

Priya Lal. *African Socialism in Tanzania: Between the Village and the World*.

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 281 pp. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. \$99.99. Cloth. \$34.99. Paper. ISBN: 97811071104525.

In *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World*, Priya Lal sets out to answer the question “what was *ujamaa*?” She shows the various ways in which Tanzanians—from Julius Nyerere to cashew farmers—experienced, understood, and imagined *ujamaa* (Tanzania’s version of socialism) and also how *ujamaa* was intertwined with and shaped by local conditions and global events. Her analysis—moving from global to local perspective—makes a valuable contribution to the literature on postcolonial Africa.

Lal focuses first on *ujamaa* in the context of the wider Cold War world, pan-Africanism, and the ideas of African socialism in the decade of nation-building in East Africa. From there, she looks at gender and family as they related to the nation: men were militarized to defend borders, whereas women were seen as guardians of family life and well-being. Lal then explores the influence of uneven development at the regional level, looking specifically at villagization in Mtwara District, and ends by highlighting individuals’ memories of resettlement under the villagization schemes. She draws on an impressive range of sources, including Nyerere’s speeches, national newspapers, national and regional archives, and oral histories.

Lal then looks at *ujamaa*’s place in a wider spatial and chronological framework, including Tanzania’s colonial past and twenty-first-century present. She finds not an incoherent theory or practice, as some scholars have argued, but rather one that displays “creativity, pragmatism, and the imprint of the colonial past as well as a larger Cold War political culture” (232). In placing *ujamaa* in a longer history of global events, rather than just in the context of immediate postindependence East Africa, she demonstrates how its founding principles developed and changed over time, and how *ujamaa* still exists in many ways today. Lal examines each of the pillars of *ujamaa*: self-reliance, security, and family. While other scholars have pointed out the contradictions between the theory and practice of *ujamaa*, she argues that there were contradictions internal to both theory and practice. “Self-reliance,” for example, became a way for the state to reject responsibility for individuals and villages, claiming that Tanzanians had to figure out how to provide for themselves without the help of the state (even while Nyerere, interestingly, was embracing foreign aid). In addition, while *ujamaa* was in theory an all-embracing philosophy, the government’s nation-building plan was exclusionary in practice, leaving out, for example, migrants, refugees, and pastoralists—and even urban women who wore miniskirts. At a time when the Tanzanian state stressed the importance of family—both the nuclear family and the figurative/symbolic family of the Tanzanian nation—these exclusions are particularly revealing of the worries and weaknesses of the new state.

What becomes clear in the book's last chapter is that ujamaa was, in many ways, just one part of people's lives that were already characterized by fairly constant change. Whether they moved to the villages voluntarily or were forced to move in the later years of ujamaa, Tanzanians were flexible and adapted to their new situation. The final chapter, containing mostly interviews with elders, shows that ujamaa was not just "a destructive power grab by an invasive state" (177). Instead, "given such widespread disappointment with contemporary affairs, nostalgia pervades many older villagers' assessments of the ujamaa-era government, especially among those who saw ujamaa as linked to a benevolent state and a feeling of membership in a meaningful national community" (220). That is not to say that ujamaa was always thought of well, and Lal makes it clear that that was not the case. However, she argues that in remembering ujamaa today, people think of it nostalgically through contemporary lenses shaped by their present situation and post-ujamaa experiences of economic hardships.

Lal directly addresses many of the book's possible limitations. Old age and memory loss made oral sources potentially less than accurate, and patching together a coherent narrative of memories about ujamaa and villagization is quite difficult. Additionally, some of the people Lal interviewed did not understand what she meant by ujamaa. That the TANU archives are not accessible to researchers presented another difficulty, though the book does not suggest that any essential sources are missing. The contradictions and complexities Lal finds enhance, rather than detract from, her argument that ujamaa transcended many of the boundaries often inherent in nation-building and development discourse. *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania* is an engaging account of ujamaa, from its small-scale village ramifications to its global Cold War connections.

Lauren Maly
 University of Wisconsin
 Madison, Wisconsin
 lmaly@wisc.edu

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POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND GLOBALIZATION

Emma Hunter. *Political Thought and the Public Sphere in Tanzania: Freedom, Democracy and Citizenship in the Era of Decolonization*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. xv + 259 pp. Acknowledgments. Map of Tanzania. List of abbreviations. References. Index. \$95.00. Cloth. ISBN: 9781107088177.

This thoughtful book explores how Tanzanians engaged with the many languages of progress, democracy, freedom, and citizenship circulating in the mid-twentieth-century world. Rather than telling this story from the outside in, by following the importation and adoption of foreign concepts on African soil, Emma Hunter grounds her inquiry in the historical realities