Galvanising political support through resource nationalism: A case of Tanzania's 2017 extractive sector reforms

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Resource nationalism has become a fashionable approach to resource governance in many countries across the world. Motivated by the desire to make resource governance deliver to socio-economic development, governments in resource-rich countries have exploited resource nationalism to achieve their populist socio-economic goals. In 2017, the government of Tanzania instituted a strong resource nationalist governance regime. This paper examines Tanzania's re-adoption of resource nationalism to understand how the government was able to institutionalise the reforms. The paper draws on secondary scholarly sources and primary materials such as President Magufuli's speeches during his presidential campaigns in 2015 and afterwards during his government clampdown on Acacia. Like studies on neo-extractivism in Latin America have shown, President Magufuli used resource nationalism as a political strategy to both secure a stronghold in party and national politics and legitimise his economic policy. Faced with a strengthening opposition politics and competitive elections, President Magufuli exploited public dissatisfaction with a liberal resource governance approach and a popular appeal of socialist policies to re-introduce resource nationalism as a strategy not only to re-legitimise extractivism but also to delegitimise the opposition and multinational corporations.