to call home to be actively engaged in the process of decision-making.⁵⁸ Moreover, people who are in such desperate conditions become easy prey for political manipulation and corruption.

As I have discussed throughout this section, democracy requires more than having a multiparty system, periodical elections, universal suffrage and freedom of speech. For democracy to flourish and be effective, factors such as justice, equality, poverty and citizen empowerment must be addressed,⁵⁹ and these from an African perspective. Liberal democracies are and have been to a great extent, inattentive to issues of social justice such as discrimination, poverty and exploitation. As Nyerere did, I believe strengthening democracy requires addressing social issues such as inequality and poverty which are often the result of injustice in a society. Liberal democracy, with its tendencies to ignore social justice issues, it is inappropriate in Africa where economic and social inequality as well as poverty is widespread. Democracy in Africa must aim to address social injustice as a core tenet of its theory and practice as was the case with *Ujamaa*. *Ujamaa* was not perfect and did have its weaknesses. Regarding women, although *Ujamaa* strived towards gender equality, culturally women continued to be regarded as inferior to men; and, with respect to issues of the LGBTQ+ community, Nyerere did not do much. Nevertheless, equality was not only a central feature of *Ujamaa* in theory but also in practice;

⁵⁸ Thomas Mountain, "Destroying Africa With Western 'Democracy' | Foreign Policy Journal," accessed December 27, 2016, <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2012/05/01/destroying-africa-with-western-democracy/>.

⁵⁹ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 12.

education, health and political opportunities were available to most regardless of one's gender, race or financial position.⁶⁰

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed liberal democracy or western style democracy and its deficiencies. I have argued that although liberal democracy offers to promote freedom, equality and electoral fairness in theory, in practice it has failed to deliver on its promises. I have also contended that genuine democracy can not be imposed from without. African countries have adopted liberal democracy and its institutions as well as liberal economic policies not so much because these policies have been beneficial to their people but rather because following western rules has been a fundamental requirement for accessing foreign aid.⁶¹ For democracy to take root in African countries, it must grow organically from within. Western countries can lead by example, encouraging as well as supporting those countries which are striving towards democracy and the promotion of human rights. However, they should not decide which forms of democratic institutions and practices African countries must adopt. As I will discuss in Chapter Three, in certain circumstances, such as in countries where there is political, ethnic or religious instability and disunity, a single-party democracy (no-party democracy) can be more appropriate than a multiparty democracy until the country is sufficiently mature such that multiparty competition will not lead to disintegration.

In Chapter Two we will discuss more specifically the way democracy has been imposed in Africa and how its undemocratic imposition perpetuates neo-colonialism and imperialism. African people have been deprived the autonomy and freedom to determine their own policies

⁶⁰ Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa*, 109.

⁶¹ Issa G. Shivji, *Where Is Uhuru?* 24.

and interventions which reflect their needs, values and priorities. Moreover, the fact that western countries have been the ones who decide and legitimize leaders in Africa, has had the effect of that leader feeling that they owe their authority to western countries rather than their own people. The implication of this is that politicians prioritize pleasing western governments even when this may come at the expense of their people. The promotion of democracy in developing countries has become synonymous with the promotion of neo-liberal economic policies pushing for privatisation and market liberalization policies for the benefit of western corporations.

Moreover, liberal democracy has failed to promote citizens' active participation. Genuine democracy requires people's active engagement in the processes of decision-making. Corruption and misuse of public office can only be curbed when citizens have an influence on the decisions and activities of their government. In African countries where corruption is widespread, I believe active citizen engagement is key in combating misconduct in government.

Wealth has been allowed to influence and determine elections so much that democracy has been compromised. Direct financial contributions by corporations breed politicians who later further their interests which comes at the expense of the majority; politicians look to satisfy 'the money' rather than the people who in a genuine democracy should be the ones influencing and shaping the decisions of the government. Western domination as well as the influence of money in Africa has played a significant role in widening the gap between representatives and their people. Politicians no longer listen to their people but rather listen and seek the approval of their donors both from within and without.

I have further argued that Western democracies have failed to address injustice from both within and without. I believe that in the absence of justice and equality, genuine democracy, which seeks to promote the rule of the people, cannot flourish. The promotion of democracy

must go hand in hand with the promotion of equality and justice. As I have discussed in this chapter, when people are discriminated against, exploited and live in extreme poverty, their ability to become active citizens and to participate in the process of decision-making is severely reduced. Moreover, as I will elaborate upon further in Chapter Three, Western exploitation in developing countries contributes heavily to the existence of extreme poverty which significantly limits their people's ability to become engaged and active citizens. When people lack essential services such as proper education and health care, they become susceptible to manipulation and corruption. As such, the task of addressing social injustice cannot be separated from the pursuit of genuine democracy.

My argument in Chapter One is that Western democracy, as one of many externally imposed interventions, not only does not reflect Africa's realities, values and challenges but also has the issues that I have identified above which produce results contrary to those intended by genuine democracy; all of which undermine human development. Additionally, as I will continue to argue throughout this essay, western democracy and other interventions, seek to advance capitalistic policies such as market liberalization which come at the expense of African people. This is why African countries, must seek a philosophy which is capable of addressing its unique challenges while promoting social justice, citizens participation, and moving them closer to self-reliance. As we will see in Chapter Three, *Ujamaa* has great potential for addressing the shortcomings of western democracy while promoting Africa's independence and the well-being of its people.

In the coming chapter, I will discuss how western imperial activities further undermine development and democracy in Africa. I will show that not only do western countries act directly imperialistically towards Africa, but multilateral organizations such as IMF, World Bank and

other international also further imperial activities of western countries. Chapter Two will demonstrate that western interventions, including democracy which is fundamental to the pursuit of development in Africa, are often ill-intentioned and aimed at advancing western capitalistic interests. Ultimately we will see how significant of an alternative *Ujamaa* is to western liberalism; it promotes genuine democracy but also seeks to promote Africa's freedom, self-determination and reliance which are essential for Africa's development.

Chapter 2: The Reign of Imperialism

2.1 Introduction: Imperialism and Colonialism in Perspective

It has been decades now since the majority of African countries gained their political independence. These countries fought colonial power with the hope that once they were freed from colonial domination and exploitation they would be able to develop their countries for the benefit of their people. However, despite the ‘independence’ gained, the majority of African countries have remained poor and have arguably lost (if they ever even truly had it) the very independence and freedom they fought for. Some argue that the reasons the Global South has remained poor is lack of resources, poor climate, diseases and worse, their leaders are corrupt.⁶² Certainly the hostile climate and weather across Africa has contributed to setbacks.⁶³ Further, the lack of technology as well as qualified manpower together with brain drain contributes immensely towards Africa’s miseries.⁶⁴ And, it is undeniable that African countries have been the victims of bad and corrupt leadership for many years. Yet the role Western countries have played in under-developing African countries cannot be underestimated.

In this Chapter I intend to discuss the ways in which the neo-colonial and imperial activities of Western countries either directly or indirectly, through multilateral organizations and non-governmental organizations, contribute to poverty and injustice in Africa and throughout the Global South. Taking a neo-Marxist position, it is essential to reframe the story of colonialism and imperialism from the Western narrative of an innocent travelling of the world, discovering new territory and acquiring unclaimed land and resources, to what it really was: violence, theft,

⁶² Thomas. Sowell, *Wealth, Poverty and Politics : An International Perspective* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 27.

⁶³ René. Dumont, *False Start in Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 28

⁶⁴ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 18.

oppression and exploitation. The point here is to emphasize the fact that Western interventions in African countries, although at times introduced with good intentions, are often imperialistic, and ill-intentioned undermining Africa's development to the advantage of Western capitalistic interests. My understanding of imperialism is guided by the following definition: "the process whereby the dominant investor interests in one country bring to bear military and financial power upon another country in order to expropriate the land, labor, capital resources, commerce, and markets of that other country."⁶⁵ In other words, imperialism is the tendency and practices of a country employing its financial, technological and military strength to exploit other countries both politically and economically. I believe that the relationship Africa has with western countries (and China as well) has been of such a nature.

Let us begin with slavery, which set the continent on a negative trajectory that colonialism later capitalized on. During slavery, it is estimated that more than fifty million people from the continent perished.⁶⁶ Some of these people died along the journey while those who survived went on to build Europe, Arabia and North America. Through slavery, Africa lost its most productive members of society. As Walter Rodney observed, "The massive loss to the African labour force was made more critical because it was composed of abled-bodied young men and young women."⁶⁷ Slave buyers preferred their victims between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five, and preferably in the early twenties; the sex ratio being about two men to one

⁶⁵ Michael Parenti, *The Face of Imperialism*, 7.

⁶⁶ Issa G. Shivji, "The Silences in the NGO Discourse: The Role and Future of NGOs in Africa" *Africa Development* Vol. 31, no. 4 (2006): 22–51, 24.

⁶⁷ HIV/AIDS has also more recently had a similar effect, wiping out much of the most productive segments of society across the continent.

woman.”⁶⁸ As we can see from the picture Walter Rodney paints, young men and women who had acquired skills and knowledge from their elders and were most physically fit to work were kidnapped and sold away. Africa’s production suffered not only because its most able-bodied people were stolen and sold into slavery but those who remained continued to live in fear for years and as a result could not engage in any meaningful economic and development activities.⁶⁹

Before Africans could regroup, colonialists invaded the continent. Through colonialism, natural resources were extracted and raw materials carried away while at the same time people were reduced to mere physical labourers. Since Africans were treated primarily as physical labourers under colonialism, they were limited in their growth and the capacity to develop any technologies or specialized skills. This explains why following independence African countries had only a tiny pool of specialized and skilled personnel.⁷⁰ Moreover, during colonialism Africans were divided along the lines of ethnicity, religion, gender, race and religion. The effect of this is still felt today. The Rwandan genocide was the result of a division established by the Belgian colonialists who privileged the Tutsi over the Hutus hence creating tension and animosity between the two tribes. Not only did colonialists exacerbate tribalism, but they also imported their own brand of racism. Since Africans were viewed as lazy and incapable by the colonialists, they had to import ‘skilled labour’ from south Asia which further bred racial and ethnic division in Africa. Shivji writes:

[Africans were] condemned as lazy and indolent, incapable of learning and entrepreneurship, to be perpetually ruled and disciplined, the internal social division and stratification of the African society was suppressed and muted. Instead, traders and craftsmen and skilled labour was imported; South Asians in

⁶⁸ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 96.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

East Africa, Lebanese in West Africa. Thus, a hierarchy of racial privileges was constructed, the epitome of which was the settler colony.⁷¹

This is why until today wealth in Africa is distributed along these racial lines. Light skinned people such as Indians, Whites and Arabs own businesses and land, and in turn hold greater power while the majority of Black Africans live in extreme poverty.

Indeed, the legacy of Western involvement in Africa has been negative with ‘independent’ African countries continuing to suffer from Western imperialism and neo-colonialism. As I will discuss in more detail below, multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and its agencies, including the World Bank, together with international organizations such as the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and other Non-Governmental Organizations, continue to protect and perpetuate imperial economic interests in Africa. Although African countries are faced by many continent-specific challenges such as diseases, hostile climate and corrupt leaders, imperialism plays a significant role in undermining Africa’s development, autonomy and democracy. Western imperialism not only exploits African countries but also intentionally creates political instability which further facilitates exploitation.

2.2 Military Imperialism

Military imperialism has also come to characterize the relationship between African countries and the West, particularly the United States. This form of engagement is yet another example of ill-intentioned Western involvement in the African continent. Imperial military occupation does enormous damage to both the occupying and occupied. The American government spends billions on its military budget every year. Because of its wars around the world, the U.S. government has accumulated massive debt which makes it the most indebted

⁷¹ Issa G. Shivji, “The Silences in the NGO Discourse”, 25.

country in the world. Meanwhile many American soldiers return home incapacitated both physically and mentally, becoming a financial burden on the nation. One would wonder then why the US and its allies build countless military bases and wage never-ending wars all around the world if these wars have such severe repercussions for their own people. Michael Parenti observes:

Along with direct yearly military appropriations, which rose to about \$500 billion by 2006, there are the direct costs of war and empire: veterans benefits, including health care and disability costs; federal debt payments due to military spending, over \$150 billion each year; covert military and intelligence operations; the 70 percent of federal research and development funds that goes to the military; space weapons programs; military aid to other countries; “supplementary appropriations” for specific wars, as in Iraq (over \$100 billion in 2006); and defence expenses picked up by non-military agencies including the Energy Department’s nuclear weapons programs, which consumes more than half of that department’s budget. Taken together, actual military spending for the fiscal year 2006 came to almost \$800 billion.⁷²

At such a cost why does the U.S. government continue to engage in such activities in light of their already massive debt, high crime rate and dysfunctional healthcare system to which they could otherwise direct their resources? The U.S. justifies its wars and military undertakings as a mission for peace, democracy, human rights as well as to fight against terrorism to protect the world and its people.

Evidence suggests otherwise. The U.S. government claimed that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and had to be subdued. This claim was rejected by the United Nations inspector who found no evidence to support such accusations. Still, the U.S. government proceeded with the invasion of Iraq, destroying its economy, political stability and the well-being of Iraqis in the process, while contributing to major loss of life. Later the very officials who rejected the United Nations’ inspection conclusions conceded that they were

⁷² Michael Parenti, *Democracy for the Few* (Boston: Thomson-Wadsworth, 2008), 78.

‘mistaken’.⁷³ Though the true intentions of the U.S. government behind its invasion of Iraq are not yet known widely, a number of questions must be asked: Why would the U.S. government reject United Nations advice and inspection results? Why were the U.S. government’s actions tolerated (in other words, why was the invasion unpunished)? Moreover, now that it has been well-established that Iraq did not and does not possess WMD, and Saddam Hussein is dead, why does the U.S. military continue to occupy Iraq instead of UN Peacekeepers? The point here is not whether Saddam Hussein was good or bad, but rather to question the motive behind the U.S. invasion of Iraq. It is well-documented that Saddam Hussein’s ascendance to power (which was undemocratic) was aided and engineered by U.S. security agencies. Moreover, Saddam Hussein continued to receive intelligence and military assistance including biological weapons from the U.S. government despite his undemocratic behaviours.⁷⁴ He only became an enemy when he switched allegiance and threatened American oil interests in the Middle East and Iraq.⁷⁵ What happened in Iraq following the U.S. invasion sheds some light on the true intentions of U.S. military operations: “After the U.S. invasion, most of that economy was destroyed, shut down, or privatized at giveaway prices. Looters were let loose on Iraq’s government ministries and headquarters; all state-owned factories, hotels, supermarkets, and many hospitals; and most public universities, including engineering and nursing colleges.”⁷⁶ It is important to note that before the invasion Iraq had the highest standard of living in the Middle East but now its

⁷³ Joseph Milburn. Thompson, *Justice and Peace: A Christian Primer* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2003), 124.

⁷⁴Michael Parenti, *The Face of Imperialism*, 106.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 107.

⁷⁶ Ibid.,

economy is in ruin and it will take decades to rebuild.⁷⁷ While U.S. corporations continue to amass wealth, ordinary Iraqis are waiting for democracy, human rights, justice and peace. What we can learn from recent wars waged by the U.S. government and its allies is that war and military interventions are incapable of bringing peace, democracy, human rights or even combating terrorism.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government has for decades supported undemocratic leaders and governments with terrible human rights records. Despite its appalling human rights records, China, for example, has not been the target of Western military invasion. China's military and financial power has worked to its advantage. The real reason for China's immunity is the fact that China has adopted a Capitalist economy which hugely benefits Western corporations. The motivation behind Western military operations is not to advance democracy, human rights and reduce suffering but rather to advance and protect the economic interests of its corporations.

Michael Parenti explains:

While claiming to be motivated by a dedication to human rights and democracy, US leaders have supported some of the most notorious right-wing autocracies in history - regimes that have pursued policies favoring wealthy transnational corporations at the expense of local producers and working people; regimes that have tortured, killed, or otherwise maltreated large numbers of their more resistant citizens.⁷⁸

As Parenti further demonstrates, the list of countries supported by the U.S. government is quite long, and includes countries such as Chad, Pakistan, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chile (under Pinochet), and Congo (under Mobutu). In spite of having leaders long known for their criminal and dictatorial activities, these countries continued to receive overwhelming military and financial support from the U.S. government. Judging from who received support and who was

⁷⁷ Ibid., 106.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 27.

condemned, I would contend that the real motivation behind U.S. wars and invasions is not the promotion of democracy, peace and human rights but rather the promotion of capitalistic interests that benefit the Western corporate world.

Giant corporations have very strong political influence in Western countries. The fact that wars waged by the U.S. rarely benefit its ordinary citizens suggests that the large corporations who benefit from such foreign policy have an inordinate, undemocratic influence on the U.S. government. While the cost of America's military operations are borne by the entire citizenry, the profits gained go to a shrinking number of wealthy individuals. To illustrate the point above, Michael Parenti writes:

In Vietnam (1955-1975), U.S. forces dropped almost 8.4 million tons of bombs and napalm, and 18 million gallons of chemical defoliants, destroying over 40 percent of Vietnam's plantations and orchards, over 40 percent of its forest lands, and much of its aquatic resources. Several million Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians were killed; millions more were maimed or contaminated by toxic chemicals; almost 10 million were left homeless. Some 58,000 Americans lost their lives and hundreds of thousands more were wounded or permanently disabled. Despite all the death and destruction, some did benefit from the war. The top ten U.S. military contractors, including DuPont, ITT, and Dow Chemical, grossed \$11.6 billion (in 1973 dollars).⁷⁹

As the passage above testifies, wars waged by the U.S. government are highly profitable to the corporate world that has immense political influence through its financial resources. However, ordinary citizens of both sides suffer: lives are lost, resources and investment are destroyed and ordinary citizens end up paying the cost of wars through their taxes.⁸⁰ The benefits enjoyed by giant corporations are not only limited to highly profitable military contracts. Once U.S. military occupation begins, natural resources are stolen or destroyed, national companies are privatized and markets are opened up to the foreign corporations. Moreover, when the economies of these

⁷⁹ Michael Parenti, *Democracy for the Few*, 87.

⁸⁰ Michael Parenti, *The Face of Imperialism*, 128.

countries collapse, the imperial powers come in with a ‘rescue plan’ to rebuild the country. As it has become custom, they provide these countries with high interest loans with a myriad of conditions that will make them indebted and forever slaves to the imperial powers.

Military imperialism not only destroys economies around the world, but destroys the conditions essential for development to be pursued and democracy to be practiced. As I have argued throughout this chapter, when a country is not free to determine its own destiny and its people are not able to participate in the process of decision-making, democracy cannot flourish. I have drawn most of my examples of Western military imperialism from Asia and the Middle East because they have been well-documented and provide a clear picture of the patterns of U.S. and Western activity. Yet, the same trends and conclusions characterize Western military imperialism in African countries. Libya is a recent example in which the U.S. government facilitated the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi and left the country in ruins with the resulting instability allowing for further exploitation by western corporations. Although the U.S. and its allies declared their involvement as being intended to bring relief from a dictatorship and promote the well-being of Libyan people, the outcomes suggest otherwise. This further demonstrates that Western interventions in Africa and other developing countries not only produce negative results but are ill-intentioned.⁸¹

Ultimately, Western military interventions, like other kinds of interventions, do not aim to improve Africa’s well-being but rather are intended to exploit. In the Chapter Three I will argue that Africa must rethink its relationship with Western countries and critically analyze any partnership the West proposes even if it comes in the form of democracy, human rights or good government measures. As Nyerere contended under *Ujamaa*, Africa’s independence and

⁸¹ David Fisher & Nigel Biggar, “Was Iraq an Unjust War? A Debate on the Iraq War and Reflections on Libya,” *International Affairs* 87, no. 3 (2011): 687–707, 699-703.

freedom, hence development, can only be attained and maintained through Self-Reliance which call for Africans to depend on their own thought and efforts for development.

2.3 The United Nations and other Multilateral Institutions in the Service of Imperialism

In this section I want to discuss ways in which the United Nations and its agencies, in particular the IMF and World Bank, as well as other multilateral institutions such as the WTO, are serving imperial interests while hurting the Global South. As I have noted above, the multilateral imposition of interventions and strategies in the Global South has had a disastrous impact on poor countries. Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) are an undisputed example.⁸² However, anti-poverty strategies advanced by these multilateral institutions are not the only failed interventions in the Global South. Pro-free market policies pushed by the WTO have had similar, if not worse, effects as I will demonstrate below.

My argument is not that the impact of these organizations has been exclusively negative. Rather what they have done over the years has not only had minimal positive impact, but it has come at a great cost to African nations. Free market policies and initiatives pushed by the WTO which includes elimination of subsidies, liberalization of markets, patent rights, and privatization have ruined production and reduced employment rates while giving market and product monopolies to foreign investors. Through patent laws which are protected and promoted by the WTO, what was a gift of nature has been monopolized, robbing the poor of a means to sustain their lives. For example, the WTO gave patent rights to U.S Corporation RicTec over the varieties of basmati rice all over the world.⁸³ Grown for centuries by Indian farmers who depend on it as a source of food as well as for income, basmati rice has become the sole property of a

⁸² Issa G. Shivji, "The Silences in the NGO Discourse," 33.

⁸³ Michael Parenti, *The Face of Imperialism*, 63.

single company. That the WTO and IMF can impose policies and bind individual free countries demonstrates how these institutions undermine the autonomy and sovereignty of nations and citizens from exercising their rights of self-determination, a crucial aspect of freedom and democracy.

As I continue to argue, the very power structures of these organizations are a mocking of and contradiction to the very idea and concept of democracy which otherwise aims to empower and enable the citizenry to participate fully in the process of decision-making. The WTO has a three-member panel of ‘trade specialists’ with decision-making power that can overrule or dilute any law of any nation considered burdening to corporate interests.⁸⁴ The fact that this panel of *three* people holds power superior to a nation is a scoffing in the face of the democracy the West otherwise propagates. It also demonstrates the dissonance between money and democracy that we discussed above. Social injustice ensues when corporate interests are prioritized at the expense of the poor

Consider the economic and social impact of free trade laws enacted by the WTO in Guatemala preventing the country from both enforcing a law to ban deceptive advertisements about baby products and preventing the government from encouraging mothers to breastfeed their babies. The WTO argued that these things interfered with businesses’ freedom and impeded them from making profit⁸⁵ – the ultimate aim. I believe that the government, assuming its aim is to first and foremost to represent the interests of the majority of its citizens, should decide what is good for its country and people as a whole not just the corporate interests. Moreover, it should be the people who have the power to overrule decisions made by the government (as a form of

⁸⁴ Michael Parenti, *Democracy for the Few*, 167.

⁸⁵ Michael Parenti, *The Face of Imperialism*, 68.

accountability), not three unelected trade specialists with little practical understanding of the reality of life for the average Guatemalan. Also, the fact that the WTO can prevent the Guatemalan government from telling its people what is good for them in the name of protecting corporate profit is a denial of freedom of speech which is a fundamental aspect of democracy. I would further argue that the well-being and humanity of Guatemalans should always precede corporate interests; not breastfeeding is not only more affordable but it also provides tremendous health benefits to both mother and baby.

The free market policies enforced by the WTO have had a disastrous impact on African economies as well. Industries which once provided jobs have closed down, food production has decreased tremendously, and standards of living as well as working conditions have declined.

Michael Parenti explains the state of African economies as follows:

In Mozambique, Senegal, and other parts of Africa, local farm and factory production was just about completely wiped out by corporate imports. In Cote d'Ivoire, "the ten rice mills that had been built by the state-owned rice company were privatized. Two years later, not one remained in business. Inevitably, the privatization drive closed down the rice company." The same held true for state-owned seed farm. Over the past two decades, Africa lost approximately \$272 billion because of the corporate takeover of domestic food production. "That money did not vanish," Elich notes. "It is being transferred to wealthy pockets in the developed nations." Free trade means privatization for the few and privation for the many.⁸⁶

What the passage above reveals is that free market policies, as part of Western interventions in Africa, have failed to deliver on their promises. Instead of creating wealth for countries and their people, they have contributed to mass unemployment, reduced food production and as a result increased poverty. Moreover, Capitalist investors have become notorious for their poor

⁸⁶ Ibid., 77.

environmental stewardship which endangers the continent not only in the present but also the future.⁸⁷

That the UN and other international agencies strictly impose imperial policies in the Global South as a condition for receiving much-needed aid, provides further evidence of their true intention: to advance Western interests. Consider the following example: in 1997 the United States refused to sign the treaty to ban Land Mines; in 2001 the U.S. Senate passed an amendment which exempt its military personnel from being prosecuted by the International Criminal Court; in 2001 the U.S. refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol which deals with global warming; in 2001 the U.S. government refused to sign the UN resolution which would make adequate food a human right, prohibit the death penalty, as well as lower the cost for HIV/AIDS drugs; and again in 2001 the U.S. government refused to sign an agreement to lift the economic embargo against Cuba.⁸⁸ These are just some of the examples of agreements which were signed and supported by the majority of UN member countries but the U.S. government refused to sign. What all of this highlights is that the UN and other international agencies are powerless to alter, and in many cases abet, the undemocratic corporate interests of the U.S. and its allies. Anything that effects the U.S. government and American corporations is not enforced regardless of the benefits to the rest of the world.

Here we are able to clearly see the connection between contemporary Western imperialism and Capitalism, which breeds injustice and exploitation, the twin enemies of democracy. Liberalism does not necessarily entail Capitalism but judging from the practices of Western liberal countries, it is evident that liberal democracy and Capitalism has become

⁸⁷ Ibid., 80.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 123.

synonymous. As I have argued in Chapter One, democratic processes and humanity have been seriously trampled upon by capitalistic desires to advance economic interests even when it is clear that human rights, freedom and justice are being violated in the process. Capitalism in the West, and now worldwide, has become not only an economic structure but also a kind of ‘religious faith’ strongly embedded in the culture and thinking of the majority.

Western capitalistic models of politics and economics do have their benefits. These include the promotion of an entrepreneurial spirit and the advancement of science and technology. However, the capitalist system cannot just be transplanted ‘as is’ into Africa. As Bob Gouzwaard argues in his book, *Capitalism and Progress*, Capitalism focuses only on the maximum utilization of resources while paying little attention to environmental, ecological, and human well-being. Capitalism has turned into a faith in a ‘never-ending progress’⁸⁹ where nothing other than the maximization of profit for the few matters.⁹⁰ However, as Gouzwaard notes, this faith in perpetual progress overlooks the reality of environmental destruction and the depletion of energy resources which are a testament to the dark side of Capitalism.⁹¹ In Africa, as we aspire to adopt the good that Capitalism has to offer such as advanced technologies, we must continue to adopt a more human-centered philosophy towards progress as Nyerere visioned in Ujamaa. We can extract the best aspects of Capitalism, while maintaining a uniquely African view of holistic progress.

⁸⁹ Bob Gouzwaard, *Capitalism and Progress: A Diagnosis of Western Society*, New edition edition (Carlisle U.K.: Authentic Media, 1997).

⁹⁰ Ibid., PAGE.

⁹¹ Ibid., 229.

2.4 NGOs under the Imperial Spell

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as a third sector, have the duty and responsibility to support and supplement governments' efforts in promoting development.⁹² However in recent decades they have moved from being tertiary service providers to engaging in advocacy. Although with good intentions, the effect has been that international institutions such as the World Bank and IMF have come to depend on NGOs as representatives of the people's voices (and needs) rather than national governments. Thus when institutions like the WB and IMF formulate and propose policies, often imposed through tied aid, they are based on consultation with NGOs. The issue here is that international NGOs in the Global South have overstepped their mandates and unofficially made themselves the representatives of the people, purporting to understand the people and their issues better than the government. It is the government who should be consulting with, representing and advocating for the people. Since NGOs are not elected to represent the people and often times their 'participatory' approaches are just theoretical frameworks that are not effectively exercised, the result is that they ultimately remain true to the interests of their donors rather than the local people they claim to represent.⁹³

Issa Shivji observes:

The African people, who were once supposed to be the authors and drivers of development and liberators of their nations, are reduced to 'the chronically poor' who are the subject matter of papers on strategies for poverty reduction, authored by consultants and discussed at stake-holders workshops in which, the 'poor' are represented by NGOs. The 'poor', the diseased, the disabled, the AIDS-infected, the ignorant, the marginalized, in short the 'people', are not part of the development equation, since development is assigned to private capital which constitutes the 'engine of growth'.⁹⁴

⁹² Issa G. Shivji, "The Silences in the NGO Discourse," 40.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

It is not that NGOs can never speak for the poor or propose projects which are beneficial to the people. But when the people are excluded from the whole process of identifying their needs as well as generating and implementing strategies to address those needs, they are robbed of the right of self-determination as well as the chance to become agents of their own development. The lack of people's involvement and consultation in devising and implementing development initiatives, accounts for their failure to produce positive results. Moreover, when people are excluded, they come to believe that the task of solving their problems belongs to others. This perpetuates the mentality that poor people cannot think and decide for themselves. This is why when donors and NGOs leave, projects also die out. People have been conditioned to look outside for solutions and will wait for another donor to fund and initiate a project. This psychological colonization of the mind is the product of centuries of colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism.⁹⁵ People have become overly dependent on NGOs as saviors so that whenever a new challenge emerges they rarely take the initiative to address it themselves even when the challenge is within their ability.

NGOs have also come to be considered as experts in identifying and addressing people's needs. That NGOs participate in policy-making, a task which should be undertaken by the people through their government, is both undemocratic and imperialistic.⁹⁶ This 'advocacy' occurs even in situations when it is clear that the NGO involved has very limited knowledge of the people they serve. Linked to the systemic racism bred in Africa discussed previously, the voices of the West (and White) have been validated above Africans. The international community of donors tends to regard the views and perspectives of NGOs as the most legitimate. They, as such, have

⁹⁵ Donatus Komba, "Contribution to Rural Development: *Ujamaa* & Villagisation," 35.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

been enabled to function as the self-appointed representatives of the people. This problem is compounded by the fact that many NGOs are largely composed of elites who reside in urban areas and have very little contact with the masses they claim to serve and represent; this is not unlike the trend I have referenced above with respect to politicians and their disconnect to the constituents they are supposed to represent.

The above discussion should not be understood to dismiss the work of NGOs entirely. There are NGOs and individuals who have good intentions and their work truly reflects and responds to the needs of the people. In fact, more and more a discourse of ‘empowerment’, ‘emancipation’, ‘participation’ and ‘rights’ is being employed by international NGOs. However, how these approaches are implemented and play out in practicality can vary significantly. ‘Partnership’ for example, may sound participatory but can be understood in very different ways. For one it may mean working collaboratively, for another it may mean others doing things their way. Thus, the impact of today’s movement towards anthropological and emancipatory approaches to development interventions remains to be seen. Just as the World Bank and IMF heralded SAPs as the solution to all of Africa’s problems in the 1980s, so does the international community and NGOs do the same for its current approaches. It is only in hindsight that the true impact (be it positive, negative or negligible) is visible. However, I continue to be suspicious of NGO approaches which claim to ‘have it right this time.’ I maintain that without African thought informing and in fact providing the foundation for interventions, they are likely to fail. Here I want to clarify that I believe African thought must be the starting point for the conceptualization of solutions which can then integrate other (perhaps Western) ways of thinking. This is different than adding a sprinkle of Africa to Western solutions (like the name of a project being in Kiswahili) and expecting that to make things work.

Still, there are a great many NGO workers who are simply motivated by the adventure of international travel and the financial gain afforded by working in the NGO sector.⁹⁷ Furthermore, there are numerous NGOs working in Africa who bring over volunteers with very little experience but because each contributes financially to the organization they are put to work and assume the role of ‘expert’ in African development issues. Here again an issue of social justice emerges because African voices are being silenced or dismissed as Western neo-colonialists (albeit not intentionally as most are aiming to undo past wrongs and injustices while unconsciously perpetuating them) once again assume positions of authority. The very fact that most large NGOs are run by foreigners who reside outside or they have limited knowledge of the realities on ground not only endangers Africa’s freedom and the power of self-determination, but also contributes largely to the ineffectiveness of their projects as I have noted. It is not that Westerners cannot support Africans in tackling their challenges but rather there must be genuine partnership in which Africans are enabled to take charge and provide leadership in addressing their own problems. Moreover, even when donors truly intend to create genuine partnership, the imbalanced power relationship between Westerners and Africans, which has been entrenched over centuries, continues to play a significant role in undermining efforts towards genuine partnership.

It has been argued that Western organizations have taken charge and a leading role in setting and implementing development activities in African countries is due to the lack of skills and knowledge as well as the irresponsibility and corruption of African personnel and leaders.⁹⁸ However, there are many honest and hard-working African leaders and activists who want to

⁹⁷ Ibid., 39.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 37.

see their people live in peace and prosperity and are more than capable of running and directing these organizations. *Haki Elimu*, a Tanzania organization which aims at promoting education in Tanzania, is an example of this. It was founded by and is successfully led by Tanzanians. Even where lack of technical knowledge and skills is an obstacle, I would argue that the best way to address that challenge lies in genuine partnership which aims at enabling the people to take charge of their own affairs. Again, many organizations claim to do this but the practice of it (and corresponding successes) varies significantly. Moreover, the NGO sector in Africa has not only excluded the masses (and failed to address systemic issues of oppression that account for the symptoms being targeted by NGOs) but have also ignored African intellectuals, preventing them from informing their practices. As Issa Shivji writes:

The NGOs discourse in the current period of apparent imperial ‘triumphalism’ eschews theory, and emphasises and privileges activism. In the African setting in particular, whatever is left of critical intellectual discourse, largely located at universities, runs parallel to and is divorced from NGO activism. The requirements of funding agencies subtly discourage, if not exhibit outright hostility to, a historical and social theoretical understanding of development, poverty, discrimination etc. Our erstwhile benefactors now tell us, ‘just act, don’t think’ and we shall fund both!⁹⁹

For many years, African intellectuals such as Frantz Fanon, Julius Nyerere and Walter Rodney to name a few, have pointed out that the poverty experienced in African is the direct result of injustice and exploitation from both within and without and as such these issues must be taken seriously if we are to make poverty history. Unfortunately, the call to equality and justice has most often fallen on deaf ears. NGOs, as imperial agents, both consciously and unconsciously, have ignored the call to addressing the exploitation for which their nations are responsible. They have instead insisted on addressing the symptoms of exploitation and injustice such as poverty

⁹⁹ Ibid., 41.

and hunger while leaving the structures of injustice which generate and perpetuate poverty untouched. Again, Shivji forcefully and rhetorically asks:

‘Make Poverty History’. But how can you make poverty history without understanding the ‘history of poverty’? We need to know how did the poverty of the five billion of this world come about as we need to know even more accurately how did the filthy wealth of the 500 multinationals or the 225 richest people was created. We need to know even more precisely how this great divide, the unbridgeable chasm, maintained, is reproducing and increasingly deepened and widened. We need to ask ourselves: what are the political, social, moral, ideological, economic and cultural mechanisms which produce and reinforce, and make such a world not only possible, but *apparently* acceptable?¹⁰⁰

The same point was also echoed by James Petras who observes as follows: “When millions are losing their jobs and poverty spreads to important swaths of the population, NGOs engage in preventative action: they focus on “survival strategies” not general strikes; they organize soup kitchens not mass demonstrations against food hoarders, neo-liberal regimes or US imperialism.”¹⁰¹ The idea here is that the poverty in most African countries did not just emerge because Africans are not hard working or because there is a scarcity of resources. Poverty has a history which can be explained by other systems of, power, exploitation and injustice. We cannot end poverty if the very mechanisms by which poverty was created are left untouched. This means addressing the problems of poverty in Africa must be preceded by addressing injustice. Thus, the efforts of NGOs must go hand in hand with radically addressing and challenging the root causes of poverty and oppression rather than just dealing with the symptoms.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that Western countries have and are still acting imperialistically toward the developing world and in particular African countries. I have shown

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 43.

¹⁰¹ James Petras, “NGOs: In the Service of Imperialism,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 29, no. 4 (1999): 429–40, 431.

that imperialism started with slavery, continued in the form of colonialism, and now endures as neo-colonialism. Superpowers such as the United States, either directly through military operations or indirectly through multilateral institutions or international NGOs, dominate and oppress developing countries in order to further their own economic interests to the benefit of large corporations. I have argued that because corporations and big businesses finance politicians especially during elections, they exert great influence over their decisions and actions while in office. Although Western countries justify their actions, such as military invasion, as being in the name of human rights and the promotion of democracy, their real motivation is often to advance capitalist interests. This affects not only the citizens of developing countries but also the poor citizens of imperial nations. As a result of imperial activities, the well-being of people is negatively affected, lives are lost, and democracy, peace and justice are being undermined and destroyed.

I have also argued that the action or inaction of multilateral organizations and NGOs (intentional or not) perpetuates imperialism. First, multilateral organizations and international NGOs fail to intervene on behalf of poor nations when they are invaded and taken advantage of by Western nations such as the U.S. I illustrated this through the example of the U.S. invasion of Iraq which was carried out in the face of opposition by the UN Security Council who did nothing in response to the U.S. actions. Second, the structures of multilateral organizations are undemocratic and imperial. Major decisions are made and influenced by Western countries and their corporations while poor countries have very little say in the decisions which affect them. Moreover, both multilateral and international NGOs have ignored or failed to address the real cause of suffering and misery in developing countries, and have only addressed the symptoms. Issues such as exploitation and unfair trade agreements are ignored which contribute to the very

poverty these organizations purport to combat. I have argued that if NGOs and multilateral organizations are to have a lasting positive impact in developing countries, they must not only address immediate problems such as poverty and disease but must also be ready to rebuke the imperial and exploitative practices of Western countries.

In this chapter, I have also discussed how decision-making in international organizations, or local organizations chiefly funded by Western nations, often excludes input from the local people. Major decisions are either made completely by foreign experts or they are made without consulting either the community or national intellectuals who are best placed to speak to the challenges they face and potential solutions to them. When local people are excluded from the process of decision-making, not only do most projects fail to make a positive impact but they in fact also produce negative outcomes including dependence. People come to believe that the solutions lie with foreign experts.

The discussion of Chapter Two, leads me to conclude that African countries cannot and should not trust or expect Western countries to solve their problems and advance their well-being. Western initiatives are capitalistic with the intention of advancing their own economic interests. Moreover, the very initiatives and strategies informed by Western liberal democracy are not appropriate in Africa. African countries must seek an alternative to Western thought. They must generate their own strategies for addressing their challenges which are in tune with their own realities. Self-reliance is therefore integral to Africans being the agents of their own change and development.

The next chapter will present *Ujamaa*, a social and political philosophy pioneered by Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania. Through *Ujamaa* Nyerere rejected the capitalist initiatives and values imposed by Western countries believing that they are responsible for the

misery faced by humanity, particularly Africans.¹⁰² Nyerere called for Africans to become self-reliant and pursue their own ideas; by doing so there is great potential to appropriately address their unique challenges and create an atmosphere where democracy, justice and human rights are improved and realized in their fullness. Significantly, Nyerere viewed Capitalism not only as a structure but also frame of the mind; this is why people's attitudes needed to be reformed in addition to social, political and economic structures being changed. This same point was echoed by Bob Gouzwaard, who wrote, "It is imperative to point out the serious flaws of our economic system, but it is dangerous, and wrong, to conclude that the system itself is at fault while we - the human agents operative in the system - are without blame."¹⁰³ As we will see in the next chapter, *Ujamaa* is a call to change not only social, economic and political structures but also to reform people's attitudes; a human-centered approach must be the basis for a just, well-balanced and flourishing Africa.

¹⁰² Julius Nyerere, "The Development of People and the Meaning of Service," 143.

¹⁰³ Bob Goudzwaard, *Capitalism and Progress*, XXI.

Chapter Three: *Ujamaa*: Nyerere's Social and Political Thought

3.1 Introduction

The concept of *Ujamaa* was pioneered by the late Julius Nyerere, first president of Tanzania and champion of African socialism. The idea of *Ujamaa* was initially outlined in a document which came to be known as the 'Arusha Declaration'. This was followed by a collection of essays and speeches which elaborate and expand on the principles of *Ujamaa* as outlined in the Arusha Declaration. The Declaration provides a framework for running a socialist society by offering guiding social, economic, and political principles. Following Tanzania's independence from the British in 1961, the country's leadership decided that Tanzania would become a socialist nation. Throughout this chapter the influence of Fabian socialism on Nyerere will become clear. However, this should not detract from the fact that *Ujamaa* was a philosophy founded first and foremost on indigenous African thought and values. Neo-Marxist influences served to help Nyerere frame *Ujamaa* as a philosophy while the content itself remained largely African. Julius Nyerere believed that African societies were always socialist in nature, and as such returning to socialism amounted to simply becoming African again.¹⁰⁴ The central points of the Declaration that I will discuss in this chapter are, 1) the meaning of *Ujamaa*, and 2) its guiding principles: the promotion of equality; Self-Reliance; the enhancement of a 'true' African democracy; and villagization, or communal living and working.

In contrasting the African vision for development with Western liberal approaches to development such as modernization theory, Nyerere highlighted the intention of Tanzania to achieve development without sacrificing equality and humanity: "We owe it to ourselves and

¹⁰⁴ Cranford Pratt, *The Critical Phase in Tanzania, 1945-1968: Nyerere and the Emergence of a Socialist Strategy* (Cambridge, Eng.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 250.

posterity to demonstrate that modern development is possible without sacrifice in equality and humanity which has everywhere accompanied ‘development’ of the present industrialized states.”¹⁰⁵ Unlike some Western countries, like the U.S. and Britain, who achieved ‘development’ by sacrificing humanity and equality through the slave trade, imperialism, and colonialism, and by the exploitation of their own people during the industrial revolution, Nyerere believed that Tanzania could achieve development while promoting equality and human well-being not only for its own people but also for people across the world. This means that the promotion of equality and dignity - in other words, social justice - is a necessary foundation for any development initiative. I will elaborate on equality further below, as it is one of the central tenets of the *Ujamaa* philosophy.

Another important element of *Ujamaa* which I will discuss in this chapter is Self-Reliance. Nyerere came to the conclusion that the only way African countries like Tanzania would develop is by depending on its own resources and ideas. His first few years as a leader of Tanzania taught him that dependence on foreign countries, whose interests and ideas most often contradicted or differed from those of Tanzania, often undermined individual people and the country’s efforts to liberate and develop itself. It was clear to him that the ideas and strategies imposed from without did not work, and in many cases, had very negative results for communities and the country more broadly. Moreover, foreign aid with its strings attached undermined Africa and Tanzania’s freedom and the right to determine its own destiny. Thus, Self-Reliance, according to Nyerere, was a way for Africans to pursue their own ideas and preserve their freedom and liberty.

¹⁰⁵ Donatus Komba, “Contribution to Rural Development: *Ujamaa* & Villagisation,” 36.

The third aspect of *Ujamaa* that I will discuss in this chapter is that of ‘democracy’. Nyerere believed that Africa could develop and implement its own concept of democracy, one that was relevant to the African context and capable of addressing the challenges faced by Africans. He believed that where Africans retained Western liberal democratic systems, certain aspects must be adjusted and supplemented by African thought so as to reflect not only the needs of the people but the different ways that they function socially and culturally. It is important to note that Nyerere was not completely opposed to every aspect of liberal democracy even as he called for an Africanization of that democracy in order to incorporate African ways of thinking, knowing, and operating. Still he contended that liberal democracy, with its emphasis on multiple parties, would divide and destroy a new and fragile country like Tanzania. The realities of newly independent Tanzania led Nyerere to argue for a no- (or single) party system which he believed could still embody democratic practices by creating mechanisms to ensure the quality participation of citizens 'as well as the promotion of internal debate, which he called “opposition from within.”¹⁰⁶ Nyerere justified a single ‘national movement’ party system as follows:

The same nationalist movement, having united the people and led them to independence, must inevitably form the first government of the new state; it could hardly be expected that a united country should halt mid-stream and voluntarily divide itself into opposing political groups just for the sake of conforming to what I have called the ‘Anglo-Saxon form of democracy’ at the moment of independence.¹⁰⁷

According to Nyerere, the simple absence of *multiparty* democracy does not make a society undemocratic. For him, democracy exists as long as both the equality of citizens and their quality participation in decision-making and implementing processes is assured.

¹⁰⁶ (Cranford Pratt, *The Critical Phase in Tanzania, 1945-1968*, 65.

¹⁰⁷ A.N Kweka, “One-Party Democracy & the Multi-Party State,” 64.

The idea that quality participation is essential to building a democratic and prosperous nation prompted Nyerere to promote socialist or *Ujamaa* villages, which were intended to further decentralize the government so that the people would be able to actively participate in the social, economic, and political activities of their country. As I will discuss below, villagization had three interrelated aims: to increase citizen engagement and participation in governance; to bring people closer as a way of providing social services; and to increase production through communal work.

This chapter will serve to unpack the central elements of *Ujamaa* as a basis for evaluating its relevance and viability for African countries today. We will see how, rooted in African indigenous values and thought, it provides a different starting point than Western interventions to approaching continental issues. Ultimately, I contend that *Ujamaa* offers the best blueprint for framing African approaches to African problems in the future.

3.2 Ujamaa

Nyerere's conception of *Ujamaa* was founded on indigenous African values and influenced by Western political thought, most notably Catholic Social Teaching and Fabian Socialism. While many of the concepts found with *Ujamaa* can be regarded as Marxist or neo-Marxist in orientation and origin, Nyerere refused such an association. He was not interested in *Ujamaa* being bound by the same geo-political fate as socialism and communism. For him, the significance of *Ujamaa* was its integration of African thought with non-African thought. It was a prototype of what could be and a validation of African thought as a starting point for addressing needs and issues specific to Tanzania and Africa more broadly.

Drawing on African values and thought, the term '*Ujamaa*' is thus defined as 'family-hood'. It is a form of African 'socialism' (I use this term loosely) which seeks to promote and expand the sense of family-hood found at an individual and clan-level to an entire nation or

beyond. To a certain extent, features of *Ujamaa*—such as the nationalization of major means of production and the communal ownership of land—resemble those of socialism. However, there are fundamental differences between *Ujamaa* and the communist form of socialism formulated by Marx and Engels. First of all, *Ujamaa* is neither the result of class antagonism nor does it aim at eliminating the state as its final goal.¹⁰⁸ According to Nyerere, *Ujamaa* first and foremost, is ‘an attitude of the mind’ by which one sees others as part of his or her family. *Ujamaa* seeks to revive traditional African social, economic, and political ideals, and when appropriate, to combine them with non-African thought as a way of orienting social lives in Africa. Nyerere explains as follows:

We are not importing a foreign ideology into Tanzania and trying to smoothen our distinct social patterns with it. We have deliberately decided to grow, as a society, out of our own roots.... We are doing this by emphasising certain characteristics of our traditional organisation, and extending them so that they can embrace the possibilities of modern technology and enable us to meet the challenge of life in the twentieth-century world.¹⁰⁹

Nyerere believed that African countries, such as Tanzania, could still learn and benefit from their indigenous thought, and use that as a basis for a new form of African social, economic, and political thinking like that espoused in *Ujamaa*. Because indigenous African thought emphasized the importance of equality and communal responsibility, Nyerere believed that these elements should be retained and promoted as the basis of African ‘socialism’. However, Nyerere did not think that *Ujamaa* should be a rigid political doctrine exclusively informed by indigenous African ways of knowing and living. He was open to learning from other non-African traditions, demonstrating both a willingness and desire to correct and improve any negative practices and

¹⁰⁸ Martin Guy, 100.

¹⁰⁹ Donatus Komba, “Contribution to Rural Development: *Ujamaa* & Villagisation,” 37.

philosophies deriving from indigenous African thought. What was important in *Ujamaa* was not the doctrine but rather the creation of a sense of social responsibility through which people would come to deeply care for each other's welfare. This is what 'family-hood' denotes. As Nyerere writes, "[i]n a socialist society it is the socialist attitude of mind, and not the rigid adherence to a standard political pattern, which is needed to ensure that the people care for each other's welfare."¹¹⁰

Regarding the economic dimension of *Ujamaa*, Nyerere had much to say. He held that while the internationally accepted system of Capitalism was successful in creating wealth and prosperity for some, its successes were built on inequality and exploitation.¹¹¹ As I have stated above, the U.S. and the United Kingdom were built through slavery, colonialism, imperialism and other forms of domestic exploitation. *Ujamaa*, then, intended to take a different route; one that would aim to bring development while promoting equality and humanity. In contrast to Capitalism, Nyerere argued that *Ujamaa* "has nothing to do with the possession or non-possession of wealth."¹¹² Rather, *Ujamaa*, as an attitude of the mind, views all men and women, regardless of their race, gender, or beliefs, as family, and therefore seeks to establish a nation of equals. When one sees another person, he or she sees a member of his or her extended family. Commenting on this attitude orientation, Nyerere observed that "destitute people can be potential capitalists-exploiters of their fellow human beings. A millionaire can equally well be a socialist."¹¹³ Although he acknowledges that it is rare for a millionaire to be a socialist, Nyerere

¹¹⁰ Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMAA*, 1.

¹¹¹ Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Nyerere and Africa: End of an Era*, 39.

¹¹² Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMAA*, 3.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 1.

admits that a millionaire can use his or her wealth for the common good and to look after those who are in need. Likewise, a person who is poor now could become a ‘capitalist’ if they came into money and did not have the right attitude toward others. Nyerere sees a ‘capitalist’ as someone who uses his or her wealth to dominate others.¹¹⁴ Because of this wealth, a capitalist gains power, and as a result of that power, a capitalist may gain even more wealth at the expense of others for selfish reasons. To these points, Nyerere should not be understood as overlooking economic inequality as a systemic issue nor is he promoting inappropriate pursuit of wealth. Rather, Nyerere is emphasising the fact that the ‘attitude of the mind’ is the root cause behind economic inequality and the ill pursuit of wealth. For Nyerere, reforming people’s attitudes towards wealth and inequality goes hand in hand with the dismantling of unjust social, political and economic structures. Nationalization of major means of productions, promotion of women’s education, extending social services in rural areas, as well as reforming discriminatory laws were all intended to eliminate structures of injustice.¹¹⁵ However, people’s attitudes must be reformed for a just society to be established because the very unjust structures in a society are the result of people attitudes. If the structures are changed without transforming people minds and attitudes, sooner or later, the same structures will be installed again.

Nyerere further argues that the very fact that people amass so much wealth is to be “interpreted as a vote of ‘no confidence’ in the social system.”¹¹⁶ Before colonialism, he

¹¹⁴ Ibid.,

¹¹⁵ Together with Nyerere’s efforts in changing and transforming people’s attitudes towards each other, he also dismantled unjust social, political and economic structures. Nyerere nationalized major means of productions such as land, communalized education, as well as reversed racist policies put in place by the colonial government. During his time as a president, there were significant improvements in gender and racial equality and the evenly distributed provision of services through the country (Colin Legum, “The Nyerere Years,” in *Tanzania After Nyerere*, ed. Michael Hodd (London: Pinter Publishers Limited, 1988), 3-4.)

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 3.

maintained, accumulating wealth was not a high priority because the communal orientation of African society ensured that those in need would be cared for. When a person became old and could no longer work, society took the responsibility of caring for him or her. This was also true of widows, orphans, and all those who could not look after themselves. According to Nyerere, the capitalist focus on the accumulation of wealth epitomizes a culture in which people no longer trust that the larger society will care for them in time of need. Although Nyerere comes across as an idealist, painting a romantic picture of pre-colonial Africa, he elsewhere admitted that certainly not everything was perfect in the pre-colonial era, particularly with respect to issues of gender inequality.¹¹⁷ However, important here is the fact that pre-colonial Africa had many valuable social, political and economic characteristics which Nyerere wanted retained in contemporary Africa. As other authors such as Martin Guy and Cheikh Anta Diop have observed, for example, although women were not always equal to men, a significant number of women were highly respected in society and occupied influential positions including in spiritual leadership as well as governance.¹¹⁸ In political leadership where most positions were inherited and permanent, people still had the right and power through democratic mechanisms to remove from power any leader who was corrupt and did not serve their needs. Martin Guy explains this point as follows:

The African leader was fully accountable for his actions at all times. In theory, the leader ruled for life, but in practice, he ruled only as long as the people allowed it: “However autocratic a chief was permitted to appear, he really ruled by the consent of the people. There was a balance between authority on the one side, and obligation on the other.” The leader would be abandoned, be removed, or—in the worse-case scenario—be the victim of a ritual murder if he did not perform

¹¹⁷ Guy Martin, *African Political Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 16.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, (One example is that of the female pharaoh, Hatshepsut of Egypt, who became the first female monarch in the world. This shows the extent to which women had influential political roles in indigenous Africa.)

according to customs and expectations or if his people so wished, irrespective of how long he had been in office.¹¹⁹

Although Nyerere can be understood as idealizing pre-colonial Africa, his intention was to emphasize the many valuable features of pre-colonial Africa that could provide the foundation for a ‘new’ African social, political and economic philosophy.

Nyerere’s socialist ideas were also very much influenced by his Christian faith, which emphasized equality and communal responsibility for the needy.¹²⁰ While he promoted an attitude of regarding others as brothers, emphasizing the responsibility of society to care for those who could not care for themselves, Nyerere also insisted that society had a responsibility to create opportunities and conditions for people to work and to fulfil their potential. He believed it is everyone’s right and responsibility to work for himself and society as a whole. Regarding work, Nyerere held the following: “A society which fails to give its individuals the means to work, prevents them from getting a fair share of the products of their own sweat and toil, needs putting right. Similarly, an individual who can work—and is provided by society with means to work—but does not do so, is equally wrong. He has no right to expect anything from society because he contributes nothing to society.”¹²¹ Thus, there was a mutual responsibility of society to the individual and the individual to society. Society had the responsibility for making sure that its people had the means to work, and individuals, once afforded the opportunity to work, were expected to work and contribute to society, including taking care of those who could not work.

For Nyerere, *Ujamaa* was not a new philosophy; rather it was a way of life in Africa which was destroyed with the arrival of colonialism. The Capitalism that arrived with

¹¹⁹ Martin Guy, 14.

¹²⁰ Cranford Pratt, *The Critical Phase in Tanzania, 1945-1968*, 63.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

colonialism destroyed Africa's former 'socialist' values, and in their place introduced individualist Western capitalist tendencies. Through *Ujamaa* Nyerere meant to resurrect pre-colonial, African values. This did not for Nyerere imply that Africa should be focused on the past or aim to return there. There was no going back, history had happened; the opportunity at hand was to rebirth indigenous African values in a campaign to set a new and decidedly African course for the future. He encouraged modern African political thought, already heavily influenced by capitalist and Western worldviews, to reintegrate all that was good in indigenous African thought to these ends.

Among the indigenous African values to rebirth as part of propelling the country and continent forward, familyhood and equality are central. Thus when Nyerere talks about an attitude of seeing others as family, this is not only referring to members of one's own community but extends to all human beings. He wanted Tanzania to provide hope for all people around the world, as he noted in his speech 'A Candle on Kilimanjaro'. He gave this speech at the Legislative Assembly as a case for responsible self-government, before Tanzania (then Tanganyika) gained its independence from the British government:

I have said before elsewhere that we, the people of Tanganyika would like to light a candle and put it on top of Mount Kilimanjaro which would shine beyond our borders giving hope where there was despair, love where there was hate, and dignity where before there was only humiliation. We pray the people of Britain, and our neighbours of all races, to look upon Tanganyika and what we are trying to do, not as an embarrassment, but as a ray of hope. We cannot, unlike other countries, send rockets to the moon, but we can send rockets of love and hope to all our fellow men wherever they may be.¹²²

This quote captures the essence of *Ujamaa* very well. It is a philosophy which gives hope and seeks to promote an attitude of mind were people see each other as brothers and sisters. It seeks to promote freedom, liberty, equality, and love, as well as to become a means of bringing hope

¹²² Ibid., 89.

and relieving the despair of not only Tanzanians and Africans but people all over the world. This evidenced by the actions of Tanzania which as a young nation struggling to address its own development challenges, devoted many of its few resources to helping other African nations, including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and others to free themselves from colonial domination.¹²³ Although idyllic in theory, the practical implementation of some policies part of *Ujamaa* ran contrary to the spirit of *Ujamaa*. These, I will elaborate on further in the relevant sections below.

3.3 Equality

Equality of all people, regardless of their sex, ethnicity, or social status, is basic and central to *Ujamaa*. According to Nyerere, one could not be a socialist if they did not see all people as equal or actively work towards equality. The centrality of equality to *Ujamaa* means that all of its other principles are established to ensure that equality flourishes. As will become evident below, Nyerere's conception of equality is largely rooted in the economic. This is why his philosophy is so often labeled as neo-Marxist. For Nyerere, equality is only possible if there is social justice at an economic level. Therefore, nationalization of the major means of production, cutbacks in salaries for those earning significantly more than the majority, as well as communal ownership of land, are all meant to remove inequalities and injustice in society. From Nyerere's perspective, "The real problem—the thing which creates misery, wars and hatred among men—is the division of mankind into rich and poor."¹²⁴ Because the capitalist mode of production does not promote even distribution of wealth, it has created increasingly extreme wealth disparities in the world today. Considerable wealth, Nyerere contended, gives the rich

¹²³ Godfrey Mwakikagile, 67.

¹²⁴ Julius Nyerere, "The Development of People and the Meaning of Service," 143.

great power and influence which they often use to further exploit the poor. In the African context, much of this wealth is concentrated in the hands of those outside of Africa, primarily Western corporations and governments. Here again we see an intersection of the themes of Capitalism and imperialism with Nyerere's philosophy.

A vast disparity in income between the rich and poor (both people and nations) suggests that there is something wrong. The astonishing disparities in wealth are arguably the result of unjust systems which promote unfair reward and exploitation of the poor. Exploitation is enabled by the very economic structures we have in place, such as Capitalism which above all strives to maximize profits regardless of the impact of its activities to the majority. The result is that equality, the central tenet of *Ujamaa*, is threatened.

3.3.1 Race and Ethnicity

For Nyerere the principle of equality also extends to race and ethnicity, which he also strongly links to the economic. A review of discriminatory education policies and systems introduced into Tanzania by the British illustrates the connection between colonialism, imperialism, and race, explaining why Nyerere's conception of equality accounted for dynamics of power and privilege which were connected to the economic.

The colonialists established a tiered education system which segregated Africans.¹²⁵ There were schools for White Europeans which were of the highest quality. Schools for Asians were inferior to White schools, and schools for Africans were even worse. Segregation policies established by colonial governments have had lasting impact on the African continent. In countries where racial inequalities were widespread and not properly dealt with following independence, the effect is still very much felt today. The most well-known examples include

¹²⁵ Cranford Pratt, *The Critical Phase in Tanzania, 1945-1968*, 45.

South Africa, where Whites were privileged and as a result accumulated so much wealth and social power that even after the end of Apartheid there remains tremendous hatred and social tension throughout the country. Rwanda is yet another familiar example. Belgian officials favored the Tutsi over the Hutu. Education and economic opportunities were given to the Tutsi, which enabled them to further exploit and discriminate against the Hutus. The inequality, exploitation, and injustice that Belgian colonialists supported in Rwanda and Burundi contributed to the 1994 genocide there. Even in countries like Tanzania, where early on Nyerere abolished systems of racial segregation, you can still see wealth distributed along lines of race and ethnicity.¹²⁶ Those of lighter complexion, deemed superior by colonial authorities, received more education, which enhanced their economic status. It should not be a surprise if one day this leads to social conflict along the lines of race, as we see in other countries, both African and Western. The significance here is that the Rwandan/Burundese elites who took power from the Belgian colonialists, for example, did not address the inequalities and exploitation that were entrenched by the Belgians. In fact, they continued to perpetuate ethnic exploitation and discrimination as a way of winning support from their ethnic groups. The repercussions are well known in Africa. The Rwandan genocide and other conflicts in Africa which are most often framed as simply ethnic conflicts, are the inevitable results of inequality and exploitation in societies. In this context, the policy of equality for all in Africa is essential not only because it is morally right but it is essential for development; equality is necessary to ensure a peaceful Africa which will make the pursuit of other development goals possible.

Ultimately, because of the colonial legacy, Nyerere had to fight not only against racial and ethnic inequality in society, but also the sense of 'elitism' which in the colonial context had

¹²⁶ Issa G. Shivji, "The Silences in the NGO discourse," 26.

effects which were very similar to those of racism. Africans who were fortunate enough to receive Western education and positions in the colonial government were made to feel they were a special group, closer to the European colonizers than fellow Africans. The education provided by missionaries and Western colonial governments became a tool to undermine African culture and values. As Jean-Paul Sartre has observed:

The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of western culture; they stuffed their mouths full with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the mother country they were sent home, white-washed. These walking lies had nothing left to say to their brothers; they only echoed. From Paris, from London, from Amsterdam we would utter words ‘Parthenon! Brotherhood!’ and somewhere in Africa or Asia lips would open ‘...thenon! ...therhood!’ It was the golden age.¹²⁷

Sartre’s statement confirms that many of those who assumed power in Africa after independence, and were thus in a position to help others, were not that different from the colonialists they replaced. Although they looked African, they often thought and acted like European colonialists toward their fellow citizens. It is therefore important to note that even though Nyerere himself received an elite education both in Africa and Europe, he rejected elitism both in words and action. Not only did he live modestly during and after his presidency; he also became the first African statesman to leave his position as a president voluntarily and one of the few African statesmen who have no stains of corruption.¹²⁸ Although the way some of his policies were carried out were contrary to the spirit of *Ujamaa*, he was a selfless, loving and morally upright leader who fought with the genuine intention of developing his nation and creating a nation of equals and free citizens, which, to a great extent, he managed to achieve. The very fact that he is

¹²⁷ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 7.

¹²⁸ “Julius Nyerere | News | The Guardian,” accessed February 12, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/1999/oct/15/guardianobituaries>.

going through the process of canonization by the Catholic Church, is a testimony to his character and selfless attitude.¹²⁹ This is not to suggest that Nyerere was sinless or had no faults, but rather to show that he realized his responsibility to the poor and devoted his life to advancing their causes with great love and dedication. The promotion of equality and social justice was therefore integral to Nyerere's mission through *Ujamaa*.

3.3.2 Gender & Sexuality

Nyerere also challenged gender inequality. He acknowledged that not only did colonialism propagate gender inequality, indigenous African societies were also unjust toward women. During colonialism, women were for the most part not given opportunities for either education or jobs in the public sphere. With rare exceptions, only men were enrolled in school and given jobs in public office. Gender disparities were also characteristic of indigenous societies in Africa, and Nyerere argued that true socialism must correct gender inequality. It is worth quoting his argument on gender inequality in length:

Although we try to hide the fact, and despite the exaggeration which our critics have frequently indulged in, it is true that the women in traditional society were regarded as having a place in the community which was not only different, but was also to some extent inferior. It is impossible to deny that the women did, and still do, more than their fair share of the work in the fields and in the homes. By virtue of their sex they suffered from inequalities which had nothing to do with their contribution to the family welfare. Although it is wrong to suggest that they have always been an oppressed group, it is true that within traditional societies ill treatment and enforced subservience could be their lot. This is certainly inconsistent with our socialist conception of the equality of all human beings and the right of all to live in such security and freedom as is consistent with equal security and freedom of all others.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Simeon Mesaki and Mrisho Malipula, "Julius Nyerere's Influence and Legacy: From a Proponent of Familyhood to a Candidate for Sainthood," *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 3, no. 3 (March 2011): 93–100, 98.

¹³⁰ Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMAA*, 109.

Gender equality was therefore an integral component of the equality enshrined within *Ujamaa*. Nyerere also placed great weight on *quality* of women's participation, in addition to their quantitative representation. Current examples of African states illustrate the significance of Nyerere's orientation to gender equality. Rwanda, for instance, has an unprecedented sixty-four percent of seats in parliament held by women, better than any other country in the world.¹³¹ Similar figures and accomplishments can be seen across other African countries as well. In Tanzania, the number of girls entering primary schools as well as university either equals or exceeds that of their male counterparts. But the question that remains concerns the extent to which the focus on increasing the number of women in political and social spaces actually improves women's well-being and brings about equality between men and women.

The problem with the focus on equal representation of women and men, especially in the African context, is that it tends to overlook and obscure the actual situation. Quantity is often used as a measure of the quality. Moreover, African leaders often accept strategies 'proposed' by donor nations and organizations to achieve eligibility for new or additional funding while the quality of women's lives continue to be ignored or oversimplified. For example, Kenya is praised internationally for successfully increasing the number of women in parliament, while the ratio of girls entering both primary school and university has significantly improved as well. At the same time, every half an hour a girl is raped in Kenya.¹³² Although the increase in women's participation in social and political activities is to be applauded and must remain a goal, the primary focus should be on the *quality* of women's lives and addressing the real, fundamental

¹³¹ "Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments (%) | Data," accessed February 12, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS?locations=RW>.

¹³² Sally Armstrong, *Ascent of Women: A New Age Is Dawning for Every Mother's Daughter*, (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2014), 32.

reasons for the unceasing oppression of women. In other words, the increase in women's participation should be the result of the improved status of women and not vice versa. Again, we are talking about needing interventions that address systemic issues of oppression and injustice rather than just the symptoms, which is what Nyerere aimed for through *Ujamaa*.

Similarly, the issue of sexuality needs to be addressed. Although Nyerere did not publicly discuss equality in terms of sexual orientation, I believe that if *Ujamaa* is to be taken seriously today it must address issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community; it must aim to combat all forms of discrimination including that experienced by the LGBTQ+ community.¹³³ This said, Hubert Fichte from Frankfurter Rundschau contends that in his interview with Julius Nyerere on the question of homosexuality, Nyerere maintained that homosexuality is an alien concept in Africa and as such cannot be defended. Nyerere's alleged remarks were never published, although the author claims to have Nyerere's comments in his notes.¹³⁴ However, Nyerere, as far as I have researched, has never made such remarks publicly as other Africa leaders have. The fact that Nyerere never made such remarks publicly or refused such remarks to be made public, perhaps indicates his reluctance to exclude the LGBTQ+ community. Alternately, even if he believed in the rights of LGBTQ+, because it was quite a controversial topic at that time in Tanzania, he could have disallowed his comments from being made public. It is also possible that he simply never made the remarks Fichte claimed he did. Regardless, I believe that any democratic ideals must address the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ and strive towards equality for them.

¹³³ Adam J. Kretz, "From Kill the Gays to Kill the Gay Rights Movement: The Future of Homosexuality Legislation in Africa," 210.

¹³⁴ Chris Dunton and Mai Palmberg, "Human Rights and Homosexuality in Southern Africa" (Nordic Africa Institute, 1996), 24.

As is well known, in most African countries homosexuality is condemned and severely punished. It is therefore the duty of the all those who aspire towards the well-being of society as a whole to defend and protect LGBTQ+ rights and make sure that this group is included in, rather than excluded by, society. Most of the laws against homosexuality still found in Africa today were first put in place by colonial powers such as the British and French.¹³⁵ Moreover, hostility towards the LGBTQ+ community was formalized and entrenched with the arrival of Christianity and Islam, the two major religions in Africa. Since the majority of Africans adhere to the teachings of these two religions, and the overwhelming majority of its followers interpret homosexuality as a sin, religious leaders and authorities have to share the responsibility in reforming people's perceptions and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community. I would argue that if the government wants to build a just society, it must also reform its laws against homosexuality in addition to changing people's attitude towards the LGBTQ+.

As religious debate of homosexuality (whether its sin or not) continues, the government must realize that regardless of whether homosexuality is a sin or not, the judgement and punishment should be left to God assuming it is a sin. If the government do not punish people for withholding tithe, or for heterosexual immorality, then the government cannot and should not punish homosexuality. I am aware that even if the government refrains from punishing the LGBTQ+ community, the stigma would continue.¹³⁶ However, the step of 'legalizing'

¹³⁵ Ibid.,

¹³⁶ In 2016 the government of Tanzania suspended HIV/AIDS programs for gay people. This will have serious repercussions for HIV/AIDS positive LGBTQ+ community members who depend on government subsidized medical services. ("Tanzania Suspends U.S.-Funded AIDS Programs in a New Crackdown on Gays - The Washington Post," accessed February 12, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/tanzania-suspends-us-funded-aids-programs-in-a-new-crackdown-on-gays/2016/11/23/ec6ced6e-ab5c-11e6-8f19-21a1c65d2043_story.html?utm_term=.8f82937c57ac).

homosexuality would provide great relief as an initial move forward.¹³⁷ Therefore, as I have discussed above, ‘true’ socialism as articulated in *Ujamaa* must aim at eliminating all forms of inequality and discrimination in society including those faced by the LGBTQ+ community. As Nyerere has argued through his political life, inequality it is not only a source of conflict, but also a reason for poverty, misery, and the distortion of democracy and this is also true for the LGBTQ+ community. If *Ujamaa* is to achieve its goal of creating a prosperous society that values humanity, then equality and justice for all members of society regardless of their race, gender or sexual orientation is critical.

3.4 Democracy under *Ujamaa*

As we began to discuss in Chapter 1, Nyerere also believed that in order to build a just and prosperous society in Tanzania, democracy must be a priority. In a socialist country all people are considered equal; thus, the government must consult not just a few, but rather all citizens of majority age, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, education, or wealth. The entire citizenry must be involved so that people can collectively decide what is good for society and together work towards achieving the country’s goals. Nyerere explains this idea as follows:

Government belongs to all the people as a natural and inalienable possession; it is not the private property of a minority, however elite or wealthy or educated and whether uni-racial. Government is properly instituted among men not to secure the material or cultural advantages of the few, but to promote the rights and welfare of many. Therefore, the many must inevitably be genuinely consulted, and the just powers of government derived from them. Government by representatives in whose selection most of the governed have no part is not rule but repression.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Ash-Shura 25:165-166.

¹³⁸ Cranford Pratt, *The Critical Phase in Tanzania, 1945-1968*, 65.

What is important about democracy, he argued, is freedom and allowing each member of society to have his or her voice heard and so able to participate in governance. Nyerere summarises this point writing, “The notion that democracy requires the existence of an organized opposition to the government of the day is false. Democracy requires only freedom for such opposition, not the existence of it.”¹³⁹ According to this understanding of democracy, all people are invited to be part of a single party and are free to challenge and oppose particular policies from within.

Since Tanzania was a newly independent country, Nyerere did not see a multi-party system as appropriate for such a young nation. According to *Ujamaa*, democracy could be practised under a single party as long as active and critical participation was encouraged. In the climate of the time, Nyerere believed that multiple parties would destabilize the country and could easily be used by those who did not care about the common good. There was the potential that since the vast majority of the population were formally uneducated, they could be easily manipulated by parties seeking to gain power for power’s own sake and the corresponding advantages it afforded them. This was compounded by the fact that not only was the majority uneducated, but they were also poor, the implication of which was that their votes could easily be bought; not understanding what was at stake, and desperate to meet their immediate physical needs (food, shelter, clothing, health) people were vulnerable to bribery by parties interested in being in power.

The democracy that Nyerere attempted to advance through *Ujamaa* involved a decentralization of power. The goal here was to avoid the concentration of power in the central government that most often led to corruption and dictatorships. The central government established village governments where people met and discussed social, economic, and political

¹³⁹ Ibid., 68.

matters directly with one another and their leaders, and communicated their resolutions to the central government which would then find ways to address them. Although there was a gap between what Nyerere envisioned and what happened on the ground in practice, in a socialist Tanzania, democracy under *Ujamaa* created an environment in which people were able to participate in the process of decision-making and the implementation of those decisions.

Cranford Pratt refers to the type of democracy promoted by Nyerere as more of a ‘no party’ national movement, one that aimed to achieve a common national goal. He understood Nyerere’s position as follows:

Nyerere had come to the firm belief that democracy did not require a competitive party system. His vision of a democratic society was not that of the populist, constitutional democracy of Western democratic theory. Rather the ideal democratic society was the self-governing community of equals in which each accepts a moral responsibility for the welfare of his fellows.¹⁴⁰

Nyerere intended his promotion of a single or no-party system to safeguard the country from any instability or conflict that could otherwise result. His intention was “to exclude the influence of factions and the exploitation of ethnic, religious and similar divisive group identities.”¹⁴¹

Nyerere was keenly aware of the ethnic divisions being esacerbated by colonialists in countries such as Rwanda, Burundi and Kenya. On these grounds, Nyerere advocated for national unity in the face of tribalism. He promoted Swahili as a common and unifying language, and *Ujamaa* was a means of leveling the playing field in order to grow a society in which people were mutually responsible and accountable as a ‘familyhood’. This explains Tanzanians’ strong sense of national pride to this very day and perhaps more significantly, why Tanzania has not fallen into the same tribalism and ethnic conflicts as its neighbours.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 202.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.,

Because of the centrality of multiple parties to Western liberal democracy, all too often discussions of the validity of Nyerere's conception of democracy become focused on the number of parties rather than the *process* and *quality* of democracy aimed for. As we will consider below it is important to assess both pro's and con's of no-party democracy in the African context. Still, throughout this discussion we must keep in mind that Nyerere's vision for democracy under *Ujamaa* was more about the 'who' than the 'how'. He was committed to ensuring *all* citizens were actively engaged in decision-making and believed that this was possible within a no-party structure as well as a multi-party system. Ultimately, Nyerere was not blind to the challenges and limitations of a single-party system. He therefore urged Tanzania, once it had achieved political stability post-independence, to move towards a multi-party system.¹⁴²

A stumbling block for critics in their consideration of *Ujamaa* as a legitimate social, political and economic framework is single-partyism. Scholars and policy analysts are eager to move beyond the evaluation of *Ujamaa* as a theory and philosophy to evaluate its practical implementation and transferability. In the process of presenting *Ujamaa* as a contemporary blueprint for development in Africa, we must therefore engage with these common criticisms of it. Realists point to the no-party system in Tanzania under *Ujamaa* as a reason why it cannot be a viable alternative to Western liberalism today. Single-partyism denotes suppression, corruption and dictatorships, and indeed in Tanzania, there were detentions of those who attempted to launch opposition political parties. Many point to this as a fundamental reason why *Ujamaa* is illegitimate. However, it is important to understand the kind of opposition which was disapproved and the context of the early days of independence. First, Nyerere and his party were not opposed to different ideas regarding the best way to move the country in a *socialist* manner

¹⁴² Ibid., 17.

but rather they opposed anything seemed capitalistic.¹⁴³ Second, since most African countries were deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines, any opposition rallied along those lines was strongly opposed.¹⁴⁴ Reverend Christopher Mtikila, the founder of the Democratic Party (DP) is an example of this. Mtikila was often detained and the DP was refused registration because of his anti-Asian and anti-Muslim rhetoric. It is doubtful whether Tanzania would be the peaceful country it is today if people and parties like his were tolerated. This then raises the question of whether ‘suppression’ of hate speech under *Ujamaa* was democratic or undemocratic.

It is true then, that politicians who aimed to form opposition political parties and evoke tribal or religious support were opposed and detained. In many ways this reflected Nyerere knowledge of history and politics and capacity to detect potential barriers and obstacles to moving the country forward in the socialist spirit of *Ujamaa*. Although political opposition was restricted, most people enjoyed the stability provided by single party politics and were able to fully participate in the process of decision-making through various levels. This is why when Tanzania held a referendum to decide whether to continue with a single party or to adopt multi-party politics, overwhelming majority, voted for a single-party system.¹⁴⁵ Still, it can be argued that the viability of a legitimately democratic single-party state depends largely on the leader at the head of it.

However, we must also acknowledge the sham of multi-partyism in Africa. In the early years of independence of most African countries, European countries wanted to continue

¹⁴³ Horace Campbell, Julius Nyerere: Between State-Centered and People-Centered Pan-Africanism” in *Africa’s Liberation: The Legacy of Nyerere* ed. Chambi Chachage & Annar Cassam (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 2010), 52.

¹⁴⁴ Michael F. Lofchie, *The Political Economy of Tanzania: Decline and Recovery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 214.

¹⁴⁵ Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Nyerere and Africa: End of an Era*, 29.

exploiting Africans and ‘divide and rule’ became their modus operandi. In those days a large number of opposition movements, within multi-party systems, were sponsored by Western countries that wanted to either dispose a leader and install a ‘puppet’ or to destabilize the country which in both cases would allow for the pursuit and advancement of their capitalist interests. In all but a handful African nations, there was a military overthrow of legitimate government. Most of those coup d’états were sponsored, supported and facilitated by Western governments, who wanted to maintain their grip on Africa’s natural resources.¹⁴⁶ Examples of this include the CIA and Belgian security authorities facilitating the overthrow and murder of late Patrice Lumumba and installation of dictator Mobutu Seseseko in his place, who protected Western interests in the Congo while plundering the wealth and resources of his country, launching it into the civil war it is still experiencing today. Similarly, Western governments (Israel included here) engineered the overthrow of president Milton Obote of Uganda in his place enthroning dictator Idi Amini who was not only cruel to his own people but also eventually turned against Western powers. The point here is to contextualize the urgency of the implementation of a single-party system in Tanzania. It was not intended to oppress or deprive people freedom but rather to promote freedom in a manner that did not endanger the peace and stability of the country for the majority. Thus a criticism remains that the well-being of the majority was promoted at the expense of a small minority.

While I maintain that the main thrust of Nyerere’s conception of democracy within *Ujamaa* was the decentralization of power and active participation of the citizenry in decision-making, a grassroots form of democracy if you will, I do also believe that in an African context, the application of a no-party system made great sense at that point in time. Because the legacy of

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.,45-54.

colonialism had entrenched considerable tribal, ethnic, religious and other kinds of divisions (including and exacerbated by economic stratification), a multi-party system would have augmented existing tensions, as was the case in many other African countries and as I have highlighted above. Single-party systems in Africa can, therefore, be viewed as a means of building stability and national unity, rather than simply understood as an apparatus of dictatorship and oppression—as the Western media would otherwise have the world believe.

Mwakikagile writes:

If there is no other way members of excluded groups can be protected and qualify for office, then—short of secession—the one-party system is totally justified under those circumstances, since it is capable of accommodating members of all tribes and regions on equal footing. It is in this context that the one-party system should be viewed as a very effective weapon against tribalism in African countries. And that was especially the case when they were just new nations trying to establish themselves shortly after independence.¹⁴⁷

Mwakikagile importantly qualifies the application of a single-party system in Africa, and this is essential to its responsible implementation. Not all single-party governments in Africa were as successful as Tanzania's. In other countries, such as Kenya, the single party KANU was extremely tribal and this ultimately led to violent conflict which claimed many lives.¹⁴⁸ The main difference is that the single-party in Tanzania, TANU, and later CCM, despite its weaknesses, was diverse and inclusive. It included members of all social, religious, and ethnic groups who in turn had equal voices and influence.

Given the aforementioned considerations, one can still make a defensible case for a no-party system today, especially in those countries with deep ethnic and religious divisions.

Nigeria is such an example regarding which Godfrey Mwakikagile contends:

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 28.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 73.

Even today, when most African countries are trying to experiment with multiparty politics, a case can still be made for one-party rule. If the multiparty system is going to enable people to form political parties on an ethnic or religious basis and even form alliances to prevent members of some ethnicities or religions from winning public office, then one-party rule is justified to maintain national unity and guarantee equality for all.¹⁴⁹

I believe that in such African countries as the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Burundi, where tribalism and religious tensions are widespread, a genuine democratic single-party movement, inclusive of all groups and factions, may help bring stability and unity while channeling all the available resources towards nation building, as was the case in Tanzania following independence. The danger of a single-party system, however, is that it is heavily dependent on the goodwill of the leader. Therefore, the key to the legitimate implementation and exercise of a no-party system is the constitutional and legislative framework that underpins it. With proper checks and balances in place, a no-party system can function in a healthy and controlled way, that allows genuine democracy to flourish.

Within the Tanzanian example we can see how *Ujamaa* provided boundaries for the implementation of a single party-system. Nyerere saw big money and economic privilege as major potential threats to the functioning of a robust democratic system as he aspired for through *Ujamaa*. As such, he aimed to introduce guidelines that prevented Capitalism from hijacking democratic processes in Tanzania. To avoid having only the wealthy and/or Western capitalist-backed candidates vying for leadership, he introduced a limit on the amount of money that could be used in political campaigns.¹⁵⁰ This not only served to protect the country from only the wealthy gaining power but it also had the effect of limiting leaders from serving corporate, rather

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 23.

¹⁵⁰ Cranford Pratt, *The Critical Phase in Tanzania, 1945-1968*, 205.

than the people's, interests once elected. Moreover, restrictions on how campaigns were run helped to reduce corruption in elections, and ensured that those without money stood on equal footing with the wealthy. Again we see here how Nyerere valued equality as fundamental to *Ujamaa* and the democracy promoted within it.

Through *Ujamaa*, Nyerere also forbade government officials from engaging in private business while in office or from receiving multiple salaries.¹⁵¹ Nyerere was aware that when one was pursuing his or her personal interest while serving the interest of the country, there would come a time when personal interest would collide with national interest, and it was likely that personal interest would be prioritized over national interests. Nyerere also lowered government officials' salaries, including his own, to make a point that politics should be a public service not a self-enriching career. As a result, Nyerere became the lowest paid head of state in the entire Commonwealth.¹⁵² Nyerere forcefully reminded African politicians that leadership was an opportunity to serve. As he rhetorically asked:

Which is the politician who was sent to the people at election time and asked them to elect him so that he could provide for his future? Which area or regional commissioner or other TANU worker got his job by saying he wanted to improve his personal position and get security for his future? Whenever a person seeks political work, whether it is through election or by appointment, he says he wants the opportunity to serve the people, to guard their interest and further their aspirations. What right has such a person, once he has the appointment he sought on this basis, to use his responsibility for his own betterment?¹⁵³

Although a case can be made for better pay of government officials and politicians as a way of minimizing corruption, African leaders have continued to be corrupt in spite of the huge salaries

¹⁵¹ Julius K. Nyerere, *Ujamaa*, 79.

¹⁵² Trevor Huddleston, "The Person Nyerere," in *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*, ed. Colin Legum and Geoffrey Mmari (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1995), 2.

¹⁵³ Irene and Roland Brown, "Approach to Rural Mass Poverty," in *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*, ed. Colin Legum and Geoffrey Mmari (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1995), 14.

and benefits they receive. Alarming, most African politicians are paid more than their counterparts in European countries.¹⁵⁴

Despite its weakness, the form of democracy and political leadership promoted through *Ujamaa*, aimed towards, and to a great degree succeeded, in advancing equality and generating the quality participation of its citizens. It managed to restrict leaders from using their positions to amass wealth and exploit people. Moreover, as I have discussed in this section, *Ujamaa* contributed to the building of a sense of loyalty and unity in Tanzania which is so rare in many African countries. I believe that *Ujamaa* still has the potential to address many challenges faced by African countries. Its model for democracy can reduce corruption in Africa, promote active citizen participation, and ensure fairness in elections. Finally, I would like to make it clear that in a stable country with strong judicial institutions, multi-party democracy is ideal. However, in a deeply divided country, I would argue that it is better to practice a single-party democracy, at least transitionally as was done in Tanzania and in spite of its being less tolerant towards political opposition, than to adopt a multi-party system that may breed and exacerbate conflict as has been the case in many African countries. South Sudan is a recent example that despite its adoption of a Western multi-party democracy, as well as its being guided by Western advisors, it has deteriorated into famine and civil war.

3.5 Self-Reliance

The policy of Self-Reliance in Tanzania was the result of hard learned lessons in its relations with donor countries such as Russia and Britain. On achieving independence, Tanzania did not become wealthy and self-sufficient. It continued to require support from foreign countries, particularly its former colonial masters, Germany and Britain, in order to establish itself

¹⁵⁴ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 19.

and develop further.¹⁵⁵ However, the assistance it required was not always available and even when it was, arduous conditions were attached. As such, Nyerere's advocacy of Self-Reliance was an appeal for Tanzanians to depend on their own resources. In Pratt's words, "Self-Reliance was a call to Tanzanians to concentrate their energies and efforts upon what they can do with their own resources. Nyerere did not rule out foreign aid, far from it, but he wanted it to be regarded as supplementary to a national development effort."¹⁵⁶ Nyerere based his plans for Self-Reliance on the financial resources the country could generate internally. According to him, if the nation remained dependent on foreign aid it would not be free in the truest sense of freedom: "Gifts and loans will endanger our independence."¹⁵⁷ He asked rhetorically, "even if it were possible for us to get enough money for our needs from external sources, is this what we really want? Independence means Self-Reliance. Independence cannot be real if a nation depends upon gifts and loans from another for its development."¹⁵⁸

Today, most countries in the Global South receive directives from donor countries. Even when they are fully aware that these directives may have a negative impact, their hands are often tied. Dependence has enslaved them and undermined their sovereignty. They are no longer being accountable to their people but rather to those who fund them. Oswaldo De Rivero comments on this situation:

Today all the governments of the underdeveloped countries are still subjected to public policies designed by an anonymous international technocracy that has not been elected by their citizens. Since they have no alternative, they are careful not to submit these supranational policies, which affect the daily life of their citizens, to their parliaments; much less do they seek the approval of a popular vote. Many

¹⁵⁵ Julius K. Nyerere, *Ujamaa*, 129.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 232.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*,

newly elected governments immediately renounce the promises of their campaigns and apply instructions from the IMF and the World Bank.¹⁵⁹

As the above quote serves to caution us, we must not be naïve. It is not always possible for poor countries to reject loans and foreign aid when they have urgent and pressing needs. You cannot refuse to accept mosquito nets in order to protect the local economy when people are dying of malaria. In this sense the only realistic way to deal with the negative impact of loans and aid is for both the recipients and donors to work together. There must be a reconfiguration of the relationship of the West to Africa; but this, I believe, will only come once Africans stand up for themselves and become active agents of their own change. With a renewed sense of self and direction, Africans will be in a better position to establish their own boundaries and to communicate how the rest of the world needs to engage with them if they do want to engage at all.

As President of Tanzania in the 1980s, Nyerere faced similar challenges with increasing pressure from the World Bank and IMF. As Nyerere argued through the philosophy of *Ujamaa*, such dependence endangers any nation's freedom. When a nation is reliant on other nations and international agencies in this way, it relinquishes its power for making decisions about its own development. Throughout the Global South, donors continue to decide and dictate development plans simply because they are the ones who provide financial and technical assistance for these projects.¹⁶⁰ Yet the development plans which are formulated by donors do not always adequately address the real needs and priorities of the people. In fact, they often fail to address them at all; they fail to tackle the systemic issues that perpetuate oppression, exploitation, and poverty.

¹⁵⁹ Oswaldo De Rivero, *The Myth of Development*, 37.

¹⁶⁰ Julius K. Nyerere, *Ujamaa*, 25.

Moreover, the projects that are imposed may not be workable in an African context because they are not designed in consultation with the people, or they do not incorporate African thought and worldviews. In other cases, where people are consulted by organizations as a means of employing participatory approaches, even well-intentioned organizations are bound by the legislation of their home countries or the source of their funding. Again it is worth referencing the Canadian Revenue Agency which dictates that, at least for Canadian charities operating abroad, the organizations must maintain ‘direction and control’: “The charity must be the body that makes decisions and sets parameters on significant issues related to the activity on an ongoing basis”.¹⁶¹ There is a contradiction between the people making decisions about the programs that impact them (as is the case for participatory approaches) and the organizations facilitating those programs ultimately ‘directing and controlling’ what really happens. This is partly why, despite the amount of money pumped into developing African countries, projects often fail to bring about the desired outcomes, and can even have negative impacts. Nyerere’s call for Self-Reliance, therefore, not only calls Tanzania to depend on its own resources, but advocates for African thought to inform the formulation and implementation of its own development initiatives.

Nyerere extended the principle of Self-Reliance to the Tanzanian education system. As he argued, colonial education was not intended for African development but rather to advance colonial interests. This is why, following independence, there was a shortage of experts in key fields. Those who had been formally educated, however, continued to function as servants of the colonial enterprise even following independence, and, learning from the colonial example, these

¹⁶¹ Canada Revenue Agency Government of Canada, “Guidance CG-002, Canadian Registered Charities Carrying Out Activities Outside Canada,” June 24, 2010, <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/plcy/cgd/tsd-cnd-eng.html>.

officials tended to pursue personal gain at the expense of public service.¹⁶² Education for Self-Reliance under *Ujamaa*, therefore, aimed to instill in people a sense of service and responsibility. The education system needed to be transformed so that it would reflect and serve the needs of the nation and its people. This led Nyerere to emphasize practical education over theoretical training so as to address the country's immediate needs. During the colonial period students were separated from their communities and families, including during the holidays. *Ujamaa* required students to go back to their communities during their breaks and use the education they received to bring change and transformation by participating directly in communal projects so as to put into practice what they were learning. Older students were also required to pay for their education by working while in school; they would work on production projects such as cattle-rearing rather than relying on external aid or government funding to pay for their education.

Dependence on foreign loans has incapacitated and continues to incapacitate African countries. High interest loans with unfavourable conditions negate any potential positive impact of the additional funds. The money paid to foreign experts, money which is itself acquired through loans, accumulates substantial interest, interest which poor countries must repay at the cost of failing to address other pressing needs. As an example, Shivji has noted that "foreign experts resident in Equatorial Guinea were paid an amount three times the total government wage bill of the public sector."¹⁶³ Cahal Daly further explains this situation as follows:

The aggregate national debt owed by the under-developed world to the developed world is such that each individual owes £250 to the richer countries; and this for many is more than one full year's wage. Each year the under-developed world pays the west three times more in debt repayments than it receives from the west

¹⁶² Ibid., 47.

¹⁶³ Issa G. Shivji, "The Silences in the NGO Discourse," 34.

in aid. Africa has to spend four times as much on debt repayment as it spends on health care.¹⁶⁴

The situation created by global exploitation and injustice through high interest loans, as Daly demonstrates, is responsible for much of the poverty, suffering and instabilities in the Global South.¹⁶⁵ This situation led the former president of Tanzania, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, to remark the following at the Jubilee Debt Campaign Conference: “[I]t is scandalous that we are forced to choose between basic health and education for our people and repaying historical debt.”¹⁶⁶ One must keep the burden of such historical debt in mind when considering the criticisms levied against Nyerere and Self-Reliance.

I am not suggesting that poor countries should refuse loans and aid. Rather, poor countries should critically analyze the longer-term impact of the loans and aid offered. This is what Nyerere attempted to do and why he proposed the philosophy of Self-Reliance within *Ujamaa*. Like an individual with a high debt burden, a country must assess whether an offered loan is necessary. If the requested or offered loan is not necessary to address a pressing need, and the funds would be used for more of a ‘would be nice to have/do’, then a decision must be made about whether it is actually needed immediately or whether it can wait. It would also help African countries to require that donors buy locally so as to support the local economy and stimulate local development.

In Tanzania’s case, with few skilled personnel and a lack of technological means to increase its production, Nyerere was forced to go against his inclination for Self-Reliance and

¹⁶⁴ Cahal B. Daly, “World Poverty, Justice and Peace, *The Furrow* 49, no. 3 (1998): 131–36, 133.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*,

¹⁶⁶ Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid : Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* (New York: Farrar, 2010), 26.

continue to look to foreign aid to support the country. Tanzania's ongoing reliance on foreign aid has been held against him as a primary criticism of Self-Reliance.¹⁶⁷ However, the context must be better understood. In 1961 Tanzania had only 14 college and university graduates.¹⁶⁸ Also, oil prices exploded, natural disasters including a flood destroyed what little infrastructure the country did have, and Tanzania went to war with Uganda after Idi Amin invaded the country in 1977. All of these factors undermined Tanzanian efforts toward Self-Reliance. Already with scant resources Nyerere's government required \$500 million to protect the country from a takeover by Amin. While the Western world stood by Nyerere in principal, applauding his defence of the country from Uganda, it offered little support besides additional high-interest loans which continued to see the country mired in a cycle of debt.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, even though Tanzania continued to ask and receive foreign aid to deal with the cost of war with Amin as well as response to the natural disasters, the Tanzanian government received very little aid. In fact, by 1974 the amount of foreign aid received by Tanzania had fallen by fifty percent.¹⁷⁰ This is likely because the rest of the world was also reeling from the oil crisis and focused inward to protect themselves, their people, and economies. This point is important because often Nyerere has been severely criticized for acting against his own philosophy of Self-Reliance. First it must be understood that Tanzanian dependence on foreign aid was not as extreme as it is argued in some quarters, and secondly, Tanzanian dependence on foreign aid was not hypocritical but rather was

¹⁶⁷ Colin Legum, "The Nyerere Years: A Preliminary Balance Sheet," in *Tanzania After Nyerere*, ed. Michael Hodd (London: Biddles of Guildford Ltd., 1988), 8.

¹⁶⁸ Irene and Roland Brown, "Approach to Rural Mass Poverty," in *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*, 16.

¹⁶⁹ Knud Svendsen, "Development Strategy & Crisis Management," in *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*, 116.

¹⁷⁰ Colin Legum, "The Nyerere Years: A Preliminary Balance Sheet," 8.

necessitated by circumstances such as drought and war with Uganda which were beyond its realm of influence.

Lastly, it is important to understand that Self-Reliance did not mean isolation from the rest of the world, or even the West. Countries like Tanzania remained open to partnering with other countries *as equals*, with the freedom to take charge of their own development. Furthermore, Nyerere insisted that African countries need to come together in partnership in all matters including trade and to help each other, so as to avoid Western domination. The very formation of the Union of Africa which was promoted by both Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah was one of such effort to increase Africa's self-reliance and independence from Western countries. Nyerere argued: "Africa ... is isolated. Therefore, to develop, it will have to depend upon its own resources, basically internal resources, nationally, and Africa will have to depend upon Africa."¹⁷¹ Through internal partnership, African countries can begin to share resources and trade with one another. I believe that the African continent has enough resources that, when properly utilized, will allow Africa to heal, feed, and educate their own people. If African countries come together as a real functioning union (not just a "a trade union of tyrants"¹⁷² to use Nyerere's words), they can share technical as well as financial resources to help each other. Further, African countries should establish a common market and currency to help facilitate business within the continent. Moreover, as a unit, African countries would have a stronger voice to negotiate with the rest of the world. Unfortunately, these efforts which were initiated by Nkrumah and Nyerere are yet to produce desirable results.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, I believe that a strong

¹⁷¹ Martin Guy, *African Political Thought*, 69.

¹⁷² Godfrey Mwakikagile, 9.

¹⁷³ Martin Guy, 59.

African partnership, can address most of the continent's pressing needs such as fair trading and sharing of resources. As I have previously stated, it is not sufficient to import a Western model and add an African name. The whole structure and system must be reflective of African ways of thinking and doing. This idea of pooling of resources and working together as a collective for collective benefit was the underlying motivation for the concept of Villagization that we will discuss in the next section.

3.6 Villagization: Ujamaa Vijijini

The final tenet of Ujamaa relevant to this discussion is villagization, or *Ujamaa vijijini*. Villagization was introduced in Tanzania with three aims in mind. First, villagization was intended to bring citizens together to work communally. Nyerere believed that there would be a greater chance of increasing production if people pooled such resources as skills, finances, tools, and labour.¹⁷⁴ Second, *Ujamaa* villages were established as a way of collecting scattered rural populations in order to better facilitate access to social services. Under villagization, government could maximize the reach of social service infrastructure, including schools and health care centres. As Nyerere reasoned:

The first and absolutely essential thing to do ... if we want to be able to start using tractors for cultivation is to begin living in proper villages. So, if you ask me what our government is planning to do during the next few years, the answer is simple—the Government will be doing all it can to enable the farmers of Tanganyika to come together in village communities. Unless we do, we shall not be able to provide ourselves with the things we need to develop our land and to raise our standard of living.¹⁷⁵

By bringing people together in this way Nyerere contended that the government would be better able to provide the public with access to vital services. Villagization was also intended to help

¹⁷⁴ Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMAA*, 142.

¹⁷⁵ Donutus Komba, "Contribution to Rural Development: *Ujamaa & Villagisation*," 35.

increase agricultural production, which was then considered the ‘backbone’ of the Tanzanian economy, by creating improved access to shared resources.

The third reason for introducing villagization in Tanzania was to create venues for people to participate directly in governance and decision-making processes. In order to secure such quality democratic participation in a one-party system, Tanzania adopted a highly-decentralized system of governance where every village had its own local government. Village governments would hold general meetings on a quarterly basis, and every citizen would be able to attend and have the opportunity to present his or her own views at these meetings. These village governments also had various committees, such as education and health committees, which villagers were invited to join, and which would help local leadership determine, plan, and implement its communally agreed upon development plans. Through general meetings, people would identify their pressing needs and priorities, and envision ways to address them. The needs and priorities identified by each village would then be used by the central government as the basis for the formulation of national action plans.

In this way, villagization was intended to empower people and strengthen democratic practices in Tanzania. As A.N. Kweka observes: “One way of empowering the peasants was through planned villagisation. There would be equality of all members of the community; they would form a village government that would make decisions on issues which concerned their lives. Villagers were supposed to accept or reject ideas or suggestions from their leaders.”¹⁷⁶ Villagization sought to ensure that leaders and experts were informed and guided by the wishes

¹⁷⁶ A.N. Kweka, “One-Party Democracy & the Multi-Party State,” 72.

of the people, rather than allowing them to further selfish interests not reflective of true needs and priorities of the people, especially those living in rural areas.¹⁷⁷

Unfortunately, things did not turn out exactly the way Nyerere had hoped. There was a gap between what *Ujamaa* intended and what actually happened on the ground. Although the intention of the government was to encourage and allow villagers to form communal villages on their own, and most people moved into villages voluntarily, at a later stage of the villagization program, people were coerced and forced to move into newly formed villages by the local party activists in those areas—an approach that was certainly not consistent with the democratic mantra of Nyerere.¹⁷⁸ This bred resentment, and as a result people refused to work and sabotaged the whole programme. Not only did people resist work unless supervised, they also defied the agricultural directives which were based on research and a strategic vision for the country.¹⁷⁹ For example, Irene and Roland Brown tell us that “[i]n one case when the field force came to make the peasants plant cassava as a famine crop, the peasants reacted by planting it upside down, or pouring a whole bag of fertiliser onto two or three plants.”¹⁸⁰ Certainly in this context, although within a single-party system which we have seen critics depict as suppressive, local resistance was able to emerge and actually disrupt the central government’s plans and vision.

Noteworthy here is that the enforced resettlement was not directed by Nyerere himself nor national leaders as it is sometimes suggested. Michael Legum who actually lived and worked in Tanzania during the Nyerere era, writes the following concerning the resettlement program:

Nyerere first defined the need for a policy of villagization in 1962. Over the next twelve years the party leadership prepared the ground for a mass resettlement

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.,

¹⁷⁸ Irene & Roland Brown, “Approach to Rural Mass Poverty,” 20.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 21.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.,

programme by explaining its need and advantages. A voluntary movement to villages began in certain areas after the Arusha Declaration in 1967. By 1973, 2 million people were living in villages; this figure shot up to 9 million in 1975 and to 13 million in 1977. It was admitted that there had been ‘cases of maladministration and even mistreatment of people’; but he insisted that the vast majority of our people moved on their own with only persuasion and a little help from TANU and the administration.’¹⁸¹

Often, villagization program is described as if it was always carried through by compulsion. The truth is that only at a later stage, as Nyerere himself admitted, force was used. However, most people moved to *Ujamaa* villages voluntarily through persuasion, in other words, after having been convinced of the rationale and value. Moreover, the forced resettlement that did take place was not directed by Nyerere or central government leadership. Rather it was party activists who took it upon themselves to speed up the process. Legum explains, “the movement had acquired momentum nationally, so the party activists and administration officers in areas where peasants were still reluctant to move decided to use force in order not to be seen to be lagging behind others. Their actions were against official policy and helped to give the entire program a bad name.”¹⁸² The intention here is not to lighten the blame and responsibility of Nyerere and his leadership. As national leaders it was their responsibility to make sure that people were protected. But it is inaccurate to depict the villagization project as having been coercive and to blame Nyerere accordingly. Nevertheless this ‘blemish’ of forced resettlement contributed to the undermining and global deligitimization of the *Ujamaa* program.

Other factors, such as insufficient research and planning of communes or communal villages, as well as lack of funds and expertise, also played a significant role in undermining the

¹⁸¹ Colin Legum, “The Nyerere Years: A Preliminary Balance Sheet,” in *Tanzania After Nyerere*, ed. Michael Hodd (London: Biddles of Guildford Ltd., 1988), 8-9.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*,9.

Ujamaa policy. The government could not provide tractors, seeds, fertilizers as well as extension officers for all of the 2,500 newly formed villages. Also, the programme was carried out too fast. The government should have experimented with fewer villages which would have provided good learning opportunities for both the people and the government before extending the policy to the whole country. This would have allowed the government to perfect its policies and base them on what practically worked and did not work on the ground. Here the government of Nyerere was guilty of insufficient consultation and as such, if *Ujamaa* is to be appropriated today this mistake ought not to be repeated. Meanwhile, since villagization was imposed in some areas, people became overly dependent on government provision. This made the project expensive and unsustainable. The fact that people became extremely dependent on the government contradicted the very philosophy of *Ujamaa*, which called for Self-Reliance.¹⁸³ I would argue that the government should have only *encouraged* these citizens to form communities, and then provided them with essential services such as health care, education and affordable loans. Moreover, and not surprisingly, in those areas where villagization was forced on people without consulting them, citizens came to believe that their ideas and thoughts no longer mattered, and as such there was no point in attending village meetings. This was contrary to what Nyerere intended to achieve through *Ujamaa* villages. Another obstacle was the fact that Tanzania, especially in rural areas, was extremely patriarchal, and as such women's participation in politics was discouraged, if not outright denied; this form of exclusion undermined *Ujamaa's* central tenet of the equality of all people.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Donatus Komba, "Contribution to Rural Development: *Ujamaa* & Villagisation," 35.

¹⁸⁴ A.N. Kweka, "One-Party Democracy & the Multi-Party State," 72.

Despite its disappointing outcome, especially economically, I continue to believe that communal living and working has great potential to enrich and transform people's lives, especially those who live in extreme poverty. The very fact that through villagization the government managed to significantly improve social services in Tanzania from increased access to health care to water supply to education is a testimony to its great potential for improving the lives of Africans. During Nyerere's presidency, the literacy rate rose to 90 percent, one of the highest in Africa.¹⁸⁵ And, with the introduction of Education for Self-Reliance, the country's gross primary enrollment rate rose from 48.6% in 1974 to 98% by 1980.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, as Bonny Ibhawoh and J. I. Dibua write with respect to Villagization, "90 percent of these villages had at least one village cooperative store while over 60 per cent had relatively easy access to safe water supply, a health center or dispensary".¹⁸⁷ This was a considerable achievement in comparison to other African countries and the timeframe within which *Ujamaa* was implemented.

3.7 Conclusion

Africa needs an African-sourced model or philosophy for development to adequately address continental issues that include corruption, poverty, ethnic conflict, and dependency. My argument in previous chapters has been that the international community, and more specifically the Western world, is unable to provide the solutions required because they represent an entirely different philosophical orientation and view of the world. Moreover, as experiences of slavery,

¹⁸⁵ Bonny Ibhawoh and J. I. Dibua, "Deconstructing Ujamaa: The Legacy of Julius Nyerere in the Quest for Social and Economic Development in Africa," *African Journal of Political Science / Revue Africaine de Science Politique* 8, no. 1 (2003): 59–83, 71.

¹⁸⁶ D.N. Sifuna, "The Challenge of Increasing Access and Improving Quality: An Analysis of Universal Primary Education Interventions in Kenya and Tanzania since the 1970s," *International Review of Education*, 53 (5-6), 687-699.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*,

colonialism and imperialism reveal, the Western world is incapable of unbiasedly serving the interests of others. Capitalism remains the major influencer of how, why, when and who engages, and to what ends. It is with this as the starting point that the need for African thought to inform responses to African issues becomes clear.

I have argued that *Ujamaa* is a viable example of how African thought can inform an African solution to continental issues. A form of African ‘socialism’ which seeks to promote and foster an attitude where citizens come to view each other as ‘family’, *Ujamaa* aims to achieve development for its people in a way that does not compromise humanity. With the foundation being African indigenous thought and values, Nyerere was able to marry an African orientation to the world with external philosophies and ideas including Fabian socialism, Catholic Social Teaching and neo-Marxism.

While not without weaknesses, *Ujamaa* offers a legitimate alternative, and distinctly African approach, to Western interventions in addressing Tanzania’s and the continent’s issues. Equality, a core principle, underscores the ‘familyhood’ orientation of *Ujamaa* and emphasizes people’s mutual responsibility to each other. It endeavours to protect against the tensions that could otherwise arise along lines of difference (economic, ethnic/tribal, gender, etc.). Moreover, on the basis of this understanding of equality, all are included in the practice of democracy: participation in decision-making and implementation; guarding against the domination of one group by another. The model of democracy proposed in *Ujamaa* is a grassroots, decentralized process in which the role of the central government is to provide services based on local directives, rather than make decisions on their behalf. Based on this premise, Nyerere supported the implementation of a no-party system of democracy, at least transitionally. This democracy was to be evaluated by the level and quality of participation at the most local level, rather than

the number of political parties operating; a marked departure from liberal democracy as practiced throughout the West. As both a post-colonial philosophy and development strategy, *Ujamaa* aimed to protect the country from imperial and capitalist interests through its Africanized version of democracy as well as its economic orientation.

Self-Reliance represented the intention of Tanzania to move beyond dependence on foreign powers and donors in order to be the agent of change in its own development. To these ends, *Ujamaa* promoted an economic system that was based on African values of familyhood and was socialist in character. It was structured with the goal of depending only on its own resources in the delivery of key social services (such as health and education). While the global context of the time (SAPs, high debt burden, oil crisis, Cold War) impacted Nyerere's capacity to fully realize this goal, he did make great advances that point to the success of this policy and *Ujamaa* more broadly. For example, adult literacy rates rose from 15% during the British who had ruled the country for 43 years to 91% in two decades.¹⁸⁸ Although critics might view this dimension of *Ujamaa* as isolationist, the true intention was to decolonize the relationship Tanzania had with the world and reframe their engagement with global partners on equal footing rather than as a poor and incapable beneficiary. In this way, he was guilty of attempting to protect the interests of his people in the face of global social injustice and imperialism.

The last element of *Ujamaa* that has received the most criticism and can be identified as the primary reason for the dismissal of the legitimacy and applicability of *Ujamaa* today, is villagization. An attempt to bridge the economic policy of Self-Reliance with the government's role of service delivery villagization focused on relocating citizens into villages. In this configuration the government could more easily provide essential services on a tight budget than

¹⁸⁸ Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Nyerere and Africa: End of an Era*, 76.

it otherwise would be able to with a population spread widely across a large geography in remote locations. By bringing people together to engage in agricultural work as a larger community, the idea was also to allow for sharing of resources and yield greater production. Nyerere believed that in its current state, the development of agriculture (for self-sustenance) was essential to the country becoming reliant on itself. Whether this was a miscalculation on Nyerere's part or the implementation was poorly orchestrated, or both, does not negate the other positive elements of the *Ujamaa* philosophy. While I maintain that there is value in communal living and working, villagization seemed to be element of *Ujamaa* that least fit; it was more of a program or implementation piece than a philosophy or core value. Thus, in the contemporary context, I believe that *Ujamaa* could be reinvented without villagization as an element. In this way, *Ujamaa* would represent a strong model for African nations to approach and frame their own responses to their own issues and development visions.

4. Conclusion: Final Thoughts and The Way Forward

4.1 The Capitalist Agenda

In this thesis I have argued that the real problem facing the Global South, and African countries in particular, is the lack of their own distinct political, economic, and social thought which would enable them to address their own developmental challenges. For many years African countries have been the victims of foreign interference and exploitation, and this colonial influence has undermined sovereignty and hindered development. First, through slavery, African countries lost many of their own people and resources, setting the continent on a negative trajectory. Colonialism then arrived and was able to take advantage of an already weakened society. Although colonialism officially ended with the independence of African countries over fifty years ago, Western imperialism and neo-colonialism has continued to disrupt Africa's development.

As demonstrated in Chapter One and Two, Western countries either directly or indirectly impose policies, interventions, and laws which undermine African countries' economic and political stability and in turn compromise the capacity of governments to improve the well-being of their people. The U.S. in particular, through its military campaigns have advanced its own capitalist economic interests at the expense of other, including African, countries. These wars are not intended to promote human rights and democracy as it is often claimed, but rather to defend capitalist interests.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, through multilateral organizations such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, as well as internationally funded NGOs, Western governments disrupt, dominate, and exploit Africa and other countries in the Global South. Forced to accept neoliberal prescriptions for development, such as SAPs, social services have been damaged and quality of

¹⁸⁹ Michael Parenti, *The Face of Imperialism*, 68.

life has been compromised. In Tanzania, both the literacy rate and life expectancy dropped significantly, while both unemployment and crime skyrocketed, in the 1980s, following Nyerere's presidency.¹⁹⁰

Economically, I have discussed how the WTO has imposed trade policies such as patent laws and free market regulations. Although these policies are beneficial to Western corporations, they are harmful to developing nations and their people, especially the poor. There is a hypocrisy in how the WTO operates. Politically, I have also argued that Western governments and multilateral organizations claiming to be promoters of democracy are themselves very undemocratic. As discussed in Chapter One, voting power in UN agencies as well as the WTO is determined by countries' financial contributions. This gives rich countries disproportionate power. They have little accountability and can do what is in their own best interest, knowing that there is little the Global South can do to in response. This is further proof that the UN, IMF and its agencies effectively advance the interests of Western countries above others.¹⁹¹

4.2 The Value of African Ways of Thinking and Doing

Because Western interventions, however well-intentioned, have and continue to ultimately serve Western countries' own capitalist interests, there is a need to consider a different approach to solving Africa's problems. This is where the case for interventions and development theories based on African thought (which can then integrate positive elements of non-African ways of thinking) can be made. This, however, is no small task. African thought has not historically been validated as a legitimate or sophisticated way of conceiving the world (politics, economics, society), at least by the Western world. This is why there has been so much

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 33.

¹⁹¹ Michael Parenti, *The Face of Imperialism*, 123.

resistance. It is therefore worth reviewing where we've come from in order to highlight the significance of what *Ujamaa* has to offer.

Colonialism has had the effect of damaging Africans' sense of self-worth. On top of their physical colonization, they also experienced a psychological colonization. Through colonial education and propaganda, Africans were made to despise their own culture and came to believe that they were inferior compared to their European masters. This is relevant because in the process, African indigenous beliefs were dismissed. As Nyerere explains: "Of all the crimes of colonialism there is none worse than the attempt to make us believe that we had no indigenous culture of our own, or that what we did have was worthless—or something of which we should be ashamed, instead of a source of pride."¹⁹² What was European came to be considered as good while what was African came to be identified as evil and inferior. Issa Shivji expounds on this, explaining that "religion and education were the vehicle for producing the colonial racial and cultural complexes—white was superior, black was inferior. The white man's means of communication was language; the black man's, dialect."¹⁹³ As noted here, everything from Europe including language and culture came to be seen as superior, better. The overwriting of African languages with the languages of the colonizers, resulted in a loss of African thought. The effect of this was that African ways of knowing and living were overlooked as viable means for achieving or contributing to development on the continent.

4.4 Ujamaa: A Gift from Tanzania

Ujamaa is a prime example of one prototype for approaching development from an African orientation, which remains applicable today. A note of qualification here. The key to this

¹⁹² Donatus Komba, "Contribution to Rural Development: *Ujamaa* & Villagisation," 35.

¹⁹³ Issa G. Shivji, "The Silences in the NGO Discourse," 26.

discussion is to understand here is that *Ujamaa* is an attempt to capture the best of what African thought has to offer. Critics may argue that not all African cultural practices or values are good. This is not the question here. At issue is whether core values and orientations within African ways of relating to each other and the world can provide a framework for approaching issues that African countries are facing. I argue that indeed this is possible and that the ‘solution’ offered by *Ujamaa* also integrates a social justice orientation to development that is inherent to indigenous African ways of social organization. Ultimately then, my contention is that the values promoted by the different elements of *Ujamaa* discussed provide a viable blueprint for African countries in the formulation of their own visions, policies and strategies for development specific to their unique contexts.

Ujamaa put great emphasis on the promotion of equality and justice as a way of strengthening democratic processes in Africa. As I discussed in Chapter Two, social, economic, and political inequalities between different groups in Africa are still problems to be addressed. As Nyerere has argued, in the absence of economic equality there will be no genuine democracy in Africa. Nyerere writes: “A political democracy which exists in a society of gross economic inequalities, or of social inequality, is at best imperfect, and at worst a hollow sham.”¹⁹⁴ Not only does massive income inequality create fertile ground for exploitation, but it also hinders those who are underprivileged from participating fully and actively in governance processes. African governments therefore need to find creative ways to address and reduce massive inequalities in the society. The government could, for example, lower the salaries of its most highly paid personnel, such as politicians, and use the amount saved to increase the salaries of those who are at the bottom. Moreover, the government should give preference to those groups who have

¹⁹⁴ A.N. Kweka, “One-Party Democracy & the Multi-Party State,”72.

historically been oppressed such as women, the disabled, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. To these ends, the government should also create and enforce laws which will protect these groups from oppression, while introducing affirmative policies. Also, in order to change people's attitudes, African governments should establish stigma reduction campaigns and public education initiatives to promote inclusion of these marginalized groups.

As I have acknowledged, internal corruption poses a significant challenge to the implementation of *Ujamaa*. In many cases, this corruption has been enabled and/or orchestrated by Western powers. Some of Africa's corrupt leaders, such as Mobutu, Idi Amin, and others, were put in power by foreign countries to protect their capitalist interests and access to natural resources. As long as these leaders are in place and serving the interests of those who put them in power, they will not be accountable to those they are supposed to be leading and serving. Resisting foreign intervention in Africa is a formidable task which can only be achieved through collective effort. Western citizens and organizations have a responsibility to join hands with the people of developing countries and demand their governments refrain from mounting any more foreign invasions.

Moreover, the strict leadership rules *Ujamaa* proposes, such as lowering the salaries of politicians as well as restricting the amount that can be spent on political campaigns, can also reduce corruption and enable those who really aspire to serve the country to have a fair chance to do so. As I have demonstrated in Chapters One and Two, when money is allowed to play a significant role in politics, not only is democracy endangered but corruption also creeps in. The guiding principles of *Ujamaa*, together with other practical suggestions Nyerere offered, provide a solid starting point for reforming politics and combating corruption in Africa.

As I argued in the first two chapters, Africa's dependence on foreign aid enables Western countries to dictate their policies. It has become glaringly apparent that African dependence on foreign aid has not helped the countries progress. This is what makes the concept of Self-Reliance integral to how African countries approach development, and points to why *Ujamaa* remains so relevant today. African nations, if they truly intend to protect their freedom and autonomy, must start relying on their own resources, as Nyerere contended through the idea of Self-Reliance.

The shift that Self-Reliance made in Tanzania was in the orientation of social, political and economic systems from serving the external to serving the internal. Through Self-Reliance, Nyerere called the country to look critically at how education, industry, etc. were actually moving Tanzania in the direction it wanted to go. By reconfiguring the education system to train people according to the pressing needs of the country, Nyerere made a break with the education strategy under its former colonizers which had been designed to serve imperial interests. Everything needed to be linked back to the country's needs and priorities so that they could build internal resources and capacity which had been handicapped through colonialism. In the contemporary context this remains relevant because where aid has become the name of the game and international NGOs have become the 'experts', a void has been perpetuated in which technical expertise and capacity rests with external actors rather than nationals, undermining citizens, and in turn countries, from being agents of their own change and development.

For Nyerere, Self-Reliance was closely tied to the practice of democracy. Not only was agency integral to Nyerere's conception of democracy through *Ujamaa*, but Self-Reliance drew a line between the needs and priorities identified by the people and the policies and interventions implemented to address them. This is why Education for Self-Reliance was so successful, for

example. People saw the relevance of it and how it aimed to help them. Thus, Self-Reliance gave Tanzanians, and continues to offer Africans more widely, the agency and power to determine their own destinies. As the saying goes, ‘he who pays the piper calls the tune’; by reducing dependence on external players (whose intentions and biases we have explored in terms of furthering capitalist interests), African autonomy is increased.

Lastly, our discussion of *Ujamaa*, is not complete without addressing Villagization. As much as Villagization is broadly considered a failure, it does not mean that there are not underlying values or lessons that can be gleaned from its attempt. The communalism and collectivism that is characteristic of African indigenous ways of life, and which Nyerere attempted to capture through the Villagization policy in *Ujamaa*, must be integrated into African development strategies, both nationally and internationally. At a national level, there is a place for communal ownership of businesses, particularly in agriculture which continues to employ the majority of the population in many African countries, including Tanzania.¹⁹⁵ At an international level, as I have discussed, African countries need to be working together through some mechanism, be it the African Union re-envisioned, or another continent or regional body that promotes shared vision as well as pooling of resources and expertise. This can also happen at the level of civil society as we see in the example of the Africa Alliance of YMCAs which aims to ‘empower young people for the African Renaissance’ through its member associations across the continent.

Villagization also intended to bring democracy to the people. Through their small intimate village governments, people would have the opportunity to participate directly in

¹⁹⁵ Emmanuel Kallonga, Alan Rodgers, Fred Nelson, Yannick Ndoinyo, and Rugemeleza Nshala. "Reforming environmental governance in Tanzania: natural Resource management and the rural economy." In *Non-Commissioned Paper presented at the inaugural Tanzanian biennial development forum 24th 25th April*. 2003, 1.

decision-making processes, as well as in the formulation and execution of village development plans. In order to increase accountability and reduce corruption, I believe that Africa must strengthen its democratic processes and enable citizens to instruct, question, and direct their leaders as the villagization policy had intended. The local government system in Tanzania requires each village to have regular meetings which all villagers of majority age are to attend. In these meetings, the people are to be informed about the village income and expenditures. This practice allows citizens to track and question local government expenditures, a practice which has proved to significantly reduce corruption in Tanzania.¹⁹⁶ Citizens have the opportunity to tell their leaders what their real needs and priorities are, and the government responds by addressing the real needs of its people while also exercising true democracy. In this way, villagization empowers citizens to become the agents of their own development, as we have discussed was also the intention through Self-Reliance.

While this local government system technically still exists in Tanzania, local governments have been deprived of much of their decision-making power. In contrast to promoting vibrant local democracy, as outlined in *Ujamaa*, people have come to despise these councils, and attendance at village meetings has significantly decreased. Furthermore, most of the decisions made at the local level are either overruled or not taken into account by the central government, which also often fails to deliver on its financial obligations and promises. Very little of the amount requested from central government is received, and as such very little is done at the village level. If villagization is to fulfil its promise of increasing citizens' participation in governance, then African governments must strengthen, respect, and empower its local governments.

¹⁹⁶ Knud Svendsen, "Development Strategy & Crisis Management," in *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*, 115.

With the above in mind we need to put *Ujamaa*'s success and disappointments into context. *Ujamaa* did not achieve as much as Nyerere had hoped for a number of reasons. First, *Ujamaa* was not given enough time to mature and become established; it was an experiment that lasted for less than thirty years, a very short time in the development of an entire country. Moreover, at this time Tanzania was emerging from colonial enslavement, and so it had very limited resources with which to successfully implement *Ujamaa*'s policies. The fact that the term socialism was attached to *Ujamaa* meant that Tanzania received opposition from Western countries who feared the country would fall into communist hands. As such, foreign interference in Tanzania and other African countries intensified, which restricted its ability and freedom to pursue its own policies. Other factors such as Tanzania's war with Uganda, natural disasters such as flooding, as well as the oil crisis depleted its resources. The result was that Tanzania had to continue to depend on foreign aid.

Ultimately however, through *Ujamaa* Tanzania was able to reduce corruption, improve the provision of social services and build national unity and peace to a greater degree than any other African nation at the time. It is worth quoting at what Ibhawoh and Dibua had to say concerning *Ujamaa*'s achievements:

Although *Ujamaa* can be described as a kind of state corporatism, the party-state system sought to mediate interests in such a way as to achieve the creation of a self-reliant socialist nation without the reliance on an elite vanguard group. While in certain instances state officials used coercive means to ensure the implementation of *Ujamaa* policies especially the villagization program, only the most sanguine Nyerere bashers would argue that he was a dictator. Indeed, Nyerere sought to institutionalize a relatively participatory political and social process from the early days of independence and throughout the transition to multi-partyism. In this regard, the villagization scheme, in spite of some of the abuses associated with its implementation process, was a harbinger of social welfare development. The *Ujamaa* villages were seen as the most important units for the provision of social resources to the majority of the people. Under the policy of education for Self-Reliance, these villages became very important centers for the promotion of literacy among both adults and children. By the early

1980s, even in the face of economic difficulties, Tanzania had one of the highest literacy rates in Africa with every village boasting of at least a primary school. 90 percent of these villages had at least one village cooperative store while over 60 per cent had relatively easy access to safe water supply, a health center or dispensary. Thus, villagization provided a bridge in the gulf between urban and rural dwellers by ensuring the latter's access to basic social amenities. In spite of the wide agreement on the failure of Nyerere's economic policies, several writers have identified Tanzania's most notable national achievement as its ability to create a strong sense of national identity among Tanzanians and in the advances made in terms of social welfare. Few sub-Saharan African countries have achieved the level of national unification that Tanzania did under the leadership of Nyerere.¹⁹⁷

As the passage above demonstrate, despite *Ujamaa*'s lack of success in certain areas particularly in the economy, *Ujamaa* had great achievement in other spheres which cannot be appreciated in economic terms. The stability that Tanzania enjoys is a rare product in Africa. Moreover, during Nyerere not only people's participation was significantly increased but also inequalities were greatly reduced.¹⁹⁸ Further, social services as I have argued, were highly improved making Tanzanian one of the most literate countries in Africa. Thus, while Tanzania suffered economically during Nyerere's term as president, we should ask ourselves whether it is really fair to assess *Ujamaa* as a success or failure on purely that basis. Nyerere did, after all, find himself at the leadership of a country which for centuries had been economically exploited by external powers. That he was able to achieve what he did in a relatively short period of time should be seen as remarkable. Certainly in today's world, much smaller political achievements are heralded as successes for Western presidents, when the starting point is not even as close to as dismal as it was when Nyerere took office.

Ultimately, *Ujamaa* is not a one-size-fits-all philosophy. In this study, I have used *Ujamaa* as model of an African attempt to devise its own social, economic, and political

¹⁹⁷ Bonny Ibhawoh and J. I. Dibua, 71.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.,

ideology to guides its development. Different African countries should adopt only those aspects of *Ujamaa* which suit their needs, and in turn supplement it with their own thought.

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