

## REVOLUTIONIZING MASS SUBJECTIVITY: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE UJAMAA MOVEMENT

**Xinyi Wang**

Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, China

### **Abstract:**

Ujamaa, rooted in the essence of traditional African communal life, emphasizes collective living, collaboration, and mutual support in the face of life's challenges and perils. The Ujamaa movement predominantly entailed the establishment of Ujamaa villages in rural areas, accompanied by urban nationalization and reform initiatives. A defining characteristic of Ujamaa villages lies in the villagers' exercise of equal rights and self-determination in all matters concerning their lives and self-governance of the village.

Research on the Ujamaa movement has yielded abundant results both domestically and internationally. These studies encompass various dimensions, spanning politics, economics, culture, and diplomacy. Notable works include Yan Runpeng's "Research on African Village Socialism" and Zhang Shizhi's "Ujamaa Movement in Tanzania," which delve into the theory and practice of the Ujamaa movement. Other studies explore its influence, such as Li Anshan's "A Study on the Theory and Practice of the Nation Construction of African States - and the Role of the Ujamaa Movement in the Nation Construction of Tanzania," and Wang Lei's "Nyerere and the Study of the Nation Construction of Tanzania." It is evident that existing research on the Ujamaa movement predominantly concentrates on its theoretical framework, practical applications, and overall impact, whereas the role of mass subjectivity within the movement has thus far remained superficially addressed, often confined to slogans.

**Keywords:** Ujamaa Movement, African Communal Life, Self-Determination, Mass Subjectivity, Communal Governance

### **Presentation of problem**

Ujamaa is distilled from the basic form of traditional African family life, that is, people living together, working together, and being able to cooperate in the face of the difficulties and dangers of life. Ujamaa's movement, in general, was the establishment of Ujamaa villages in the countryside, while nationalization and reform were carried out in the towns. The main feature of Ujamaa village is that the villagers enjoy the right of equality and self-determination in all matters related to their own lives and manage the affairs of the village themselves.

About the Ujamaa movement, there have been very fruitful research results at home and abroad. In terms of content, there are studies on the theory and practice of the Ujamaa movement, involving various aspects such as politics, economy, culture and diplomacy, such as Yan Runpeng's "Research on African Village Socialism" and Zhang Shizhi's "Ujamaa Movement in Tanzania". There are also studies on the influence of

the Ujamaa Movement, such as Li Anshan's "A Study on the Theory and Practice of the Nation Construction of African States - and the Role of the Ujamaa Movement in the Nation Construction of Tanzania", Wang Lei's "Nyerere and the Study of the Nation Construction of Tanzania" and so on. It can be seen that studies on the Ujamaa movement mainly focus on theory, practice and influence, while the role of mass subjectivity in the Ujamaa movement is only at the slogan-based level. In fact, most of them use administrative means to exert the role of the masses, and they do not really rely on the power of the masses, nor do they specifically write how to exert the role of the masses. Therefore, in order to better understand the role of mass subjectivity in the Ujamaa movement, we will study it from the perspective of historical materialism.

### **1. The construction of mass subjectivity in the Ujamaa movement**

If the people want to live a better life, they can ultimately only rely on the people themselves, and they can exert their subjectivity by satisfying their needs and providing institutional guarantees. The subjective role of the people is played by need as a driving force. The German Ideology states that the premise of human existence is "that in order to be able to make history, men must be able to live." But in order to live, you first need food, clothing, shelter and other things. The first historical activity is therefore the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself." [1] In order to meet the needs of people to eat, drink, live, travel, etc., people have to produce the materials needed to meet the needs of survival through labor. Therefore, the need of survival urges people to carry out productive labor, and the continuous development of labor promotes the development of productive forces, so it can be seen that the need of survival is the driving force for the development of productive forces. Only after meeting people's survival needs, on this basis will cause new needs, which is a process of development from low to high, including not only to meet the physiological needs, but also a certain social needs and self-value realization needs. It is in the need of continuous development from low to high driven, people's production technology means are also constantly improving, so as to promote the leap in the development of productivity. Therefore, human needs are the driving force for the development of all social productive forces, under which the needs and fundamental interests of the people must be taken as the starting point for development and construction. Paying attention to the needs and fundamental interests of the people can mobilize the enthusiasm and creativity of the main body of the people. It can be concluded that the masses of the people are the subjects of the productive forces, but only when the masses of the people become the subjects of fair and reasonable interests can they truly become the creators of history and the subjects of the productive forces. [2]

The people are the makers of history. "Populism is the essential attribute of Marxism." [3] Marxism is broad and profound, and in the final analysis, it is a sentence to seek liberation for mankind. The Communist Manifesto declared: "All movements in the past were movements of the minority or for the interests of the minority." The movement of the proletariat is an independent movement of the great majority, for the benefit of the great majority." [4] Upholding the supremacy of the people is a concentrated embodiment of Marxist historical materialism and the nature and purpose of the Communist Party of China. Practice has proved that sticking to the people-centered approach is the key to the success of our Party. We believe that

we have always taken the people's position as the Party's fundamental political position. We not only have a deep understanding of the people's principal role in theory, but also give full play to the people's principal role through institutional and institutional development in practice, and implement the Party's mass line into all activities of governing the country.

[5]

### ***2.1 The construction of mass subjectivity in Ujamaa movement***

Building and implementing true democracy. Nyerere advocated for a democratic government: dialogue, equality and freedom. In traditional African societies, tribal affairs are handled by discussion, and they are handled freely and equally. In a village in Africa, a hundred men sat down to discuss where to dig a well until they agreed. <sup>[6]</sup> Everyone has the right to freedom of speech, and everyone can say whatever they want. Every Tanzanian, every member of every community, every representative of a local council, every member of parliament, has the right to freedom of expression, to discuss freely before making decisions. People must establish Ujamaa villages when they voluntarily join and truly understand that only in this way can they live with dignity, freedom, and maximum benefit and development. At the same time, the government and the Tanzanian League provide guidance and assistance to the people, such as improving education and developing leadership skills. These are things for the Tanzanistan and the government to improve and provide. Whether to participate in the construction of Ujamaa village is a personal decision. But once the decision is made, then the democratic rules apply to every villager. For example, 15 people sit together and discuss whether to grow crops together, or whether to grow only cash crops while individuals grow food crops. If they can, they will come to an agreement after discussion. If it was time to start work and no agreement could be reached, they decided by majority rule. <sup>[7]</sup> In fact, if the village of Ujamaa is built, it must be maintained through democracy. Only in this way can people provide an example of free discussion and decision making on an equal footing; It also ensures that discipline is required of all members in implementing decisions made collectively. The government and Tanzanian leaders should also help Ujamar and its residents to make people understand the different ways of organizing. For example, helping a group that wants to start construction determine whether they've got a good enough plot of land. Help explain the benefits of working on collective farms and how problems are overcome in collective labor.

The Tanzanian government is working hard to prevent exploitation, through minimum wage regulations, through taxation, through many other means, the government will stop the serious exploitation faced by the workers, the people of Tanzania. At the same time, the government is relying on the workers, the Tanganyika National Federation of Workers, to safeguard workers' rights. The principal means of production and exchange shall be in the hands of the peasants and workers, so that all the principal means of production and exchange in the country shall be in the hands of the peasants and workers through government agencies and cooperatives, and the ruling party shall be the party of the peasants and workers. In Tanzania, the main means of production and exchange include: land, forests, minerals, water, oil and electricity; News media, communications; Banking, insurance, import and export trade, wholesale

business; The iron and steel, machine tools, weapons, automobiles, fertilizer, and textile industries, as well as the great factories on which all appreciable people depend for their livelihood, or the great factories, the great plantations, which supply important parts for other industries, especially those which supply essential raw materials for important industries. Some of these means of production and exchange are already in the hands of the People's Government of Tanzania.

Tanzania had a one-party system, and Nyerere rejected the two-party system, arguing that it could not be a true democracy. From Britain and the United States and other countries, he deeply realized the shortcomings and hypocrisy of the two-party system, and the one-party system can better represent the people. The people are the only justification for any people's party, and the people's service is and should be its only goal. The purpose of the work of the Tamil League is to serve all the people living in this country. Within the party, by combining democracy with discipline, members must both embrace the party's leadership and ensure that it serves the people wholeheartedly. In addition, it will establish and maintain two-way communication between the people and senior party leaders. Only if there is such two-way communication will Kyoku lead the people or respond to the people it serves. It requires the enthusiasm of party operatives; There needs to be an active recognition of the need for political parties to win the trust and support of the people; We need to listen to and learn from the people, which means summarizing experience and forming policies on this basis. It means explaining these policies to the people and following their advice again. A party must be well organized so that its members can be rooted in the masses, and there is no future for such a party if it cannot share the hardships of the poor and carry education into the university classroom. Only through and dependent on the work of the people can a Democratic Party make progress towards its goals. When it comes to decision-making and policy implementation, political parties can achieve nothing without enthusiastic party workers forming strong organizations through party mechanisms.

### **3. The gains and losses of mass subjectivity in the Ujamaa Movement from the perspective of historical materialism**

#### ***3.1 Improving infrastructure and providing policy inclinations that highlight the subjectivity of the masses***

The Ujamaa movement in Tanzania aims to improve people's living standards, eliminate exploitation and achieve equality for all. The improvement of living standards will not happen automatically, and Tanzania will make the best use of available resources in all aspects of policy and practice, including education, agriculture, industry and public facilities, to achieve this goal. Thanks to mandatory school attendance, Tanzania has a literacy rate of 90 per cent or more. In 1961, Tanganyika had 490,000 primary school students, most of whom only attended the fourth grade. In 1967, Tanganyika had 825,000 primary school students, who gradually completed seven years of primary school. In 1961, there were only 11,832 middle school students, and only 176 of them reached the sixth grade. In 1971, the number of secondary school students reached 25,000, of whom 830 attended the sixth grade of secondary school. Analysis of census data shows that from 1957 to 1967, life expectancy also increased from 37 or 38 years to 41 years. The

infant mortality rate has been reduced from 2000-250 per cent to 160-165 per cent. The maternal mortality rate has also dropped considerably. Tanzania has trained more agricultural officials, responsible for both agriculture and livestock. In 1961 there were three agricultural training institutions, and by 1971 there were four additional training institutions for agricultural assistants, 17 training centres for farmers (members of the village of Ujamaa attended special courses), the university Department of Agriculture and several special training centres in farm management, agricultural machinery, land planning and so on. These courses focus on agricultural economics, and it is hoped that by training people, Ujamaa commune members will be able to better mix crops and plan farming. By 1981, 40 per cent of the country's villages had clean running water, 35 per cent had health centres and 74 per cent had shops. The per capita income was \$269, and free health care and compulsory education were provided.

### **3.2 Productivity and relations of production**

In the practice of the Ujamaa Movement, beginning in 1967, the Ujamaa Movement was implemented in three phases. In the first step, the government mobilized the peasants to move to a centralized village and cultivate their own crops around the village. The second step is to establish small-scale public farming areas in which everyone works together and harvests together. Finally, communal farms were established and collectivized, namely the village of Ujamaa. The newly built Ujamaa village, the village site is selected on the side of the main road, convenient transportation, flat terrain, unified planning, unified construction, clean drinking water, a post office, a village activity center, and unified agricultural machinery. The cadres came to inspect again, drove directly into the village, inspected many villages in a day, and returned to the city on the same day. More than 100 such villages were built in the first year, and they looked very good. But the problem soon emerged: the law of productivity had not been followed to build Ujamaa village. Although the transportation and inspection are very convenient, but farming is too inconvenient, there is no land next to the new village, farming has to go back to the old village, the new village in the morning, and so on to the land when it is almost dark. Some farmers had to secretly live back in the old village, but the cadres knew that they would not allow it. Nyerere personally inspected several model Ujama villages, was very satisfied, and felt that the pace of construction was too slow, so the next year stepped up the pace and built thousands of Ujama villages across the country. Because of the rush to build Ujamaa, many villages were never built at all, just a plot of land was enclosed and then ignored. But the original village was actually demolished, and overnight, many farmers became homeless. This practice destroys agricultural production and violates the law of production.

The traditional Tanzanian people do not do farming, the superior climate conditions, so that people on this land can enjoy food without work. Nature and tradition have formed the free and undisciplined life habits and character of Tanzanians, who are not used to constraints. Therefore, after the Ujama movement, everyone worked together, played together, and centralized management and distribution of property led to people's laziness and irresponsibility, resulting in land wastage and chaotic management. Coupled with the government's forced relocation to the village of Ujamaa, it failed to motivate the masses to participate. In 1982, Nyerere, recognizing the problems and mistakes of the large-scale Ujamaa movement, stopped the



practice and implemented a villagization campaign, restoring private production to the peasants, while in the cities and towns, reducing and reforming state enterprises and encouraging private capital development. These measures have significantly regulated the development of productive forces and productive relations, reviving and promoting the development of the Tanzanian economy.

### **3.3 The role of mass subjectivity under the leadership of the government**

The leaders and the government cannot force people to join Ujamaa Village, but by explaining, encouraging and guiding them. If the leaders of the government or party say to the peasants, "You will do this." Farmers would be suspicious of them. He would rather hear them say, "This is good for several reasons." My friends and I are doing it." The Government can assist the socialist communes by encouraging and providing various forms of assistance to those who have established them. The task of the government and the Tanzanian should be to encourage and, if necessary, assist, not to govern these communities. Village communities must be created and managed by the people themselves. Tanzanian farmers would be willing to adopt this form of organization only if they saw firsthand the benefits of working and living together. In particular, before giving up individual control over land, they will want to see that this cooperative approach actually benefits everyone. The fact that farmers were forced to move to locations that the Government and the LTM considered suitable for carrying out the Ujamaa movement, in the process of using coercive administrative orders, especially after 1973, the government and the LTM began to build Ujamaa villages on a large scale without respecting and listening to the opinions of the farmers, which was essentially a government-led order. The role of the government as encouragement and guidance envisaged in the early stage is far from that, in this case, the subjectivity of the masses cannot be brought into play, let alone talk about the equality of everyone and the improvement of the quality of life said by the Ujamaa movement.

### **4. Summary**

The subjective role of the masses is very important in the Ujamaa movement. In the early days of Ujamaa movement, due to the prudent principle, farmers voluntarily chose whether to join Ujamaa village, and the economic development at that time was in a good stage. During the aggressive Ujamaa movement, farmers were forced and appointed to join Ujamaa village, but the expected economic growth was not achieved, and even the economy of the whole country was on the verge of collapse. In the adjustment phase of the Ujamaa movement, farmers were no longer forced to join the Ujamaa village, and the previous individual small-scale farming production was restored, and the economy gradually recovered. Throughout the Ujamaa movement, it can be found that respecting the will of the masses, dealing with the relationship between productivity and production relations, and reducing administrative intervention can give full play to the subjective role of the masses, and the subjective role of the masses can in turn promote the Ujamaa movement.

### **References**

*Jun-Xia L .The Role of Student Societies in the Cultural Communication of University Libraries under the Concept of Inter-subjectivity Education[J]. Library Tribune, 2017.*

*Hongqing Wang. On Giving Full Play to the Main Role of the Masses [J]. Journal of Social Science, Jiamusi University, 2002, (03):5-7.*

*Zequan Li. Promoting theoretical innovation must adhere to the people first [N]. People's Daily, 2022-12-29(09).*

*Jingliang Huang. Research on the inner relationship between the Manifesto of the Communist Party and the original Mission of Chinese Communists [J]. Jiangxi University of Science and Technology, 2023, (02):25.*

*Shuangshuang Zhou. The internal logic between subjectivity and poverty alleviation: A Study based on the poor Masses. [J]. Journal of Shanghai Economic Management Cadre Institute, 2021, (01):24-28.*

*Lei Wang. Nyerere and Modern State Governance in Tanzania [J]. 12th Annual Conference of Shanghai Federation of Social Sciences, 2014(09):602-615.*

*Shaolin Sun. Nyerere's Theory and Practice of National Socialism [J]. Problems of Contemporary World Socialism, 1989, (03):69-72.*