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## BOOK REVIEW

*Building Ujamaa Villages in Tanzania; University of Dar es Salaam Studies in Political Science No. 2.* (Tanzania Publishing House, 1971).

Edited by J. H. Proctor.

by

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This small book represents some of the first fruits of the system of long vacation research and dissertations for third year students which has been developed in the University of Dar es Salaam. Ujamaa villages have been a popular subject for research, and six of the dissertations resulting were selected and edited to produce this volume. The students concerned visited ujamaa villages, interviewed settlers, observed the conduct of affairs in the villages, and studied official records. The result is six honest and readable accounts of ujamaa villages and their problems in six districts of Tanzania — Bukoba, Geita, Lushoto, Moshi, Tanga and Ukerewe. Since most of the research was apparently carried out in 1968, it concerns only the early stages of the implementation of *ujamaa vijijini*. Nevertheless, the material and insights of these essays make a most useful contribution to the literature of organization for rural development.

There is some difference of focus between the contributors. I. K. S. Musoke describes the process of establishment of an ujamaa village — Rugazi in Bukoba; B. B. Bakula is concerned with traditional practices and their relation to the new settlement at Omurunazi, again in Bukoba; E. N. Ntirukigwa concentrates mainly on land tenure as an obstacle to ujamaa in Geita; A. W. M. Daraja discusses administrative problems of implementation; R. K. Mashauri, in his study of Gallu village in Ukerewe, is most interested in leadership and village relationships with the bureaucracy; and finally, C. R. Mboya, discussing the feasibility of ujamaa villages in Kilimanjaro, reveals some of the main dilemmas of the programme. But for all this diversity of focus, these six pieces have a great deal in common. They all expound the formidable difficulties of implementing the policy of *ujamaa vijijini*, and document this well and convincingly; they all, however, appear to accept the policy as desirable and do not question it; and to varying degrees they balance awkwardly between compulsion and consent in their prescriptions about how it should be pursued.

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The programme of *ujamaa vijijini*, at least in these early stages of implementation, has evidently repeated many of the mistakes and encountered many of the obstacles which now, after the long experience of colonial and post-colonial settlement schemes in tropical Africa, are all too familiar. In these early ujamaa villages, the settlement or grouping of people was carried out with haste and sometimes without proper surveys, so that the sites chosen were often infertile. Recruitment was sometimes by force, or with varying degrees of compulsion: thus Musoke, '...it seems clear to me that actually command and not persuasion was the predominant means used'; and Daraja, 'There were times when unemployed youths were driven from urban centres and sent to the rural areas where they were expected to form ujamaa villages'. Not surprisingly the calibre of settlers was variable: thus Musoke again, 'Considerable difficulties were caused by the fact that most people who had been recruited to Rugazi were those that were not desired by the people in the villages from whence they came. Most of them had very long criminal records...' and Mboya records that the first settlers in an ujamaa village near Moshi were 'jobless and loiterers', some of them 'hooligans or thieves'. Absenteeism and complete withdrawal from settlements were consequently common. In addition, there were cases of administrative difficulties over food supplies. When the settlers at Rugazi no longer received official food supplies, they sought food at first in exchange for work on neighbouring farms, and later through intimidation. Other familiar problems arose from poor communications, lack of water, socio-political differences between the groups settled, and conflicts between settlers and Party and Government officials.

It is arguable, and the authors generally take this line, that these difficulties are superable. It is also true, as Daraja points out, that the early stages of any programme are full of difficulties and one should not rush into premature judgement. Remedial measures can be taken: infertile land can be avoided through proper soil surveys before settlement; recruitment can be made voluntary, as indeed it has been for many ujamaa villages; those settled need not be hooligans or criminals but can be law-abiding and industrious citizens; food supplies can be ensured for as long as they are necessary; communications and water can be provided, and socio-economic problems can be moderated. But the questions remain, even if these measures are taken and are effective, in what sense *ujamaa vijijini* is a sensible development policy, and what its long-term effects are likely to be. These questions are not confronted by the authors, and this failure, understandable though it is, is the major weakness of this book. The authors do, however, present evidence which convinces this reviewer that the major investment in communal production intended through the programmes is unlikely to be successful in achieving its objectives in any normal social or economic sense.

The assumption runs through the book that ujamaa is preferable to what is pejoratively described as 'individualism'. The advantages of ujamaa are

implied as first, economic, second, avoidance of the exploitation of man by man, and third, a general preferability of communal and cooperative work outside the nuclear family to cooperative work within the nuclear family. In the first place, nowhere in this book are the economic advantages substantiated in detail. Ntirukigwa writes that 'the villages would become an important centre for the modernisation of agriculture where there can be provided technical advice, machinery and processing facilities, and other innovations such as cottage industries' (i.e., carpentry, pottery, masonry and weaving); and Daraja that 'the new settlements could benefit from sustained encouragement, specialist advice and modest equipment' and Mboya states that there could be economies of scale in colonizing the lower slopes of Kilimanjaro. But in the absence of more specific analysis, including administrative feasibility, and in view of the poor economic record of communal production schemes elsewhere, these statements are not in themselves convincing.

The second implied advantage of ujamaa is the avoidance of exploitation of man by man. In the case of Geita District, Ntirukigwa shows how within the present system immigrants are exploited by those who own the land, and how difficult it is for immigrants to obtain land of their own. He explains how by-laws intended to make acquisition of land easier, in fact encourage corruption and discriminate against the very poor. For these disadvantaged people, life in a communal ujamaa village might indeed be an improvement. But against this must be set the weak assumption that in an ujamaa village there would be equality and no exploitation. A communal village has its own internal stratification, and Musoke noted, for instance, that the chairman and secretary in Rugazi had already each more than the standard one-acre individual plot. Moreover, if the rewards from communal production are distributed equally, and if, as is to be expected, some are more energetic than others, this amounts to exploitation of the energetic by the lazy. Institutional arrangements to overcome this are possible but difficult. Moreover there is liable to be a loss of work through the disincentive to the energetic to work hard. A further form of hidden exploitation may occur through the concentration of investment and services on that minority of people who live in ujamaa villages to the neglect of those who do not.

The third and most puzzling justification of ujamaa is the value set on cooperation outside the nuclear family. It is ironical that ujamaa should be applied to community-wide cooperative work, while cooperation within the nuclear family is branded as individualism. The vocabulary used biases the reader's perceptions, and a constant effort is needed to recollect that the contrast is not between individualism and collectivism, but between what for lack of a better phrase can be called nuclear familism and collectivism. A good deal of evidence is presented that many of those who were trying to persuade others to form ujamaa villages were themselves farming 'individualistically', and that

the prime motivation of most of those who joined villages was economic: Bakula found that 50 per cent of those interviewed in Omurunazi were motivated to join the scheme basically by a desire for economic improvement, and Mboya states that those who went from Kilimanjaro to settle at Mwese were motivated by a belief that the market for tobacco, which they would grow there, would be better than that for coffee, grown in their area of origin. What we are concerned with here is the relationships between the nature of man, the nuclear family, and economic development. In a significant passage, Musoke writes :

The crops grown on the private plots are not placed in a common pool, but are used by each individual farmer as he sees fit. It is my fear that if the settlers are allowed to produce in this way, man being what he is, the notion of possessive individualism that our socialist policies are trying to curb is likely to be encouraged. If this practice is not looked into in its infancy, it may grow and hence become more difficult to eradicate.

There is strong evidence, not only from Africa, of an association between on the one hand, economic development and on the other, a decline of cooperation between families and strengthening of the nuclear family as a unit. Perhaps the policy of ujamaa is kicking against the pricks, 'man being what he is'. As Mboya says of the people of Kilimanjaro :

Their immediate concern is more food, better shelter, better clothes, and more medical facilities rather than ideological gymnastics. Development is what they are aiming at; it always appeals to them when you talk more of fertilizers and less of ideologies.

The bad fit between the ideological motivation of the programme and the economic and nuclear familist motivation of the people raises the central dilemma of means of implementation. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the programme is paternalist, trying to get people to do something they would not do 'naturally'. At the same time, it is official policy that ujamaa must be voluntary and its management democratic. Some of the authors flirt with the idea of use of force; and the last somewhat sinister sentence in the book is 'Whether persuasion will ultimately be adequate remains to be seen.' Generally, however, the authors take the view that mass education, revolutionary motivation, and ideological instruction must be improved and intensified. In practice, this reviewer is very sceptical of this working. The choice is almost certainly between force, which Tanzania cannot muster, and which, if attempted on any scale would probably lead to a change of government, and inducement through the generous provision of services and facilities. The most likely course for the ujamaa movement is that the concentration of resources on villages will indeed encourage some village settlement, at least for a time, but that rational peasant motivation will maintain a system of family farms except in a few rare cases where there is outstanding leadership, or marked economies of scale in the agricultural technology or both.

Whether or not this prognosis is correct, the evidence provided in this book suggests that there is a strong case for further research, including economic research, into the ujamaa movement. In this connexion, it would be best if ujamaa could be regarded officially as the significant socio-economic experiment it is, subject to continuous evaluation and modification, rather than as a rigid and irreversible national commitment. For it is important, not just for Tanzania, that lessons be drawn from the experience, and this could best be done through further studies. It is to be hoped that the Department of Political Science and other departments at the University of Dar es Salaam will be able to follow up this admirable little book with further research and publication. It would certainly seem to be in Tanzania's best interests that this should happen.