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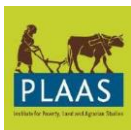


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Introduction

We are living in a new era, characterised by an ever deepening crisis neoliberal capitalism economically and politically. The establishment's attempt to salvage neoliberalism with another round of austerity reforms has been met with a backlash from the opposite ends of the ideological spectrum: the radical left and the ultra-right. From Narendra Modi's electoral victory in India in 2014 through Donald Trump's presidential triumph in the 2016 US elections, populist right movements have increasingly become influential in the UK (UKIP in the Brexit referendum), France (Marine Le Pens and her *Front National*), Greece (Golden Dawn), Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*) to mention only a few. On the other hand, SYRIZA's sweeping electoral victory in Greece (even though the new regime would later be forced disown its socialist commitment) to the rise of PODEMOS in Italy, Bernie Sanders in the US, Jeremy Corbyn in the UK, and Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France marked a new wave of radical leftwing politics as a counter to both the neoliberal establishment and the surging far right movement.

Both the new ultra right and leftist movements share certain features. One, they both immersed in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis of neoliberal capitalism and as such their rhetoric is opposed to the neoliberal establishment. Two, they are based mostly on the charismatic individual¹. The solutions they propose are, however, different. While the left point to inclusive policies based on welfarism as solution, the alt right embraces xenophobic nationalism based on white supremacy, scapegoating of immigrants, and hatred against sexual and religious minorities (Scoones et al. 2017).

There have been attempts by scholars to understand and build alternative to the rise of extreme rightwing politics. The debate is centred on, inter alia, how to characterise the current conjuncture. The liberal democratic view uses the term "populism" lump together leftwing leaders like Hugo Chavez and right wing ones like Trump. This scholarship maintains that populism is arises out of the shadow of liberal democracy only to destroy all the basic liberties and freedoms and replace them with authoritarianism (Müller 2016). Theirs is therefore a call for a return to authentic liberal democracy².

Forster (2016) and Mammone (2015) are objected to the use of the term populism to describe the extreme rightwing movements. They argue that the populist label hides the fascist nature of the current extreme right movements and falls into the liberal rhetoric under which "populism is seen as representing incipient anti-democratic, dictatorial, and even totalitarian tendencies, to be found on both right and left, in so far as they oppose liberal democracy" (Forster 2016, 61). As such they propose the use of "neo-fascism" to understand the current wave of extreme right movements.

The major focus of the recent scholarship on extreme right movements has been on the Global North, even for scholars like Mammone (2015) who emphasize the "transnational" character of the events. In the aftermath of Trump's victory for instance the former Greek finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis,

¹ Having witnessed the rising tide of rightwing populism in the US elections and the Brexit referendum in 2016, the Corbynite strategists in the Labour Party decided to "relaunch Jeremy Corbyn as a leftwing populist" in 2017 in a bid to "ride the anti-politics mood in the Brexit Britain and narrow the gap with the Tories" (Stewart and Elgot 2016).

² The economic version of this argument is found in the writings of Joseph Stiglitz who chastises *Globalization and Its Discontent* in one book, and ends up writing another on *How to Make Globalization Work*.

called for the creation of a “Progressive International” to counter what he called the rightwing “Nationalist International.” His main focus was on Euro-American world (even though he mentioned the Middle East in passing) and as such the peripheral world in general, and Africa in particular, does not feature in his conceptualization and activism. This leaves the impression that the xenophobic nationalist reaction only takes place within advanced neoliberal capitalist countries in crisis (which is actually what Forster (2016) argues). However, as Mamdani (1983) aptly puts it,

Those who have argued that fascism is only possible in imperialist countries have ignored the twin poles of the imperialist system: the oppressor imperialist countries and the oppressed neo-colonies... The crisis that gives rise to fascism develops both in the camp of imperialism and among the people.

This calls for the examination of the post-2008 developments in the peripheral countries, which is what this paper does with regard to Tanzania. One wonders whether the neofascist label³ would automatically be applicable to what is taking place in Tanzania under the Magufuli regime. Mamdani further observes that one of the fascist regime in Africa in the 1970’s “did not set out consciously to create a fascist system” but found itself building one in the process of resolving the crisis of neocolonial capitalism. “[T]he regime tried one solution after another, the total result of which was fascism” (Mamdani 1983, 36). In the context of post-2008 Tanzania, one cannot give a definite conclusion that Magufuli’s regime (which is only 2 years in power) is neo-fascist, even though it exhibits some fascist symptoms.

It is in this regard that the paper has decided to use the concept of authoritarian populism⁴ to describe the ongoing reforms in Tanzania.

Historicizing authoritarian populism

Eurocentric scholarship on Africa has always associated African forms of power with totalitarianism – itself seen as emanating from the traditional African patriarchal system. Democratic rule (its economic equivalent being modern market relations) should therefore be introduced from the external as part and parcel of the European civilizing mission. Such arguments, which trace their origin from the early days of Africa’s encounter with Europe, continued to be reproduced with only slight changes in vocabulary, by modernization and neoliberal scholars (Hyden 1981).

Challenging Eurocentric scholarship, some scholars have been to show that precolonial Africa was neither static nor uncivilized but progressed through different stages, with some societies reaching the tributary mode of production prior to its encounter with Europe (Rodney 1972). Precolonial African forms of power were diverse, ranging from centralised authorities to those in which power was diversified among clan rulers. However, even the examination of forms of powers that appeared to be centralised or authoritarian, reveals the prevalence of mechanisms that checked against development of absolute of power (Abuso 1980; Vail 1989; Mamdani 1996).

The encounter with the West produced two major effects on Africa. One was the turning of Africa into the periphery of Europe, as such subordinating it to Western economic interests. The resulting effect has been massive expropriation of African wealth and labour which is siphoned into the Western economies (Amin 1976). The second was the establishment of the colonial state, which divided the people into races and tribes, and ruled races through civil law and tribes through a multiplicity of customary laws, enforced by the despotic native authorities. Between the native authority and the biological relations that were said to bind members of the same tribe lay the homeland – to which ‘outsiders’ were excluded (Mamdani 1996). The relationship between the colonial power, whether

³ Indeed, even Mammone (2015, 12) himself makes it clear his use neofascism is “the appropriate terminology in reference to ... Franco-Italian political and cultural phenomenon” while “extreme right” is “an overall all-inclusive term, a kind of a container to include the whole political and cultural phenomenon, a kind of a container to include the whole political family at the right of the right.”

⁴ For a discussion on authoritarian populism see Scoones et al (2017).

through the civil law or customary law, and the tribalized African populations was mediated by coercion⁵.

The historic struggles have African peoples have aimed at regaining their sovereignty as well as greater control over and benefit from their natural resources and labour, and more often than not, the mobilizations have borne the ethnic, racial and religious labels. The success of a decolonization project would be measured by its creation of a self-sustaining and socially just economy, as well as a deracialised, detribalised, and democratic forms of rule.

Julius Nyerere, the charismatic founding president of Tanzania, identified two major pillars of his decolonization project: nation-building and development. Nyerere's regime thus dismantled native authorities and integrated some of the customary as well as colonial laws into a single legal system (Mamdani 2012). His developmental vision articulated in the famous *Arusha Declaration* aimed at creating a self-reliant and socialist economy (Nyerere 1967).

Scholars have pinpointed various theoretical and practical problems associated with Ujamaa. The means of production had been nationalised but the relations of production hardly changed since control was still in the hands of a petty bourgeois class in power⁶ (Shivji 1975). The extreme reliance on the state as the agency of development ended up coercing the workers and peasants to comply with its directives and limited their political participation when it banned or coopted into the single party machinery all hitherto independent popular organisations from cooperatives to trade unions⁷ (Kiondo 1989).

Despite all the shortcomings, the Nyerere regime made credible achievements in the implementation of welfarist policies as well as in narrowing income gaps. It also managed to build a unified nation creating a single citizenship out of tribal and racial identities created by colonialism. Nyerere's charisma, his frugal life style, his egalitarian vision as well as his pan-Africanist and anti-imperialist stance placed his regime among the most progressive regimes in Africa (Hirji 2014).

Capitalist Crisis and Peripheral Responses

Post-independence Tanzania has gone through two waves of crises which have their origin in the crisis of the global capitalist system. The first wave was the crisis of the late 1970's which extended to the 1980s and early 1990s. It manifested itself through a negative balance of payments, falling producer prices, falling agricultural and industrial production, shortage of essential items, closure of factories, and popular loss of confidence in the ruling party and government (Campbell and Stein 1991).

⁵ "Between the colonizer and the colonized," wrote Aimé Césaire (1972, 45), "there is room only for forced labour, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, degraded masses." He further observes that this brutality also dehumanizes the colonizer. Fascism was therefore a reverse colonialism which "applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the 'coolies' of India and the 'niggers' of Africa" (ibid, 36).

⁶ As far as the rural sector is concerned, the Land Ordinance of 1923 continued to operate in principle, giving the state the state the ultimate ownership and control over all lands. As such the state could expropriate land in the name of development, and move rural populations from one place to another. It goes without saying, however, that no one could become landless – as the moved populations would be given alternative land to settle and work on.

⁷ The Nyerere regime adopted some of the most oppressive colonial laws including "the Penal Code of 1945; Collective Punishment Ordinance, 1921; the Townships (Removal of Undesirable Persons) Ordinance, 1944; and the Deportation Ordinance of 1938 which allowed the Head of State to deport citizens from one part of the country to another." It also enacted new pieces of legislation including "the Preventive Detention Act, 1962 which allowed detention without due process; Regions and Regional Commissioners Act, 1962 and Areas and Area Commissioners Act, 1962 which allowed these two important representatives of the government in the regions to curtail the freedoms of the individual for specific periods also without due process" (Kijo-Bisimba and Peter 2009).

The Nyerere regime tried unsuccessfully to salvage state socialism by waging a war on the rising class of comprador capitalists, who gained their wealth mainly through ever growing black market. Rightwing academics, politicians and bureaucrats within the single party system, the rising merchant class, joined hands with imperialist governments and institutions to put pressure on Tanzania to adopt the neoliberal policies (Kiondo 1989; Campbell and Stein 1991). Nyerere who had rejected the neoliberal package pushed by the IMF citing interference over sovereign mandate to make policies, as well as its disastrous effects on the working poor, relinquished power in 1985 (Nyerere 1980; Campbell and Stein 1991). A year later, the Mwinyi government signed a deal with the IMF and the full-scale implementation of the neoliberal reforms started⁸. The Tanzanian state metamorphosed from a radical nationalist, with a socialist orientation to a neoliberal one. In a peripheral setting like Tanzania, such a metamorphosis meant the new role of the state, apart from cutting social expenditure, was to facilitate primitive accumulation of capital by the imperialist bourgeoisie⁹ (Shivji 2009; Mwami 2009; Kamata 2012).

The second wave crisis was that of 2008, also referred to as the global crisis of neoliberal capitalism. The economic manifestations of the crisis in Tanzania included job cuts, a hike in food and fuel prices, rise of import bills, cuts in the aid and FDI inflows, to mention only a few (Mkulo 2009). Most importantly, neoliberalism as an ideology of the state was seriously delegitimized as popular struggles against plunder of resources, land grabs, commodification of social services and low wages intensified.

Jakaya Kikwete, a darling of imperialism who came to power in 2005, turned to the US and the UK for solutions. In his capacity as the chairman of the African Union, he wrote to George W. Bush and Tony Blair to help Africa overcome the crisis (Kikwete 2009). The two imperialist governments would initiate, through bilateral and multilateral channels, two sets of solutions, one short term and another long term. The short term was to provide funds to African countries to be used for the bailout companies *à la* US. Tanzania received USD 220 million from G-20 countries (Lunogelo et al. 2010). On its part, the US government provided Tanzania with an initial grant of USD 37.7 million with the directive that it be used to implement a green revolution. The US further committed to “double [its] agricultural development assistance to more than \$1 billion in 2010, and provide at least \$ 3.5 billion over the next three years” (Arieff et al. 2010, 29).

The long-term solution to the crisis (embedded in the bailout funds as a conditionality) was a ‘green revolution’ for Africa. Kikwete’s own country, Tanzania, was be chosen as a guinea pig for another new round of neoliberal policies in the agricultural sector. The president launched, in 2009, the *Kilimo Kwanza* (Agriculture First) initiative which opened two opportunities for giant corporations: land for large scale agriculture and market for agro-inputs – especially fertilisers, pesticides and GM seeds (Bergius 2014; Mbunda 2013; Kibena 2018). Up to 2014, about 1 million hectares of land had been granted to (mostly foreign) large-scale agricultural companies, while input giant corporations like Monsanto, Bayer, DuPont and Yara gained entry into the country’s market (Locher and Sulle 2014; Bergius 2014).

The further neoliberalisation of agriculture would trigger rural protests against land dispossession, or refusal to sell their crops due to price falls (Bergius 2014; *Raia Mwema* 10th August 2011). In some cases, the reactions there would erupt violent clashes between farmers and pastoralists fighting for scarce land (Kamata 2015).

⁸ These included the removal of agricultural and food subsidies, commodification of social services, privatisation of public enterprises, trade and financial deregulation, the opening up of space for multi-party politics and non-governmental organisations.

⁹ The leadership code of the *Arusha Declaration* that prohibited politicians and bureaucrats to engage in capitalist activities was officially repealed in 1991, thus allowing leaders to engage in private accumulation of capital. This pattern of accumulation was complementary to, and dependent on, the imperialist-led accumulation.

At the same time, government and private sector elites were indicted for grand corruption scandals – a revelation of the state-capital collusion in primitive accumulation (Gray 2015). The popular outcry against plunder would force the government to pursue some legal reforms in the mining sector to allow “state participation in the mining investment and the promotion of Tanzanian companies in the sector” (Jacob and Pedersen 2018, 2). Such legal reforms, however, remained in paper and the government continued to promote neoliberalism and responded to popular protests with violence (Mtandao wa Madeni na Maendeleo Tanzania 2013).

And then Magufuli came

As the 2015 general elections approached, the ruling party (Chama cha Mapinduzi) was divided into factions racing for power while its popularity continued to go down (Collord 2017). John Pombe Magufuli would therefore be nominated as a “compromise presidential candidate” (Jacob and Pedersen 2018) because he did not belong to the powerful rival factions and his image (and that of the ministry he led) had not been severely tarnished by grand corruption. Nicknamed “the bulldozer,” Magufuli was perceived to be strong and hardworking individual who would not shy away from making tough decisions.

For the ruling class as a whole, Magufuli was an insider who had been part of the government for two decades. He would therefore manage the system rather than destroy it and would most probably side with the ruling class as a whole in its class war against the masses.

Magufuli led a populist campaign in which he sold his name, rather than that of his unpopular party (*Mwananchi* 30th October 2015). “Mniamini” (have faith in me) he asked the masses, and after coming into power, the statement would change to “mniombe” (pray for me). Some of the immediate measures taken by the Magufuli government included crackdown on corruption and tax evasion, cutting down lavish government expenditure and enforcing working discipline among government workers. His government provides free primary and secondary school education, but higher education is still commodified.

The economic war

The two contradictory visions

As Forster (2017) observes, the Trumpite neo-fascism has managed to enter the White House but has not extended to the overall state apparatus in the United States, which continues to be liberal politically. In the case of Tanzania, the state apparatus continues to be neoliberal in its economic outlook, it is only the Presidency that exhibits some elements economic nationalism.

There are two contradictory visions currently guiding the economic reforms under Magufuli: the neoliberal/integrationist vision inherited from the past regimes and the nationalist/autonomist vision championed by Magufuli. The neoliberal vision is reflected in such grand documents as The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 and The National Five Year Development Plan 2016/17– 2020/21 (FYDP II). For the FYDP II, the engine of development is the private sector (specifically foreign capital) as the Plan “envisages raising FDI flows from US\$ 2.14 billion in 2014 to over USD\$ 9.0 billion by 2021” (URT 2016, 2). The role of the state is to pursue necessary policy and legal reforms as dictated by the IFIs, including the provision of tax breaks and allocation of huge tracts of land to multinationals (URT 2016, 3, 22, 35-6 & 42-45). The production to be carried out is geared towards meeting the demands of the world market, and as such FYDP II emphasizes on specialising in areas where Tanzania has a “comparative advantage” (ibid, 33 & 24). Thus, in its source of capital, the type of reforms as well as the purpose of production, the FYDP II is integrationist and neoliberal.

The autonomist/nationalist vision finds its expression in Magufuli’s speeches and a few pieces of legislation, enacted after Magufuli had taken on mineral giants. Three main speeches, two of them delivered extemporaneously, point to the autonomous path: his address to the newly elected Parliament

in November 2015, his speech at a meeting with members of the local private sector in December 2015 and his speech at the President's Manufacturer of the Year Awards organized by the Confederation of Tanzania Industries in May 2016.

The major economic activity, in Magufuli's autonomist vision, is to be industrial production (what one would call, in Marxist terms, accumulation through expanded reproduction). For this to happen, the fictitious and grand corruption-driven economy that dominated the previous era has to be cracked down on, hence, the war on grand corruption and embezzlement of public funds, as well as the government's decision to transfer of its funds to the Central Bank. Instead on engaging on speculative ventures, the banking sector has been asked to finance industrialisation (*The Guardian* 1st June 2016).

The Agency

Magufuli's vision of industrialisation has an element of building national linkages, especially between the agricultural sector and the industrial sector¹⁰. The goods to be produced by those factories are mass consumer goods produced: mass as opposed for luxury goods for elites. By producing "commodities like clothes, shoes, cooking oil, etc, and as such these factories will have a secured internal market before thinking of the foreign market" (ibid). Furthermore, such industrialisation has to be labour-intensive as opposed to capital intensive.

Magufuli entrusted the undertaking of the industrialisation project to a local capitalist class – a national bourgeoisie. He acknowledges that such a class is almost inexistent. Instead, there is a comprador bourgeoisie that is subservient to the imperialist capital. However, he thinks it is possible to transform a comprador bourgeoisie into a national bourgeoisie through both the stick and the carrot. The stick is a heavy crackdown on speculative economic activities, and the carrot includes easy access to the land and loans, market distortions and legal protection (*Uhuru* 12th March 2018). Magufuli's bans on sugar import, the outright rejection of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) – a free trade pact imposed on Africa by the EU – and the ban on the importation of second hand clothing received a backlash from the comprador sectors and imperialist forces¹¹.

Magufuli's desire to see the comprador bourgeoisie metamorphose into a national bourgeoisie has not been fulfilled. He then turned to social security funds to invest in industrial production and also declared to revive cooperatives. While the revival of cooperatives would take longer, the role played by pension funds is only minimal due to the fact that they are the main lenders to the government (*The Citizen* 13th December 2018). Currently, Magufuli seems to be comfortable with foreign capital, so longer as it builds factories and does not evade taxes. His interest, at the moment, is on the increasing number of factories rather than the creation of a self-sustaining economy.

The Battle with Mining Giants

The war with predatory foreign capital reached its *pièce de résistance* when Magufuli took on the mining giant, Acacia Mining Plc, a subsidiary of Barrick Gold Corporation. In March 2017, Magufuli

¹⁰ In his first address to the National Assembly, Magufuli said: "The factories that we aim at are those that utilize a huge part of the raw materials from within our country, especially from the sectors of agriculture, livestock, fishery, and minerals – and other natural resources. These industries will give us the opportunity to build a local production system that is articulated and integrated. Such industries will need and depend on raw materials from the local producers within sectors I have mentioned, and by so doing, those producers will have an assured market in the country" (Magufuli 2015; author's translation from Kiswahili).

¹¹ Both the EU and the USA threatened to punish Tanzania for its violation of free trade while local sugar importers and whole sale traders started hoarding sugar in order to create further scarcity, and hiked the sugar price in violation of the government-set price (*HabariLeo* 7th May 2016; *The EastAfrican* 15th February 2018; SEATINI Uganda 2016). Even more surprising, the sugar producers wanted the government to give them permits to import sugar – the manufacturers' desire to play a comprador role. Neoliberal intellectuals and politicians joined hands with the compradors and imperialist forces in opposing what they perceived as a threat to market economy (*The Guardian* 27th May 2016).

banned the export of mineral concentrates pending the investigation into the exact amount of minerals contained therein. Acacia's 277 containers were seized at the Dar es Salaam Port. The two investigation committees formed by Magufuli concluded that for two decades of its operation in Tanzania, the mining giants (Barrick/Acacia) was involved in mineral smuggling, tax evasion, under-declaration of the mineral values in the containers, which denied the government TZS 108 trillions in taxes and royalties since the operations started in the mid 1990s (*Mtanzania* May 25 2017, 1-4; *The Citizen* May 25 2017, 1-3). Magufuli fired Tanzanian officials who colluded with the multinational, and ordered Acacia to "repent" and pay back what it had stolen from Tanzania. In its "updates to the market," Acacia pleaded innocence, while Magufuli electrifying speeches to his people insisted reiterated Acacia's crimes (Acacia Mining Plc 2017). Whereas the people rallied behind the president, asking him to take even more radical measures, the market betrayed Acacia. "In just three days, the company has lost 42 percent of its stock on the London Stock Exchange" (*The Guardian* 26 July 2017). This would force John Thornton, the executive chairman of Barrick, to visit Tanzania to hold talks with Magufuli. It was reported that Thornton apologized and agreed to negotiate with the government of Tanzania on compensation and mining sector reforms (*Mwananchi* 15th June 2017). A few days later Magufuli threatened to close the mines if Barrick/Acacia delays to come for negotiations, and the Tanzania revenue Authority issued Acacia with a TZS 424 trillion (USD 190 billion) tax claim (*The Citizen* 25th July 2017). Five village councils in Tarime District also sued Acacia Mining "demanding TZS 53 billion/= in outstanding royalties" (*The Guardian* 16th June 2017). Finally, Barrick sent its delegation to Tanzania for negotiations – after which the multinational accepted, among other things, to abide by the new laws on natural wealth and resources.

The new laws, enacted under Magufuli, are *The Natural Wealth and Resources (Permanent Sovereignty) Act, 2017*, *The Natural Wealth and Resources Contracts (Review and Re-negotiation of Unconscionable Terms) Act, 2017* and the *Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2017*. These laws reaffirm Tanzania "a sovereign state has permanent sovereignty over all natural wealth and resources." The government of Tanzania, as a representative of the people, shall own and control all the natural wealth and resources, and shall therefore acquire compulsory shares (16 to 50 percent) in mining companies. The export of raw resources is banned as beneficiation has to take place in Tanzania. The laws also bind the mining companies to deposit their incomes with Tanzanian banks and prohibit them from seeking arbitration in foreign courts.

As far as the economic war is concerned, Magufuli, only challenged the peripheral status of the country, especially in its relations with imperialist powers (multinationals and their governments). Almost singlehandedly within his government, Magufuli managed to renegotiate the terms of exploitation within the international capitalist system. Otherwise, the productive relations between capital and labour have remained intact – and they may even get worse as the state is growing uneasy of trade union activism (interview with Alaquin Senga 30th January 2018).

The politics of "Tanzania First"

While Magufuli's economic war appears to be progressive as it envisions a self-sustaining economy and poses a challenge to imperialism, it is politically reactionary as it expresses itself through chauvinistic nationalism. He has made it clear that his national bourgeoisie is to be that of "wafanyabiashara wazawa" (indigenous businessmen) and thus, reinforcing the politics of indigenization ("uzawa") that resurfaced after Tanzania liberalised its economy (*Azam TV* 23rd November 2017; *Rai* 17th December 2015). Under the label of "uzawa", only black Tanzanians are seen as authentic Tanzanians, while the rest, especially those of Asian origin are regarded outsiders, and consequently get scapegoated for the country's economic problems (Heilman 1998). Magufuli has not gone further in his promotion of "indigenization" but, given his trend in other areas, the adoption an extreme position of excluding Tanzanians of Asian origin is not an impossibility.

On the plane of African and international relations, Magufuli has completed the transition from the "liberation diplomacy" that guided Tanzania's foreign relations in the socialist era to the "economic diplomacy" of the neoliberal era. Liberation diplomacy was premised on the pursuit of African unity

and Third World solidarity, the support for liberation struggles within and outside Africa (Mushi and Mathews 1981). Tanzania was also on the forefront in the fight for a New International Economic Order (in 1960's and 1970's) and collective self-reliance through the Lagos Plan of Action (in the early 1980's), which were examples of liberatory economic struggles (Kamata 2012; Prashad 2012). What is new in the economic diplomacy is the surrender of the country's sovereignty and economy to predatory foreign forces. It is in this regard that Kamata (2012) has chastened it "diplomacy of dispossession."¹²

Even after the adoption of a new Foreign Policy in 2001, Tanzania still showed some degree of sympathy with and Palestine and Western Sahara. It is Magufuli who came to officially bury the old policy of liberation diplomacy. Not only did he ask the then South African President Jacob Zuma to show gratitude, in monetary terms, for Tanzania's assistance to the anti-apartheid struggles but also overtly embraced Israel and Morocco. One of the local newspapers aptly captured Magufuli's foreign policy shift in its heading "JPM 'echoes' Trump, says Tanzania first." Ironically, the speech was made at the University of Dar es Salaam, once a hotbed of revolutionary politics in Africa:

We carried the burden of other people's conflicts for too long... We have to change – the enemy of your friend is not your enemy ... let them continue with their animosity, but you can possibly be friends with both of them... I have decided to restore ties with Israel. Just by appointing a new ambassador (to Israel), we have received a delegation of 600 tourists from Israel... Our goal is to focus on the interests of our country – Tanzania first (quoted in *The Guardian* on Sunday 16th April 2017).

The refusal to carry "other people's burden" also extends to the refugee question. During era of liberation diplomacy, Tanzania maintained an open door policy, thanks to which refugees were considered guests and were granted not only unconditional asylum but also, over the longer term, citizenship. In the economic diplomacy anchored in parochial nationalism, refugees are regarded not only as an economic burden but also as security threat (Kamanga 2005; *The Citizen*, 21st July 2018). Only Tanzanians can stay in Tanzania – others have to go back to their homelands. The Magufuli regime has therefore zealously implemented the *Refugee Act* 1998 by refusing to grant citizenship to refugees and has ordering the closure of camps and forced repatriation of refugees to their home countries. It has also withdrawn from international treaties including the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) that bound it to guarantee refugee stay in the country (*TanzaniaDaima*, 10th February 2018, 1&3; *Global Publishers* 18th February 2018).

Social conservatism

President Magufuli regards himself as a servant of God, his actions as divinely sanctioned, and his purpose is "to build a nation that believes in God" (*HabariLeo* 1st May 2017). In Magufuli's thinking, God created only heterosexual creatures – that is why, he said in Bagamoyo on 22nd June 2017, there is no homosexuality among animals. He sees same sex practices as unnatural, "shameful" and a "curse" which is being brought to Africans by Western countries. Just as same sex is immoral, early opposite sex is also impure and should be punished. The Magufuli government has retracted some achievements won on the field of gender and sexuality. While same sex practice remained illegal in Tanzania, non governmental organisations were allowed to provide their services to sexual minorities. Some progressive NGOs like TGNP and FemAct had gone further and integrated the LGBTIQ demands within their broader transformative feminist agenda (Kitunga 2009).

¹² Kamata's article is however reticent on what the pursuit of economic diplomacy could portend when it is rooted in populist nationalism. As Nyerere apocalyptically warned, a nationalism that is pursued outside a larger pan-African agenda "is meaningless, is anachronistic and is dangerous." He equated it to "tribalism on a continental scale" (Nyerere 1963 & 1966). Under Magufuli, economic diplomacy has coopted some of the popular demands on securing the country's sovereignty and resources. However, it has undone all the principles of pan-Africanism and international solidarity.

On the question of teenage mothers, the government had even developed “Guidelines on How to Enable Pregnant School Girls to Continue with their Studies” (CCITWG 2009) whose implementation was yet to start. Magufuli’s minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elders and Children as well as the vice President had, on different occasions, given statements to support a re-entry policy for teenage mothers (*The Citizen* 15th December 2016; *The Citizen* 6th June 2017). Moreover, “the Social Services and Community Development Committee and the Opposition asked Parliament to push for a change in policy that would allow girls to resume their studies after birth” (*The Citizen* 6th June 2017) Magufuli intervened to close the Parliamentary debate, stating that his government “will not educate parents.” Even though he acknowledged that schoolgirls may get pregnant “by accident” he still insisted that the majority become pregnant by their own conscious choice¹³. Whatever the cause of the pregnancy, both groups would be punished so as to protect other girls from imitating their behavior “because that game is sweet and everyone would want to play it.” (Magufuli’s Speech in Bagamoyo, 22nd June 2017).

The President’s hardline position has fueled the war on sexual minorities, who have been named and arrested, and NGO’s advocating their rights faced with de-registration. Schoolgirls have been arrested by the police in public beaches, while teenage mothers apart from expulsion from school have also been arrested. The war on immorality has not stopped on the two groups: it has extended to other groups engaging in “immoral” and lazy behavior. These include sex workers, beggars, and the unemployed youth (*Mwananchi* 14th April 2016; *Nipashe* 31st August 2017, 9; *Raia Mwema* 20th April 2016; *The Guardian* 27th March 2016).

Magufuli and the civil society

Magufuli’s statecraft can be described as imperial presidency, based on erratic presidential orders, a heavy reliance on the armed forces and a despotic bureaucracy. "Imperial presidency," Shivji (2009a, 81) writes, is "marked by extreme concentration of power in the executive, and, within the executive, in the presidency." As a result, the legislative and the judicial pillars have seen their mandate crippled and turned into mere appendages of the executive. The President not only deliberate on cases that fall under the judicial mandate but also issues orders to the heads of the Judiciary and the Parliament on what and how he wants their organs to deliberate on.

On one incident, the President himself ordered the transfer of a magistrate in a public meeting, and on another, he directed the Speaker to eject opposition MPs so that he (the President) could deal with them outside the Parliament where they do not have any immunity. During the commemorations of the Law Day in 2016, the President offered the court a quarter of the TZS 1 trillion that the government would get if they ruled in its favour in the pending tax evasion cases. (*Mwananchi* 7th February 2016). “He also directed Mr Justice Othman [the then Chief Justice] to forward to him the names of judges and magistrates with exemplary records so that they could be rewarded for their service” (*The Citizen* 5th February 2016; see also *The Citizen* 26th February 2016)¹⁴.

Outside the Parliament, opposition parties have found their space narrowed after the President banned political rallies and demonstrations. More than 400 members and leaders from the opposition

¹³ Blinded in social conservatism, Magufuli downplays both the economic hardships which push young girls to engage in early sex so as to meet their basic needs (Ivy 2015, 10), and the sexual violence against children which have become rampant, and among the major causes of early pregnancies. Between 2013 and 2016, for instance, about 23,000 children were reported to have been raped (LHRC and ZLSC 2017).

¹⁴ Following their boss’s style, the president’s appointees – ministers, regional and district commissioners – have also attacked the judiciary (with the Dar es Salaam regional commissioner going as far as banning the ward land tribunals in ‘his’ region) and have invoked their detention powers to jail activists, journalists, political opponents, and even ordinary citizen (*Mwananchi* 8th February 2017; *Mwananchi* 18th May 2017). The Hai District Commissioner, for example, ordered teachers to be detained for allegedly failing to know the DC’s name (LHRC 2018; *Mwananchi* 24th August 2017). Government agencies have also refused to implement court orders – the good example being violation of a court injunction against demolitions in Kimara, Dar es Salaam (*The Citizen* 28th August 2017).

CHADEMA have been detained between 2016 and 2018, while critical voices within the ruling party itself have publicly feared for their lives. Nape Nnauye an MP from the ruling CCM was threatened with a pistol by state security agents. Later, Tundu Lissu, an opposition MP and a fierce critic of Magufuli, narrowly escaped death after he was shot multiple times by people who have not been identified to date. Some analysts think that the shooting of Lissu was done by conspirators against the Magufuli government (Chahali 2017) but Lissu himself maintains that it was “a politically motivated assassination attempt” (*The Citizen*, 6th January 2018, 1&2). Amid increasing cases of abduction of journalists, artists, activists, two ward-level opposition leaders were recently murdered (*The Citizen*, 9th September 2017, 4).

The Media Services Act 2016 passed under the Magufuli regime gives government power to control the content of the media. Section 59 of the Act gives the Information Minister powers to “prohibit or otherwise sanction the publication of any content that jeopardizes national security or public safety” while section 7 (2) forces the media houses “to broadcast or publish news or issues of national importance as the Government may direct.” Sections 38(3) and 54(1) criminalize the publication of what the government considers to be defamatory, seditious or false material all of which of are punishable by either financial penalties or imprisonment or both. In a period of two years, five radio and TV stations have been given financial penalties, 5 newspapers and 2 radio stations have been temporarily shut down, and one newspaper has been permanently banned. In an unprecedented move of self-censor, the *Nipashe Jumapili* tabloid decided to punish itself by 90-day self-ban after it had published an article that did not please the President (*Mwananchi* 15th January 2018; *The Guardian* 3rd November 2017, 1–2).

Thanks to the *Cyber Crime Act 2015* the state machinery has infiltrated even private social media groups (such as whatsapp and facebook) and convicted people for publishing alleged defamatory remarks¹⁵ on government leaders or providing false information.

In short, the Magufuli government has been very consistent in its crackdown on the civil society – whether it is political parties, media, non-governmental organisation, or universities. It is worthwhile to note that the post-independence reality in African countries attests to the fact that the civil society has been an arena of the petty bourgeoisie – the educated as well as economic and political elites. The masses have always found the law unjust to them. Thus, while the elites within the civil society push for “rule of law,” the masses have been pushing for “rule of justice” (Shivji 1985).

Rural struggles and Magufuli’s Reforms

To understand where Magufuli derives his legitimacy among labouring classes in rural areas, we have to look into what Partha Chatterjee (2004) refers to as the *political society*, that is an arena by which groups of the urban and rural poor groups interact with decision makers to accrue benefits from the system which is otherwise unjust to them. Members of the political society always act on the extra-legal sphere and the government would want to maintain that relationship in order to avoid radically reforming the entire socio-political system which requires among other things a reconfiguration of class power.

Thus, while closing windows for the civil society, Magufuli has opened some space for the political society. On several occasions he has joined the street vendors’ protest against being evicted from the city centre and ordered municipal authorities to let the vendors run their businesses without any disturbance. At his political rallies, the President adjudicates cases, announces major policy shifts,

¹⁵ One of those arrested was Dennis Mtengwa who wrote thus in a whatsapp group: “I don’t know what is going on in JPM’s [John Pombe Magufuli’s] head... He doesn’t even know how to say sorry. We are at this stage because of one person who believes that what he thinks is always right. He needs to understand that politics isn’t about resentment and the Opposition isn’t the enemy.. He should learn to compete with the Opposition on the basis of debate, not force” (LHRC 2017, 40).

offers money to the needy and fire public servants. Likewise, he has conceded to the demands of some of the rural-based movements to have their grabbed land restored to them.

The Kidago Farm Land Movement

Kidago Farm No. 4 is a 1080 ha land estate, located in Lukonde village (formerly Kikundi) in Morogoro Rural District. The Morogoro region is the second largest region in Tanzania, covering an area of 73,039 km². It is, however, one of the leading regions in land dispossession, triggering violent clashes between pastoralists and peasants on the one hand, and peasant-led movements, on the other hand, to regain their land from large-scale land occupants.

The Kidago land movement is therefore a popular movement, bringing together rural producers (the majority being poor and middle peasants, with a handful of rich peasants) to reclaim the land that has been taken away by a large-scale investor.

The movement has its root in the forced villagisation of the Nyerere era whereby families were moved from their original settlements to form socialist villages for easy delivery of services and collective production. During the era of liberalisation, the people started going back to their original settlements. The same happened to Kidago Farm no 4. However, the land was given to Uluguru Tailors Cooperative Society in the mid 1980's without the villagers being aware. Uluguru did not develop the land. In the mid 1990's individuals claiming to act on behalf of the now defunct cooperative started collecting rent from the villagers for using the land¹⁶. The rent being higher, the villagers protested it. They cited Nyerere who had abolished "nyarubanja" (a precolonial feudal system in North Western Tanzania) and ensured villagers access to land (interview with Sefu Litai, Omary J. Chunga, and Chaula Juma 23rd December 2017, Morogoro). In 1999, they passed a resolution through the village assembly to have the title deed revoked (Kijiji cha Kikundi 1999).

Morogoro District authorities were then favourable to the villagers. In their several letters to the Commissioner for Lands, they argued that Uluguru had violated the conditions for holding the title deed and recommended the revocation of the title deed and redistribution of the land to villagers (Ofisi ya Mkurugenzi Mtendaji – Morogoro 2000; Ofisi ya Waziri Mkuu 2008). However, Uluguru took the matter to a court, which concluded in its favour. In October 2005, the Office of the Morogoro District Executive Secretary wrote to the Commissioner of Land blaming him for his negligence of the matter and objecting to the legally questionable court award to Uluguru (Ofisi ya Mkurugenzi Mtendaji – Morogoro 2005a).

Uluguru went further and sold the land to a new investor, Mgolole Agro-Processing Ltd, owned by a former professor of Sokoine University at Tshs 20 million. In 2010, having changed the name in the title deed, the new investor used the title deed to acquire a Tshs 600 million bank loan. The new title deed and the loan were issued on the same day, and at the time when the government was facilitating large-scale land acquisitions under the *Kilimo Kwanza initiative*.

The new investor used state organs to terrorize and detain the leading activists in the Kidago Land Movement, burned the villagers houses and crops, as a way of evicting them from the farm. But the majority of the villagers refused to leave, instead they continued with the struggle to regain ownership of their land.

They have no faith in the law and court system even they have taken their case to court as a delaying tactic. The judge ruled in favour of the new holder of the title deed. When the villagers claimed to be born on the land, the judge retorted that such a claim was not backed by "documentary evidence." He declared them "trespassers to the suit land" and ordered them "to vacate the suit land within three months." Should "they fail to do so within the given period," the judge added, "they should be evicted

¹⁶ They were required to pay rent in money (Tshs 6,000/= per acre) or in produce (1 sac of rice or maize per acre).

therefrom” (*Bananga and Others v Uluguru Tailors and Shem*¹⁷). The villagers told the court “that they cannot move from the suit land because they do not have another place to go” but the judge ruled that “they are not entitled to any relief” (ibid).

The villagers use all techniques at their disposal including forging alliances with NGO’s, journalists, progressive scholar-activists, and some sympathetic voices within the ruling party, regional commissioners’ office and the immigration department.

They now fight three battles against their “enemy”: as a land grabber, who took away land from rural producers; as a speculator who used the title deed to gain a bank loan and did not invest in the farm; as an outsider and an illegal immigrant, citing his alleged Rwandese/Tutsi origin as a source of his “cruelty.” They claim their only hope is President Magufuli because he is “the only one up there” who understands their language and has delivered justice to other villagers with the same cause (Interview with Mary Sanga, Hamdani Chawila and Athumani Tambauone, Morogoro 23rd December 2017).

The mini-land reform

Since coming to power the Magufuli government has responded to two major demands of rural-based movements: the removal of the “nuisance” taxes in agriculture and the revocation of titles of some absentee landlords. The revocation of titles is limited to “absentee” landlords. In Kilosa District¹⁸, for instance, only 11 out of 192 estates were confiscated by the Magufuli government (TALA 2018). The confiscated land is handed over to district and regional authorities with an order to strike a balance between redistribution among village members and large-scale investment needs. The land for investment is not given to the village but is put in the “Land Bank” which falls under the general land category. The statistics calculated from the *Government Gazette* of November 2015 indicate that the government revoked about 13658 acres (or 5527 ha) of land, while at the same time it transferred some 10096 ha from the village land into general land for investment purposes. The double process of revoking titles on the one hand and the acquisition of huge tracts of village land is going on simultaneously, with the president himself performing the double roles in public meetings.

Currently, the Magufuli government is in the process of changing the Land Policy so as to enhance the role of the central government in the management of village land and to facilitate the easy acquisition of village land for investment purposes. Commenting on the new land policy, Marcelina Charles Kibena, a smallholder peasant and rural activist based in Morogoro argued that it aims at facilitating “double robbery”:

Firstly, villagers are robbed of their land which they use for production. That land moves from the ownership of the many, who are rural producers and is put in the ownership of a few, who are big capitalists. Secondly, villagers are dispossessed of their power to manage and control the land resource, which is taken away from a democratic entity [ie. the village assembly] to be bestowed on an office of a bureaucrat (Kibena 2018, author’s translation).

The 2016 draft land policy not only consolidates the radical title in the President but also gives the office of the Commissioner for Lands (represented at district level by land officers) a direct mandate over village land.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to understand the changes taking place in Tanzania as a result of the 2008 global crisis of neoliberal capitalism. The Magufuli Presidency came to rescue capital much as it also co-opts some of the demands of lower classes. His economic vision, albeit capitalist, challenges the

¹⁷ Land case no. 320 of 2013, High Court of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, unreported.

¹⁸ This is one of the districts where violent clashes between pastoralists and peasants have been taking place due to shortage of land.

neoliberalism in its double manifestation as an ideology of recolonisation of peripheral countries and as a war on laboring classes. Magufuli has not been able to build a credible alternative but he has managed – in some cases – to reassert the country’s right to self-determination and renegotiate the terms of exploitation by multinational corporations. While the presidency exhibits some nationalist elements, the Tanzanian state continues to be neoliberal in its economic outlook and this explains the continuity of neoliberal policies, especially in agriculture.

Politically, the state has embraced the social conservatism and xenophobic nationalism that have eroded some of the gains made in gender and sexuality matters and has undone the pan-Africanist and internationalist ideals that guided Tanzania’s foreign policy in during the Nyerere era. The state is united in its generalized crackdown on the civil society while at the same time co-opting some of the demands of the political society – including rural movements. Some of the concessions made by the state (such the revocation of title deeds of absentee landlords) are only selective and do not cover the rural society as a whole. Moreover, they come as gifts from an authoritarian ruler, when and how he deems fit, to obedient groups, with the expectation that they will behave and not ask for more. Magufuli careful in his reforms to make sure that most of the power continues to remain in the Presidency.

The challenge to the area-based rural movements is to forge unity among all the rural producers and demand for democratization of ownership and control of the land, and oppose the ‘green revolution’ policies that Magufuli inherited from the previous regimes. Such a movement may want to recuperate the pan-African and internationalist ideals of the Nyerere era in order to counter the chauvinistic outlook of the current regime.

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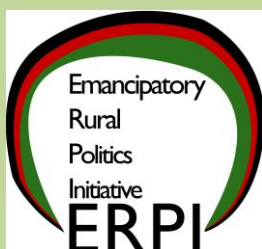
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