THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEMOCRATIZING TANZANIA

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Introduction and Background

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world. Like the rest of the poor countries, there have been, for the past twenty years now, internal and external efforts to try and free the country from the woes of poverty that can be seen all over the country. There have been many theories attempting at an explanation of what went wrong in Tanzania. These range from colonial domination – and the resultant theories like *dependencia*, underdevelopment and so on, to those which pin down capitalism and its "predatory" nature leading to, among other things, to unequal exchange on the world market, world division of labour, etc, (Ellis, 1983; Dutkiewicz et. al, 1987); as well as the ubiquitous globalization currently affecting many aspects of life. However, not all see these theories are capable of providing a plausible explanation of what happened and why. Others see it as a structural problem in general as well as inappropriate policies pursued by many poor countries as it was candidly acknowledged by the Organization of African Unity (1986: 17). Others blame the way the policy was implemented (for example Babu, 199: 31 – 34, Shivji, 1974: 85 - 90). We will pursue the last paradigm of seeing the causes of the predicament more closely and see how things are being changed now.

Tanzania: A Brief Profile

The population of Tanzania is at 34 million as per the 2002 population census. About 24% of these live in urban areas. It is widely held that 50% of Tanzanians live below a locally defined poverty line while 36% of them live in abject poverty (DFID, 1999: 1; URT, 1999b: 7; Assey, 1999: 129). Studies indicate that poverty is likely to persist for the foreseeable future. Per capita income is around 300 US$. Population growth is at 2.9 per cent, while the economy has been growing at around 6 per cent in the past four to five years. Of the rural population which account for about 75% of the total population, around 60% live below the poverty line. In comparison, only 39% of the urban population outside Dar es Salaam live below the poverty line. Women who comprise 51% of the population constitute 54% of the economically active population. Women – and especially rural women - are known to bear the brunt of poverty. Of the economically active rural women, 98% are engaged in agriculture, producing between 60 – 80% of all domestic food supplies (URT, 1998: 5). They also contribute substantially to cash crop production. Despite these statistics, they are severally disadvantaged (Assey, op. cit.: 135 – 137; DFID, 1999: 2). Firstly, they do not have equal chance as men in accessing education. Secondly, there are outdated traditions that work against them. Thirdly, while they carry a heavy burden in production and reproduction in rural areas, their access to wage employment is very limited. Fourthly, they are underrepresented in decision making bodies like parliament, cabinet, different committees, although efforts are

underway to rectify this. For instance since 2005 women representation in parliament is 30% through both constituency and special seats. Lastly, many of them are ignorant of their rights.

The Consolidation of Party Power

When African countries started gaining their political Independence, the state was seen and used as the main development agency. This was partly because dominant theories of the time advocated the centrality of the state in the development process. Moreover, during the struggles for Independence the nationalist leaders promised a range of economic and social changes which, given the circumstances, only through the agency of the state such promises could be met. In most countries, there were no indigenous entrepreneurs with enough capital to take on the challenges that came with Independence. The state, therefore, for a considerable period of time, became an engine for development and the provider of goods and services. In this framework of provision in the newly independent states, political leaders became patrons, creating networks of patron-client, characteristic of African politics and which, to a large extent, have led to the characterization of the African state as "patrimonial" (Sandbrook, 1993).

To realize the centrality of the state in the development process, policy making in Tanzania was gradually designed to take the top-down approach. Few people (those who made the Central Committee of the only party) were ***the*** policy makers. Deliberate efforts were made by the ruling elite to alienate citizens from the policy process by concentrating policymaking power into fewer and fewer people. This is attested by the ruling elite's move to shift policy-making power from the parliament to the party's National Executive Committee (NEC), where the CC became the ultimate policy maker. Citizens' alienation from the policy process took place on two fronts. Firstly, civic organizations and ideas that did not conform to 'party ideals' were suppressed. Secondly, national public policy making bodies were subordinated to the party organs. Consequently, citizens lacked autonomous avenues for participation in the policy process. The adoption of the single party constitution, and making the party the supreme organ of the state, elevated party organs to the national policy making level. The Cabinet, which should have been at the center of the policy-making model as per the inherited Westminster model, was deprived of its power over policy making, and was replaced in this by the CC of the party. The parliament became a committee of the party. In fact, it was subordinated to the party's NEC. What needs to be noted here is that these structural changes placed policy-making power in party organs, thereby giving the party chairman who was also the president enormous powers (Mushi, 1981). The dual structure gave the president a lot of discretion in deciding what organ deliberates a policy in question.

The Authoritarian Developmental State and Exclusion

The consolidation and institutionalization of the state and party supremacy was carried under the banner of 'nation-building', thereby justifying the exclusion of citizens from policy making (Holmquist, 1983). These processes led to the suppression and forcible affiliation of civil organizations to the regime. It would seem that the state was suspicious

of factionalism and sectarianism, and particularly, organized disagreements, which could lay foundation for the formation of strong civic organizations. Civic organizations that were allowed were required to either be apolitical or pro-party in their activities. As a result of this, there was little, if any room left, for the organization of autonomous civic organizations that could provide channel for citizen participation in the policy process (Goulbourne, 1980; Rodney, 1980; and Miti, 1987). By the time the Arusha Declaration was announced in 1967 ushering in the policy of *ujamaa* (African Socialism), the party had monopolized the organization of society in most spheres of life. Potential pressure groups such as women, youths, students, workers and so on had been co-opted. Under such situation the policy process became highly exclusive and secretive. All other possible avenues for policy expression outside the party were eliminated and hence under-cutting not only policy critics but also citizens' initiatives and participation in policy making. The ownership, censorship and monopoly of policy information by the state and its control over mass media worsened the situation. Most citizens became un-informed or ill informed and those who were informed lacked avenues for expression and participation in the policy process.

The State Under Fire

Tanzania became a big aid recipient like many other African countries after Independence. Aid was needed by the new states to attend to the many demands placed on them as "nationalist governments". However, aid did not work as one would expect, a situation which has led to the so-called "donor fatigue" (see for example, Plank, 1992), and the christening of Africa as a `bottomless pit'. Having directed lots of resources to the poor countries as a means to check the horrible poverty in which many people lived, yet there were no tangible successes, donors and development theorists begun to ask questions and look for explanations. This is where the role of the state was brought under scrutiny. Actually, the state was held responsible for the mess. The onslaught on the state as the prime cause of the problems was, of course, led by the International Financial Institutions – the World Bank and the IMF, whose help was necessary for the revival of the economies of these countries. Latter the donor community as a whole coordinated to have a concerted pressure on aid recipients to agree to the prescriptions of the two institutions.

It was realized that one weakness of the reliance on the state in solving development problems in Africa has been the sidelining of civil society and the private sector as actors in the entire development agenda. The state centric approach to development did have another weakness, even where some economic development was attained. The approach conceived the state as being a vehicle for economic prosperity and as a result problems of development would be solved there from. However, it is not automatic that economic development will lead to human development. Per capita incomes for example, are, to tell the least, very misleading when trying to tell how comfortable a population of a country is (Handy, 1995: 221). With the failures of the state as the leader in bringing about development, other explanations were sought. This is where the role of society and the private sector in the whole matrix began to take centre stage in policy as well as academic fora (see for example, Hyden, 1992). The weaknesses of the state – and more so in its

relation with the civil society in the whole process of societal management – came to the fore. The general conclusion that was arrived at was that, there is need for the civil society to participate in the political processes that end up shaping the social and economic status of a country. This is the point at which the right interaction between state, the private sector and those of the civil society was considered as the possible solution to the problems African countries were facing. After all, when it comes to state-society relations, it has been observed that their interests have sometimes merged, conflicted, and cooperated (Nordlinger, 1987). And, as Bratton and Rothchild (1992: 264) observe, struggles between the two are always damaging. What came as a conclusion and, therefore, the need to recalibrate the relations between these three sectors was that the state had been doing much more than it should or could, the private sector was not given enough chance, and the civil society was virtually if not completely sidelined.

The Liberalizations: Economic and Political

With the economy in doldrums by early 1980s, the government of Tanzania held talks with the financial institutions, especially the IMF, as well as improvising recovery programmes like the National Economic Survival Programme (NESP) of 1981/1982 as well as the home grown Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of 1982 and the home grown Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) (Stein, 1990: 8-9). These efforts were aimed at attracting more resources for the state but they were not successful. While the state wanted to mobilize more resources for its use, at the same time it maintained the control-cum-exclusionist stance that it had had for a long time. Concentration of power remained in place. Meanwhile, the financial institutions and other donors already were pushing for both economic and political liberalization. The government started to liberalize the economy a few years later in 1986 when it had an agreement with the IMF for standby agreement for SDR 64.2 million subject to performance as per timeframes agreed by both parties. This was to be named Economic Recovery Programme (ERP I).

There were several conditions though, which the government had resisted but then had yielded to including devaluation, liberalization of crop marketing, liberalization of export and import trade, and removal of subsidies to peasant farmers. More reforms were to follow in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These include:-

- 'rolling back' the state in line with the World Bank's paradigm shift in the mid-1980s (see World Bank's Berg Report 1981, for example);
- end of free services and introduction of user fees in some social services;
- creation of executive agencies and freezing of wages in the public sector;
- retrenchment of public sector workers in the attempt to control the wage bill and several other measures;
- one big subsidy consumer – the parastatal sector – was also put under restructuring in view of trimming it down.

In brief, from 1986 the Tanzanian economy started to wear a capitalist face in all aspects.

After the economic liberalization came political liberalization in 1992. Again this was a result of several factors including the 'wind of change' in Eastern Europe that begun late

1980s, internal pressure from activists and NGOs, pressure from donors, and according to Kiondo (1990: 39) as well as influence from within the only political party in which some members were pro-reforms. In that year, the law was changed to allow other political parties into the political system after a 27-year period of one-party state. Hand in hand with that, by this time NGOs and other civil society organizations were acting more freely than it had been. These include those focusing on economic matters which started to increase in numbers with the liberalization of the economy. The following year some eleven new political parties were given full registration. Others followed in the subsequent years. Competitive politics within the framework of multiparty framework was back in Tanzania. The first elections were the local government elections in 1993/94. The performance of the new parties was not impressive but at least different opinion and choice of candidates was now possible.

Enter 'Good Governance': Right Politics for Development

The **Tanzania Development Vision 2025 (**URT, 1995**)** states that Tanzania "cherishes good governance" and the rule of law in the process of creating wealth and sharing benefits, as well as empowering people so that they can make leaders and public servants accountable. Where to locate the new relation between the three (state, CSOs and private sector) in theory and practice ended up in the concept of "governance". Governance is not entirely a new concept but it was given a particular meaning in the context of the revival of the management of politics in African states. Sometimes the qualifier "good" is prefixed to make it "good governance". The term governance gained currency in the mid-1980s when, for example, Dunn (1986) looked at good governance in terms of organizational effectiveness, with no particular emphasis on the philosophical orientation of the management of the state. The definition of governance varies with the sources but they in a way touch certain key elements that are important. The UNDP (1997: xi), for example, see governance as:

> . . . the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage the nation's affairs. It is the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and mediate their differences.

Hyden (1992: 7-8) defines good governance as the conscious management of regime structures aimed at enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm. The World Bank on its part is for good governance because it believes good governance will ensure the presence of human rights, it will check corruption, and promote democratization as well as accountability (1989). The Global Coalition for Africa considers the following as elements of good governance:

- Constitutional arrangements and human rights
- Primacy of legality and predictability of the law
- Responsible government and which is transparent
- Coherence of administrative institutions

- Openness and tolerance in the political system
- Participation by stakeholders
- Favourable climate for the private sector.

The Components of Governance

The concept and practice of governance as it is, would encompass the processes and structures of society that guide political and socio-economic relationships while protecting peoples values, beliefs, freedoms, security as well as guaranteeing the exercise of personal capabilities that lead to better life for the entire community. Let us briefly discuss the three players in the new management of societal affairs under the governance framework.

The State: this player facilitates the presence of policy making and implementation processes under a legitimate (state) authority. What is expected from this player include the presence of a stable political system. By this we zoom on the presence of a credible constitution which is acceptable to the majority and to which all the processes are regulated, making predictability of events possible. Such a constitution would provide for the democratic rights of the population including provisions for human rights and freedoms, electoral processes, accountability mechanisms, allocation of powers to the agreed arms of government, and so on. Under the same player we expect to have an administrative system that is facilitative of efficient policy implementation. This would include the presence of an efficient, independent, accountable and open public sector.

Civil society organizations provide some kind of checks and balances on government power and on the private sector, but they also can contribute to the strengthening of the two. Examples would include the help they can give in monitoring the environment, checking social and political abuse, running of economic activities. When it comes to participation, civil society organizations become the training ground s for their members in the first place, and at a higher level i.e. in state politics etc. members become more confident and they participate with higher efficiency and effectiveness. They speak for the vulnerable and the poor in society. They in some case managed to help people overcome market failures and weaknesses; we are specifically targeting cooperatives here.

The private sector**:** The private sector has assumed a greater role in the economies of the developing countries in the recent past. With the state's ability to provide for the population (and in most cases "free" of charge) dwindling with time, the private sector - which in many countries had been suppressed for a long time - was reconsidered the alternative-cum-partner in the provision of goods and services. Hand in hand with the coming onto the scene of the private sector, is the reduction of state activities in the economy.

- This means, among other things, that rationalization will take place and which by all means come with a cost – job losses.

- The private sector also comes with improved technology, which again come with the same cost – job losses.
- But on the other hand, production improves, tax revenues for the state go up, and market distortions eliminated.
- The state will have new challenges.
    - First, as the economy is opened up, competition becomes stiffer. Local enterprises and businesses will need support in order to become competitive on the world market.
    - Secondly, on the local scene, there will be need to support formal and informal sector small businesses and enterprises by, for example, creating credit facilities. These are the sectors that will create jobs.
    - Thirdly, there will always be the need to take care of casualties from the reforms – the unemployed and unemployables, the untrained and who fit nowhere etc.
    - Fourthly, the state will need to monitor the relationship between the private sector and the environment. In many cases, the private sector has been found culprit of environmental degradation. The sustenance of the environment has become one area that has to be on the agenda of good governance.

To sum up, it is now obvious that the state, the private sector and the civil society need to cooperate so that sustainable development can be achieved. The claim by any of these to be able single handedly to lead society to desired levels of development would be, as it has until now been proven, unrealizable objective. The state is required to safeguard law and order as well as proving the required massive investments in infrastructure. The state will also provide the legal framework in which competing entrepreneurs and other societal actors will operate. The private sector's innovation and ingenuity is required to alleviate the problems of joblessness, failures associated with the state, archaic technology and business techniques, poor quality goods and so on.

Gainers and Losers: Legitimacy, Politics and Economics

Legitimacy is a distinct form of political support that concerns evaluations of the state from a public or 'common good' perspective (Easton; 1965: 278, 312). Gilley (2006: 48) locates where and when a state can earn its legitimacy by saying that "a state is more legitimate the more that it is treated by its citizens as rightfully holding and exercising political power". Among those things that can bring legitimacy to a regime according to him include good governance, democratic rights and welfare gains. These may not be compatible bedfellows when it comes to a newly independent country. The independence governments needed to consolidate power via different means in order to be able to, at least partially, deliver what they promised during the fight for independence and partially to pander to the interests of the emerging elites. This would guarantee them the required legitimacy. This means only welfare gains could count here. Democracy and good governance were not priority issues then. Tanzania did the same as many other African new governments as earlier discussed. This is why some (for example, Kiondo, 1990)

describe the state in Tanzania as being authoritarian with economic and political control over the civil society. This being the case when the economy was not right, some extra economic coercion was even applied in order to appease the emerging elites while at the same time forcing the disenchanted masses to go on producing – for local consumption and for export. The elites in this case were in the commercial sector as well as the bureaucratic bourgeoisie (Shivji, op. cit) and for the former acted as a compradorial class in its role of linking the state in Tanzania and international capital. This was the case when Julius Nyerere was in power.

When Nyerere resigned from active politics in 1985 it was the time that economic liberalization started in earnest. His successor, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi had to carry out the necessary economic reforms that his predecessor denied Tanzanians. In 1991 he and his colleagues in the party issued the Zanzibar Declaration which opened the doors for political leaders to participate in business – a thing that was not allowed during the Arusha Declaration years. The remarkably little private capital there was started to increase through private capital accumulation and a 'nouveau riches' group of entrepreneurs joined the political and bureaucratic elites in the race for wealth accumulation. One thing that needs to be mentioned here is that with these reforms, the hitherto elites felt that their interests were threatened further given that they considered the redistributive policies followed under the Ujamaa policies as having dealt them a blow as resources were being directed to the lower and underprivileged sections of the population (Shivji, 1990). But looked into closely, with the reforms associated with cutbacks on public expenditure directly point to the situation whereby the poor would suffer most. Given the corruption levels that had been prevailing in Tanzania, those in government offices, even if not in high positions, had something of a bargaining chip to get some extra money to cover for the extra expenses that will be brought about by the reforms – such as user fees and charges on services that were not paid for before. The most unlucky in this game became the peasants who had no say on their produce prices and had nothing to hold on to, which could mitigate the effects of the reforms. Under such a situation the emerging commercial elites, the political and bureaucratic elites found means to survive at the expense of the majority peasantry.

The Lethal Alliances

An alliance between politicians and businesspersons saw an emerging group of rich people with conspicuous spending while at the same time the peasants were languishing in poverty thanks to the neglect of the agricultural sector by the Mwinyi regime. With the emerging patterns of accumulation, businesspersons started to seek political office especially vying for legislative seats, while at the same time politicians launched a silent campaign to accumulate wealth either by cooperating with business or through graft. The levels of graft, and corruption in general, were at such a high level by 1995 when the third phase government came to power. The results of this included the fact that the government was not collecting taxes, work ethics disappeared in the public service and the under-funding of services offered by the government. This led to the erosion of the legitimacy of the government, something which had to be addressed by the Mkapa

regime through the Warioba Commission on corruption in 1996. The Commission's findings and recommendations did not, however, affect the levels of corruption and little was done in terms of action against corrupt officials because of lack of hard evidence that could lead to successful prosecution!

At some point during the Mkapa regime, lethal alliances were formed between the political, the economic and senior law enforcement elites in ventures that came to be "mafia-style" organizations in the attempt to get rich quickly. As noted above, politicians started to do business, business elites started to seek political office and law enforcement officer became trapped in the influence of the business elites in protecting both legal and illegal businesses. This is in a situation where graft was common when it came to signing public procurement contracts. And, during this time around, political clientelism intensified, and more so when CCM realized that the opposition parties were not a real threat and that it still had only control of the politics but not the economy. Big business supported the ruling party openly after they were disillusioned by the opposition parties after the 1995 elections. Although the control of the economy was ultimately in the hands of forces beyond the government due to the reforms and globalization, CCM was indirectly the powerful internal negotiator as it was the kingmaker. Not only that, CCM controlled the government which issued licenses and permits for business. In some way, clientelism increased levels of corruption, as people kept seeking favours rather than engaging in productive activities.

At the level of policy, the government tried to appease the population by issuing policies such as those on poverty reduction, improvement of education system staring with primary education, and other programmes backed by the World Bank and the bilateral donors. The gap between the poor and the nouveau riches was staggering by way of looking at the consumption and investment patterns. While some urban dwellers could afford only one meal a day, some Tanzanians were sending their children to study abroad, shopping abroad, getting medical treatment abroad, and constructing posh houses worth billions of shillings. The unemployed youth, now exposed to Western life after the liberalization of the media, and the conspicuous spending by a few Tanzanians created a very good breeding ground for criminals especially with regard to the use of small arms in robberies and other violent crimes. Armaments were not a problem given the Great Lakes region conflict situation surrounding Tanzania and the influx of refugees into Tanzania almost daily. While the collection of taxes had improved tremendously during the Mkapa regime, this was not reflected in the peoples life. In a way this was caused by the fact that the regime was focusing more on building the macro aspects of an economy, including infrastructure, for the people to be able to market whatever they produced in the rural areas.

The legitimacy of the third phase government under President Mkapa was based on the rhetoric and may be some successes about putting the macro-economic structures in place, promotion of good governance, facilitating the democratization process and fighting corruption. There has also been the strategy for the reduction of poverty, part of which is the channeling of funds down to the villages and district council for the people to plan and implement their development projects. However, when the current

government started to act on issues like graft, the collusion between law enforcers and the criminal fraternity, the inertia that abounded the public service, and the misuse and embezzlement of the funds meant for local development, some started to question that legitimacy in retrospect. Maybe here what needs to be said is that legitimacy is also relatively derived, relative to the situation in some other African governments' performance. Tanzania has been in good books so far despite some weaknesses in both political and economic structures; as well as policy slippages that exhibit discrepancies between government policy and reality on the ground.

2005 a general election was held. It is during the first months of the newly elected government which came into office 2006 that some of the alliances started to be cracked. The alliance between law enforcement agencies and the business community was well under scrutiny. The force was used by the business elites to protect illegal and legal businesses vis-à-vis the state (taxes), but also against the common man in the street (compromised security). What was worrying is that some of the top police officers were part of this criminal world. On the other hand, it came to the light that some political elites were engaged in graft through contracts signed during the third phase and beyond, like in the mining, tourism, natural resources and energy sectors. Some of the contracts are now pitched for review.

Concluding Remarks

What has been emerging in Tanzania is a logical outcome of uncontrolled interaction between the political, bureaucratic and business elites. Having done away with the restrictions put on politicians by the Arusha Declaration by the Zanzibar Declaration of 1991, political elites started to do business and business elites became interested in politics as the two combined put them in pole position to reap economic benefits. The two complemented each other through reciprocal favours. And, since for the political elites to operate through the government machinery they need the support and actions of the bureaucratic elites, it was no wonder that the latter had to be brought into fold. In a situation where graft is common, the two must collude to make things work for them. And, where there is graft in government, the business elites are the likely suppliers of the goods. They give out money in order to win contracts. The politicians have to use the bureaucracy to implement their devious plans. So the trio – business, political and bureaucratic elites formed a web of actors through which public resources were allocated in a skewed manner such that the legitimacy of the governments from Mwinyi to Mkapa was never permanent or stable. It was on and off depending on the 'bold' action taken by the government at any one time. The problem is that the actions were not enduring.

Where does this leave Tanzania's democracy then? It would be correct we believe, if we talk of a situation where the people are facing a 'democratic deficit' (ADB, 2000), that is a situation in which democracy is confined to franchise issues and electoral participation rather than having it in the wider context in which people participate in decision making – at least at the local level. The benefits that the people have been expecting from the multiparty political arrangements - such as a more robust parliament, better debated

policies and more inclusion are yet to materialize. The parliament has remained one-party dominated and policies are, therefore, controlled by this party. Even at local levels the same party controls most of the councils – and therefore, decision making. In other words, the minorities (in terms of party affiliation) are yet to have a forum where their ideas and preferences can be heard and acted upon. However, the basic structure for a more democratic Tanzania is slowly coming to place especially through the piece-meal constitutional changes. The problem may be the need to have a better performing economy so that the economic (welfare) benefits can reach the wider community than it is at the moment. Since democracy is more than the franchise issues, the current government needs to address the 'social welfare' aspects as proposed by Gilley, (2006: op cit.) – in addition to the good governance and democracy ones - in order to maintain or increase its legitimacy. This is much so because of the gradually emerging class society in Tanzania. Short of that to the majority of Tanzanian will the benefits of democratization and good governance would be an illusion. They need something concrete and that can be realized through welfare issues like health and education.

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