

Ujiji the Commercial Hub, 1831-1890

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ABSTRACT

This paper discuss the history of Ujiji town prior to the coming of the foreigners like the Arabs and the Europeans focusing on the forces that led its development to the extent of being the Commercial Hub during the 19th century. The main objective in this paper is to show the main factors that contributed to the development of Ujiji from 1831-1890 such that it was regarded the Commercial Hub. This paper applied the theory of historical materialism which centers on the material production as the main forces for the development of human society. The World system Theory was also used to inform the historical background that happened within the capitalist economy which then integrated Ujiji into capitalist economy. Qualitative approach was used where data both primary and secondary were collected through documentary review like books, journals, thesis, dissertations as well as archival sources from Tanzania National Archives (TNA). The main argument in this paper is that the development of Ujiji to the extent of being the Commercial Hub was not only caused by the external forced but also the internal forced within Ujiji itself.

Keywords: Ujiji the Commercial Hub, Waha, Muteko, Mwami, Merchants, Ivory, Slaves

BACKGROUND

The history of the growth of towns and cities in Africa and Tanzania in particular is sometimes linked with the foreign agents particularly Asians and Europeans who came and colonized Africa. Even if the contributions of the colonialists towards the growth of African towns and cities cannot be completely ignored, it is true that there were towns which developed before the advent of colonialism.^[1] Generally, the history of urbanization in pre-colonial Africa and Tanzania in particular can be divided into two respective periods. The first period started when urban centres developed in Africa as a result of early contact up to 17th century which resulted into the growth of coastal towns like Bagamoyo, Pangani, Kilwa, Lamu, Malindi, and Mombasa. These towns emerged and grew before the colonial domination mainly due to the development of early contacts between the coast and the Asian and European continents and the Middle East. They functioned as commercial centres during the contact between Africans and Arabs in East Africa.^[2] The second period started during the 19th century after penetration of the Long Distance Trade into the interior parts which witnessed the growth of towns such as Tabora, Mpwapwa and Mwanza as a consequence of involvement in the trade between African societies and the external world through Arab middlemen.^[3]

Ujiji town was one among the pre-colonial trading centres during the mid-nineteenth century which emerged and became popular especially after the penetration of the Arabs and the Swahili traders from the coast following the development of the Long-Distance Trade. During this period Ujiji functioned as the trading terminal in the east and central caravan trade where traders used to rest before journeying to other parties like Congo and eastern Zambia in search of ivory and slaves. At first, these commodities (slaves and ivory) were obtained by the Arabs and the Indians directly from the coast hinterland such that there was no need of organizing expansive commercial expeditions into the interior at that time.^[4]

Hence, during the first decade of the 19th century the situation changed as the Arabs, and Swahili traders as well as the Indian merchants started to venture into the interior following the huge increase in the

international demand for ivory and slaves.^[5] Ivory from East Africa was in great demand in Europe and America to produce luxury goods like combs, billiard balls while in India it was needed to produce the jewellery.^[6] Slaves were also a great need in Zanzibar and Pemba to work in the clove plantations especially when Sultan Sayyed Said shifted his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1840. Other slaves were needed to work in the sugarcane plantations of the Mascarene Islands.^[7] Therefore, these needs cemented the traders from the coast to venture into the interior in search of those commodities. Therefore, it was from this particular juncture that Ujiji was integrated into this caravan trade and became a trading hub. John Iliffe states:

By 1811 coastal traders had opened a more southerly route along the Ruaha valley, reaching Ukimbu on the plateau by about 1825. There, they met Nyamwezi ivory caravans and persuaded some Nyamwezi to become porters. With their aid, coastal traders entered Unyamwezi. By 1831 they reached Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika. From Unyamwezi, routes were opened to Katanga and Buganda which were probably reached by 1852.^[8]

Apart from commercial activities which integrated Ujiji into the capitalist economy, Ujiji has been a very famous historical town due to the presence of historical heritage dated from the mid-19th century such as Arabic culture following the settlement of the Arab immigrant in Ujiji. This is marked by Arabic architecture and some imported cultural materials as well as Arab dressing styles.^[9] Having settled in Ujiji, the Arabs engaged in slave trade and ivory. This is exhibited by the presence of a slave market which is located at a place currently known as a Kitongoni ward in the Ujiji zone which justifies this phenomenon as Beverly Brown points out that the town became a major slaving centre and by 1858, it was labelled the great slave-mart of these regions^[10]

A history of European explorers such as David Livingstone and Henry Morton Stanley in Ujiji is revealed due to the presence of Dr. Livingstone Memorial Monument which dates back to 1858 when Richard Burton and John Speke reached the shore of Lake Tanganyika in their expedition to look for the source of river Nile.^[11] Moreover, missionary activities also played a part in Ujiji. Roman Catholic, for instance, was introduced by the White Fathers missionaries who reached Ujiji in January 1879 and extended their station as far as Ufipa Plateau.^[12] In fact, throughout the nineteenth century Ujiji remained the pivot and battling commercial ground until when it collapsed after the suppression of slave trade in 1870s and has remained a native fishing village in the ruins of the old Arab port.^[13]

1.1 The people of Ujiji

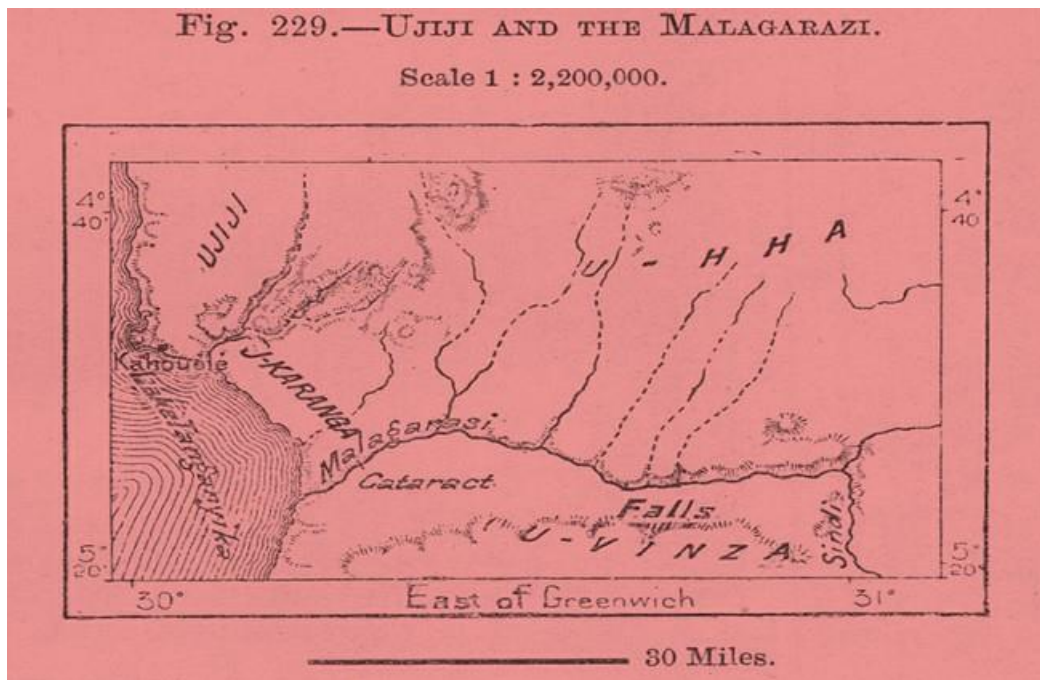
As far as African continent is concerned, the pre-colonial period is one of the longest periods in African History starting from 3000 years ago.^[14] With regard to this study, the discussion is centered from 1831 up to 1890. This is partly because the period starting from 1831 was the period when Ujiji was integrated with the foreigners like the Arabs, the Indians, and the Swahili traders as well as the Europeans following the development of the long distance trade of the 19th century. During this pre-colonial era, the Ha (Waha) were the indigenous of Ujiji. Apart from the Ha (Waha), other natives from many tribes such as Wagua, Wamanyema, Wagoma, Wavira, Wasige, Warundi, Wajiji, Wavinza, Wasowa, Wakawendi, Wangwana (free men) and Arabs also inhabited in Ujiji^[15]

2.0 The Geographical location of Ujiji

Geographically Ujiji town is located on the north eastern shores of Lake Tanganyika between 90⁰s and 90⁰E in Western Tanzania. It is bordered to the West and South by Lake Tanganyika, to the North by Urundi and to the East by Uhha and the river Ruiche. It occupies a gap in the mountain barrier of the lake as well as a part of the elevated country itself.^[16]

The geographical location of Ujiji of 1885 is shown in the following map below:

Figure 1: A sketch map of Ujiji, 1885



Source: Antiquemapsandprint.com

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of Ujiji

The history of the pre-colonial towns in Africa and East Africa at large has been dealt with in the writings of various authors. All these authors used various theories like Central Place Theory, Long Distance Model, Merchant Capital Theory and Technology Transfer models to explain the development of pre-colonial towns. However, these studies have not put much consideration on the internal dynamism of African societies in the emergence and development of pre-colonial towns. Therefore, this part reviewed the existing literatures showing how their authors have not addressed the internal dynamism of indigenous societies in the emergence and development of the pre-colonial towns with reference to Ujiji town. Starting with Norman Robert Bennett, he states that the development and growth of Ujiji as a commercial and a much busier centre is directly linked to the coming in of the Arabs. To prove this, Norman Bennett states:

Though Ujiji was becoming a much busier centre, it continued to be of more importance as a stop on the road than on an actual centre of trade. It was used by all the Arabs working in the lake area and by those passing to the Congo. Here one could find the goods necessary for the progress of a caravan. This was the reasons for the existence of Ujiji and for its continued success. [17]

Therefore, as it has been explained in the quotation above, Norman Robert Bennett insists that it was the Arabs who facilitated the flow of goods which necessitated the progress of the caravan leading to the rise of the town as the oasis of the Arabs in an African sea. Bennett continues to insist that despite the fact that the Arabs facilitated the flow of trade in Ujiji, they benefited the people of Ujiji much more. For instance, he insists that many Africans in Ujiji depended upon the Arabs for livelihood as they served the People of Ujiji against their enemies. [18] In line with Norman R. Bennett, Pius Luvumwa in his study of palm oil in

Kigoma supports that Ujiji was the main centre of the Arabs who conducted trade with Tabora and Unyanyembe. He adds that MwinyiHeri who was the chairperson of Ujiji (1872-1885) married a daughter of chief Rusimbi of Nkalinzi and became the governor of Ujiji on behalf.^[19] In this view, Luvumwa informs how important the involvements of the Arabs were in making Ujiji the terminal of commercial activities having been financed by the Asians. In Zanzibar, the most important capitalist individual was TariaTopan who financed Tippu Tip, Rumlalza as well as the entrepreneurs who penetrated West Tanganyika in 1860s.^[20]

In all these studies, the growth and expansion of Ujiji to the extent of becoming the commercial hub is directly linked with the penetration of the coastal traders like Arabs and Swahili merchants. To support the ideas provided by Norman Bennett and Pius Luvumwa on Ujiji as the centre of commercial activities in the 19th century, Beverly Brown introduces another idea that slavery was an old institution in the lake areas. However, he agrees that there is scant evidence of any long distance slave trade that took place there prior to the coastal merchants, something which provides a room for another study on that particular area. He insists that as the expansion of Muslim community increased in Ujiji, the town emerged as the major slaving centre where by in 1858 it was labelled as the great slave-market of these regions whereby the Arabs who had resided in Ujiji by 1879 were estimated to own one hundred slaves who used to work as household labourers, porters, crewmen as well as field hands.^[21] Geert Castryck in his essay in honour of Adam Jones argues that the history of Ujiji cannot be written without including the Indian Ocean Coast and East Central Africa. His justification on this argument stands on the fact that the first traders to come and settle in Lake Tanganyika region came from Pangani to Ujiji around 1845.^[22] According to this author, these Arabs were MwinyiAkida Bin Tayari, Mwinyi Hassan and MwinyiHeri who formed a kind of triumvirate in Ujiji for forty years.^[23] This author insists that the settlement of these Arab traders played a major role in establishing commercial activities and they became the pivotal political brokers in Ujiji.^[24] Andrew Coulson in his book titled “Tanzania a Political Economy” provides an understanding on the motives behind the establishment of a permanent staging settlements inland. He states that the desire of the Arabs to collect ivory made them to establish settlements in Tabora in 1845 where another staging settlement was established in Ujiji in the 1860s close to the present day Kigoma along the shores of Lake Tanganyika.^[25]

To put this argument more clearly, Andrew Coulson continues to state that until 1850, the Nyamwezi had a great control of ivory trade than Arabs and Swahili traders due to the fact that up to 1860 elephants were still available in Tabora. But, up to 1870, the Nyamwezi were no longer caravan as ivory started to diminish.^[26] Therefore, they had to go as far as Karagwe, or Uganda or across lake Tanganyika in the Congo basin.^[27] Therefore, according to Andrew Coulson, it was for this purpose that an Arab settlement was established around 1860 at Ujiji, near Kigoma on the shore of Lake Tanganyika making Ujiji to become the hub of commercial activities. Geert Castryck on the other hand provides an understanding on the concept of the spread of global capitalism as he relates it with the rise of Ujiji as the hub of commercial activities. He states:

In the process of spreading global capitalism, the vanguard of ivory and slave trade dispatched from the Indian Ocean coast swept over Ujiji and at the same time used the town as a pivot in the caravan system. Hence, Ujiji was both affected by the moving frontier of Swahili or African-Arab proto-colonialism and by a rely function that reminds us of the internal African frontier which we identified as a zone of interaction.^[28]

Therefore, as it has been explained in the quotation above, Castryck informs that the need of commodities like ivory and even slaves that integrated Ujiji and the traders from the coast was cemented by the spread of global capitalism. MandiluliOsmundKapinga in his study conducted in Umatengo concurs with the idea developed by Castryck. In his view, he states that the coming of the merchant capital into the scene led to the acceleration of commodity production and exchange which opened up the existence of caravan routes in which town centres such as KilwaKivinje (1830), Dar es Salaam (1867), Tabora (1830) and Ujiji (1830)

developed.^[29]

P.M.C Clarke in his book titled “A Short History of Tanganyika” depicts that the presence of the Arabs in Ujiji what made Ujiji the hub of commercial activities. He continues to hold that even the people from the Congo side of the lake followed the Arab route to Ujiji.^[30] Therefore, the internal dynamism of indigenous societies in the emergence and development of the pre-colonial towns have not been put into consideration. Kelvin Shillington in Encyclopaedia of African History depicts the establishment of trading posts at Unyanyembe in northern central Tanzania as well as Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika in the 1840s was the result of the Oman-Swahili merchants’ activities and from that period those towns started to function as trading terminals drawing the region into long-distance commerce.^[31] This opened rooms for some famous traders like Tippu Tip to start penetrating beyond the lake, who carved out a vast trading-raiding empire in the forests of the eastern Congo basin.^[32]

The study conducted by Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore put forward the argument portrayed by Kelvin Shillington by stating that by the 1830s, the Arabs had penetrated in some parts of lake Tanganyika whereby in 1844, they visited the court of Buganda.^[33] They continue to put forward that in the interior, the influence of Arabs traders were much more hence, the saying: “the pipe in Zanzibar, the people dance in on the shores of the great lakes.” They insist that Arabs established settlements in Tabora in the Nyamwezi country as well as Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tanganyika; the towns that later became not only commercial hub but also grew and became military and political control centres over the surrounding countryside.^[34] Similarly, apart from supporting the argument portrayed by Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore, Isaria Kimambo provides an understanding on why the Arabs found it necessary to establish centres which was to simplify the collection of slaves and ivory; the commodities which were greatly needed in America for making luxury goods like combs and billiard balls and in India for making jewellery. He continues to explain that the caravan started from Bagamoyo or Sadani and passed across the country through Zaramo, Kami, Luguru and Gogoto the Nyamwezi country and then to Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tanganyika while other caravans went into Zaire and northwards to Karagwe and Buganda. A southward route went to Lake Nyasa region to join the ones connected with Kilwa.^[35]

Just like Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore, Kimambo justifies that Arab established settlements at Unyanyembe, near present-day Tabora in the Nyamwezi country and at Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tanganyika.^[36] Therefore, from this explanation, Kimambo like other scholars insist that the rise and development of Ujiji town as the trading hub was due to the settlement of the Arabs at that place.

Edward Coode Hore in his book titled “Tanganyika: Eleven Years in Central Africa” provides knowledge in this study. For instance, he states that for over half a century, Ujiji had been the terminal depot for those oriental colonists, travellers and merchants (Arabs) who for a long time have exploited the ivory of this region.^[37] Hence, from this statement, Edward Coode Hore informs that Ujiji was not only the terminal for Arab merchants but also colonists and other travellers like Dr. David Livingstone who found himself in this town in 1871. This indicates that in Ujiji, there was something special apart from the Arabs’ commercial activities that made this town to become the trading hub. To widen the knowledge about Ujiji as a trading hub, the information obtained from the Tanganyika secretariat files indicate that up to 1845 Ujiji was an Arab station during their tour which was actually intended to smuggle slaves from the Congo and other northern countries. Nevertheless, the town slowly became known to the foreigners as the centre of slave trade instead of a halting station as it was formally intended by the Arabs.^[38] Hence, from this narration, Ujiji is depicted as a station of the Arabs while going to Congo and other northern countries though it is not clearly stated “why Ujiji” something which is important in this study.

Chris Peers in his writings from the book titled “Armies of the 19th century: Africa” continues to put forward that since Ujiji was just like a crossroad, the town was fairly well populated due to the fact that it was frequently traversed by the Arabs even before Burton and Speke became the first white men to see Lake

Tanganyika in 1858. From the point of view of the explorers, Ujiji was often little more than a country to be crossed on the way to Buganda or the Congo until when the Germans claimed it for their new empire in the 1880s.^[39] Therefore, throughout all these literatures, little has been stated regarding the internal dynamism of the people of Ujiji in the rise and popularity of Ujiji as one of the pre-colonial towns and commercial hub in Tanzania.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Ujiji ecological advantages

The vital ecological advantages contributed greatly in the development of Ujiji. This was because the frontage on one of the Lake Tanganyika's richest fishing zones as well as a fertile countryside together with an open geographical physique attracted immigrants something which led to the town's expansion throughout the nineteenth century.^[40] The Arab merchants, for example, their decision to settle at Ujiji and turn it into their major trading port among other things was to use the water of Lake Tanganyika as a means of transport for hunting slaves and ivory beyond Ujiji. Thus, their settlement at Ujiji along the shores of Lake Tanganyika assured them to extend to other potential parts like Victoria Nyanza, Uganda, the Congo, and even little-known Urundi. At Uvira in Congo, for instance, the area had had many elephants to be hunted for ivory. In 1858 this area was portrayed as the great northern depot for slaves, ivory, grain, backcloth and ironware. From all these areas, an Arab slave trader namely Said bin Habib brought to Ujiji a large number of boatloads of slaves.^[41] These commodities were then exchanged with other commodities like cotton cloths, beads, and brass wire from the coastal traders.^[42] Above all, in the pre-colonial period, in Ujiji, the land was very fertile with enough rainfall because of being bordered by Lake Tanganyika and River Ruiche something which cemented specialization among Wajiji. With the presence of arable and fertile land, Wajiji produced a variety of crops like palm oil and other foodstuffs while others specialized in making canoes, hoes, fishing, and ivory searching.^[43] The presence of all these economic potentialities caused other neighbouring societies like Wagoma and Wabwari from Congo to move to Ujiji where they became fishers and farmers^[44] something which encouraged the rise of entrepreneurial as well as commercial desire among Wajiji and turned the town of Ujiji into the terminal on the lake frontier on one hand while attracting the foreigners like the Arabs, Swahili traders, and European explorers on the other hand.^[45]

The availability of trade items in Ujiji

In pre-colonial Ujiji, there was plenty of trading items which was facilitated by its fertile land. Moreover, both the fishing grounds and the markets were also favourable to support exchange between zones around the lake which used to provide different kinds of coveted goods such as palm oil, hoes, canoes, foodstuffs, ivory and slaves.^[46] The availability of salt obtained from Uvinza also cemented Ujiji popularity due to the fact that Ujiji was at the closest meeting point for Uvinza salt as well as goods from all around the lake.^[47] Apart from Uvinza, the salt used in Ujiji was also manufactured once a year, especially on the bank of Ruguvu River to the East of Ujiji.^[48] During the 19th-century, salt was one of the major trade items in the market of Ujiji which were bartered with other commodities. Thus, the availability of these trading items encouraged the entrepreneurship among the people of Ujiji which turned Ujiji into a pivot on the Lake Frontier and attractive destinations for Arab-Swahili traders as well as European explorers throughout the 19th century.^[49] David Sperling stated that:

The reasons for establishing settlement or trading centres were varied; for example, It might have been to secure a strategic or convenient location, or because the availability of trade items or provisions, or the political influence of a particular chief or leader.^[50]

Penetration of the Arabs and Swahili traders

The mid-nineteenth century witnessed great changes in the trading history of the interior of East Africa. These changes were stimulated by two great forces: The first course was the establishment of an Arab colonial state of Zanzibar with a plantation economy based on the slave labour from the interior by Sultan Sayyid Said who in 1840 shifted his capital from Oman to Zanzibar. The second course was the high demand for Ivory cemented by the rapid expansion of the luxury industries in the capitalist countries and India.^[51] For instance, two hundred and eighteen tons of Ivory was exported from Zanzibar and this was just a record of one year.^[52] These two forces led to the increased demand for slaves and ivory from the interior of East Africa. To acquire enough slaves and Ivory, the Arabs and Swahili traders penetrated farther into the interior. By 1845, at least the whole part of Ujiji had become under the control of the Arab merchants and a trading post under MwinyiHeri.^[53] Other Arabs who lived in Ujiji were Mwinyi Hassan and MwinyiAkida who lived in Ujiji in the 1840s and became popular in politics and trade in Ujiji for four decades. Having occupied Ujiji, the Arabs even if they were few managed to control trade in slaves and ivory and they became the rulers of the area of Ujiji whereas all the inhabitants of Ujiji became either their slaves or paid loyalty to them.^[54] For the Arabs to effectively control the trade in ivory and slave in Ujiji, they put under their control all parts of Ujiji as well as all surrounding tribes on both sides of the lake.^[55] Since the Arab merchants were satisfied with the valuable commodities found in Ujiji and that Ujiji seemed to be like a cross-road due to its geographical location, they made it their trading hub where they had to rest, store their hunted commodities and plan for the next step. This is supported by Norman Robert Bennett as he keeps on holding that Ujiji continued to be more important as a stop on the road than an actual centre of trade and was used by the Arabs and those passing to the Congo.^[56]

The European missionaries in Ujiji

The influence of missionaries like any other foreigners in making Ujiji the hub of commercial activities cannot be underestimated. After a long and very complicated voyage in different parts of Africa, the missionaries arrived in Ujiji on January 24, 1879.^[57] From Ujiji, stations were built up along the Lake and extended as far as Ufipa Plateau.^[58] After the arrival of the Church Missionary Societies (CMS) in Ujiji in 1879, they found that the White Fathers had already established themselves in the area. The missionaries, despite hiding themselves under the umbrella of evangelization, were colonial agents in nature who came from different parts of Africa purposely to soften African hearts towards the acceptance of colonialism. For them to fulfil their mission, they built schools along the caravan routes in Ujiji to train local inhabitants the religious doctrine and some other elementary teaching skills. These schools built by the missionaries in Ujiji have been dismantled, although their foundations can still be seen in Ujiji as shown below:^[59]

Figure 2: Foundations remains of the former White Fathers' classroom at Mbano Primary school in Ujiji



Source: Research field on 25th October 2021 at 10.38, AM

How did the missionaries contribute to the establishment of Ujiji as a trading terminal? It should be remembered that in the period from 1831 to 1890, the whole parts of Ujiji were still under the control of the Arabs at their trading post. Nonetheless, the changes in a capitalist world economy were a threat on the part of the Arabs. This was because during this period, the scramble for Africa had started and ended up with the division of the African continent into colonies to be controlled by their respective countries.[60] Following this capitalist division of the African continent, Congo was given to Belgians while Tanganyika was given to the Germans. This division was a threat to Arab supremacy simply because they thought that the Europeans whom the White Fathers represented as their forerunners would take their commercial position. Above all, during this period England being the first European nation to campaign on the abolition of the slave trade had managed to suppress slavery in Zanzibar which also affected the slave trade which was taking place along Lake Tanganyika. Hence, the Arabs having been affected, had to defend strongly their territory in Ujiji by inviting other Arabs who came with Waungwana from the coast and founded many more trading posts and settlements on both sides of the Lake which then emerged and continued to be a trading hub[61]

The roles of the Nyamwezi

The major transformation in the capitalist economy that happened in the second half of the nineteenth century increased the demand for ivory in the international market as well as the increased demand for slave labour in Zanzibar. All parts of the interior of Tanzania were integrated into this commercial world of the western Indian Ocean especially when the Arabs and the Swahili merchants started to conduct an expedition into these areas. Thus, following this commercial expedition, there were three main trade routes. According to Karin Pallaver, the first route started from the South and went as far as Kilwa with the second in the North which reached the coastal belt of Kenya while the third started in the centre going from Bagamoyo on the coast to Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tanganyika.[62]

The Nyamwezi who lived in Tabora occupied these opportunities as they controlled the central caravan route and became very prominent throughout the 19th century. The reason as to why the Nyamwezi were active participants when long-distance trade started was that they had gained experience in the interregional trade, which included Lake Tanganyika on the west, Lake Victoria on the north as well as the southern regions among the Ufipa and Ruemba. During this period, some major commodities used in this Nyamwezi interregional trade were copper, salt, and iron. These commodities were hunted by the Nyamwezi traders beyond their respective area as far as western Tanzania; the place where throughout the nineteenth century had valuable commodities like salt, grain, livestock, ironwork and pottery.[63] The Nyamwezi traders for example, obtained salt from Ujiji and Uvinza. During this period, Uvinza emerged as a great participant in the regional trade because of its salt which was of high quality to the extent of being sold over a vast area like from Lake Tanganyika and from the eastern Congo to Ruaha valley.[64] The Nyamwezi also traded in copper which during the nineteenth century became a very important item of trade not only during the interregional trade but also during the operation of the long-distance trade. The Nyamwezi used to go to Katanga via Ujiji to search for copper.

Therefore, by 1850s, copper from Katanga used to be carried up Lake Tanganyika to Ujiji where the Ha and Sumbwa among whom were the smiths used copper to make commodities like ornaments and bracelets that were sold throughout the interior.[65] Therefore, the movement of the Nyamwezi traders through the central route which they had founded to some parts like Katanga coming with copper and other commodities to Ujiji also contributed to the emergence of Ujiji as a trading hub.[66] The Nyamwezi dominated the long-distance trade until when their prominence crumbled in the 1870s following the heavy internal duties imposed on them along the coast and Zanzibar which aimed at favouring the Arab merchants.[67] During this period, the availability of ivory was diminishing due to the big hunting of elephants in the interior, something which led to the diversion of hunting elephants in the basin of Upper Congo.[68] Thus,

Nyamwezi lacked enough resources to run such long expeditions of searching for ivory like the coastal traders and hence their fame crumbled.[\[69\]](#)

The Introduction of Currency in the Market of Ujiji

The pre-colonial Wajiji reached the stage of using their currency, something which led to the development of trade exchanges. On the other hand, it should be noted that the kind of currency used was not like the one used nowadays. The use of commodity currencies in Africa was very widespread during the pre-colonial period provided that it was accepted in the societies to be used as money for a trade transaction. In most parts of the interior like Tabora and Ujiji, cloth, guns and piasters were used to purchase slaves and ivory whereas beads were used in small transactions like the buying of food. In the market of Ujiji for instance, the use of currency was noted being used as stated by James B. Wolf:

The market of Ujiji town consists of general, of an assemblage of from 200 to 300 small booths or stalls, exposing for sale almost everything that the Lake countries produce as well as meat, vegetable, fruit and grain. Here, for the first time, we find a regular currency or money in use by the natives. It consists of strings of blue and white cylindrical beads, each string containing twenty beads.[\[70\]](#)

Even though the use of currency in the market of Ujiji simplified the trade transactions and caused Ujiji to emerge as the trading hub due to many operated transactions, it also led to the coming in of other people called money changers. These people took this opportunity to exchange cloth for beads.[\[71\]](#) All these activities which took place in the market of Ujiji increased the popularity of Ujiji such that the Arabs and Swahili traders made the town their trading hub throughout the nineteenth century.

Canoe making in Ujiji

The presence of canoe-making skills among the people of Ujiji was among the factors which attracted the foreigners to Ujiji. Since Ujiji is located on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, the use of canoes for transport as well as fishing activities was very important.[\[72\]](#) For instance, MwinyiKheri who was the most prominent Rima trader and governor of the coastal trader community at Ujiji in 1875-1885 owned nine sailing canoes in 1876.[\[73\]](#) The largest of all sailing canoes at this time was owned by Abdullah bin Suleiman who was the leader of the Omani faction of traders based in Kasimbo.[\[74\]](#) These canoes were also used by the newcomers who came to Ujiji and other Great Lakes regions but were not familiar with the environment and the lake. They depended very much on the native canoes crossing the lake. Hence, indigenous knowledge was very important for crossing the lake and interacting with the natives. There existed three types of canoes: the Warundi had their canoes made from trees in their vicinity, the Wajiji had their canoes which they called dugouts made from trees. These canoes were not used for fishing only rather they were sometimes hired by those who wanted to cross the river such as the missionaries during their exploration activities. Another type of canoe used by Wajiji for fishing and trading purposes in Lake Tanganyika was the one made by the Goma from the hard tree known as *mvule*. From this tree, Wagoma managed to make canoes of between 25 and 40 meters in length, and during this period these canoes made by Wagoma proved to be Lake Tanganyika's largest type of dugout canoe.[\[75\]](#) Since during this period the use of currency was already in operation in the market of Ujiji, the traders who crossed Lake Tanganyika by using these canoes to Congo came with other commodities like copper, ivory, and slaves which were purchased in the famous market of Ujiji something which led to the development of Ujiji causing to become the trading centre throughout the nineteenth century.

The roles of Mshilwampamba

Mshilwampamba first lived in Katobo village in the part of Nakalinzi. He was born a long time before the arrival of the Arabs and the White people to Ujiji and Kigoma. During that time, Ujiji was known as *Ibhujiji* and Kigoma was known as *Lusambo-gwa-Nyange*. Mshilwampamba was one of the people who migrated to

Bugoye and Lusambo-gwa- Nyange and other places around Lake Tanganyika. He lived near Kangoma which was near Bangwe.[76] At this place, he built a house, cultivated, kept hens, dogs, goats, and cows. Mshilwampamba was very clever and inquisitive who always wanted to know various things around him and those of the far distant.[77] One day after the rain and the sky being white and clear over the mountain of Zaire, he was astonished to see the smoke rising in the atmosphere. After this incident, he thought to tell himself that where there is smoke there is fire, where there is fire there is firewood and people. Therefore, I have to go there. Having been satisfied that there are people like him in Zaire, he went into the forest to look for the tree known as *mzila* so that he could cut it. He succeeded to cut a part of it and after a few months, it was ready for boat makers to make a boat which was locally called “*ubwato*.” Before starting the journey, he went to Kitobo to say goodbye. When the journey was ready, he took his clothes known as “*impuzu*”, salt “*umunyu*,” *ugali*, and dried meat and got into his boat in great fear that he would die in the lake or be killed.

[78] After several days, the children of Wagoma who were swimming in the lake were worried to see something like a big piece of tree in black colour coming. The report about this thing spread in the whole village for it kept coming. During this period Mshilwampamba was in great fear, not knowing what will happen to him. Soon, he started to see the people whom he followed. After a short time, he arrived at the shore and was received by the natives, although he did not talk to them because of fear. At first, the natives feared him but finally, they became happy to see a person from the other side of the lake. Therefore, it was from that time when the people of Zaire and Tanganyika separated by Lake Tanganyika started to integrate.

[79]

When Mshilwampamba looked at the people of Zaire, he found that they look like him but they had no salt and they did not understand his language. The people of Zaire saw that Mshilwampamba has valued them for coming to their country from a very far distant. After a short time, Mshilwampamba started to understand their language as he was able to communicate with them. He stayed with them for several days and he requested them to allow him to go back to his home to see his family.[80] During all this time, the people of Kitobo, Nkalinzi, and Kangoma thought that Mshilwampamba had died in the lake but they continued to believe that he would arrive. Finally, Mshilwampamba arrived at Bangwe with some people from Zaire who accompanied him.[81] According to this short story of Mshilwampamba, it is revealed that he was the one who integrated the people of Ujiji and those from Zaire during that time. [82] Since this period, the market of Ujiji was in operation, the people of Zaire had to come several times with their commodities like palm oil and copper to trade with Wajiji. This led to the expansion of Ujiji as a trading port.

CONCLUSION

As it has attested in this paper, the period from 1831 to 1890 Ujiji functioned as the trading terminal in the east and central caravan trade where traders used to rest before journeying to other parties like Congo and eastern Zambia in search of ivory and slaves. The findings obtained from this study indicate that the coming in of the Arabs, Indian merchants as well as the Swahili traders in Ujiji contributed to the rise of Ujiji as the commercial hub. Nevertheless, the natural endowment of Ujiji itself like good climatic condition, geographical strategic position as well as good political systems of the local rulers of Ujiji attracted the foreigners to Ujiji leading to the rise of Ujiji as the commercial hub. Generally, throughout the nineteenth century Ujiji remained the pivot and battling commercial ground until when it collapsed after the suppression of slave trade in 1870s and has remained a native fishing village in the ruins of the old Arab port hitherto.[83]

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