

Abstract

Laila Nielsen, *Unfree to Develop - A Comparative Study of Kuria and Ukerewe under Colonial Rule, Tanzania 1850-1961*. (Dissertation from the History Department, Göteborg University, 32, 2003).

The general theme of the thesis is to discuss the historical causes to the development problems that Tanzania faces today. In pursuance of this theme, the investigation is conducted in the form of a comparative study between the Kuria and Ukerewe societies located in the eastern Lake Victoria area.

The period of investigation is ca. 1850-1961, but the primary research concentrates on the era of British colonial rule, i.e. 1919-61. To delimit the general theme to the purpose of the study one may ask: How did British colonial rule influence development within the Kuria and Ukerewe societies? The intent is to expound the real effects of colonial policies on these societies based on the real choices at their disposal, thereby avoiding oversimplification of the complex process of development. The source materials that constitute the primary source of information for the research consist of different colonial files of various types such as reports, correspondences, minutes and research. On the other hand, for the precolonial and German colonial period, the study utilises earlier research.

Amartya Sen's approach to Development as Freedom is adopted as an analytic tool of the study in order to systematise and to make the complex historical process of development more manageable. The approach represents five types of capabilities, viz. instrumental freedoms, to enhance the kinds of life people have reason to value. Each representing certain aspects of human development, these freedoms serve as explanatory units to make the complex process of cause and effect more visible in the two societies in the study. At the same, the study constitutes a contribution to the general picture of the impact that colonial rule had on Tanzania.

The study shows that, on a general and fundamental level, the legacy of colonialism appears in today's development problems as a historical lack of substantial freedoms among the majority of Tanzania's people. It appears from this study how these shortcomings under colonial rule negatively impacted on people's daily lives in the Kuria and Ukerewe societies. The historical and local perspectives stand out as a desirable method to elucidate and evaluate the real effects of national and international policies.

Key words: British colonial rule, Tanzania, Kuria, Ukerewe, development, development problems, comparative study, instrumental freedoms.

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