



PROGRAM IN
Agrarian Studies
YALE UNIVERSITY

Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
YALE UNIVERSITY
SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2013

Conference Paper #21

The Developmental State and Food Sovereignty in Tanzania

Richard Mbunda

T

N

I



YALE SUSTAINABLE
FOOD PROJECT

Food First

INSTITUTE FOR FOOD AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

ISS International
Institute of Social Studies



ICAS
Initiatives in Critical Agrarian Studies

The Journal of
PEASANT
STUDIES

critical perspectives on rural politics and development



The Developmental State and Food Sovereignty in Tanzania

Richard Mbunda

Conference paper for discussion at:

Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue

International Conference

September 14-15, 2013

Convened by

Program in Agrarian Studies, Yale University

204 Prospect Street, # 204, New Haven, CT 06520 USA

<http://www.yale.edu/agrarianstudies/>

The Journal of Peasant Studies

www.informaworld.com/jps

Yale Sustainable Food Project

www.yale.edu/sustainablefood/

in collaboration with

Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy

398 60th Street, Oakland, CA 94618 USA

www.foodfirst.org

Initiatives in Critical Agrarian Studies (ICAS)

International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)

P.O. Box 29776, 2502 LT The Hague, The Netherlands

www.iss.nl/icas

Transnational Institute (TNI)

PO Box 14656, 1001 LD Amsterdam, The Netherlands

www.tni.org

with support from

The Macmillan Center, the Edward J. and Dorothy Clarke Kempf Memorial Fund and the South Asian Studies Council at Yale University

http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/kempf_fund.htm

<http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/southasia>

© July 2013 All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher and the author.

Abstract

Tanzania has been experiencing different periods of food shortages mainly because of insufficient food production. While the country has an undisputable potential for food production, the state and its development partners such the World Bank, believe that the unsustainable peasant food production is the main cause of the food crisis. As a panacea to the food crisis, a call for de-peasantization in favor of commercial large scale farming is advocated. This paper is against de-peasantization, in light of the fact that for a country that is largely agrarian, achieving food self-sufficiency should began with the peasants. The principles of food sovereignty must be adopted and the orientation of the state must be developmental. The state must play the 'activist' role in investing heavily in agricultural related projects as well as a 'de-activist' role by reducing the budget of sectors that do not add direct value to the national project.

Introduction

Tanzania, like many other Sub-Saharan African countries, has been experiencing different periods of food shortages resulting from insufficient food production. Unsupportive natural resource base and 'unsustainable' peasant food production are often cited as the main reasons for inadequate food production in Africa. For example, in his comparative analysis of African agriculture with that of Asia and Latin America, Paarlberg (1999) concludes that Africa has poor soils, unpredictable weather, and topography unsuitable for irrigation farming. As such Africa's natural resource base has failed to support food production and the agricultural sector as a whole. Although Paarlberg's observation may partly hold some truth, but on the whole, this argument is wrongly generalized to apply to all countries in Africa. A country by country assessment of its potential for agriculture can easily refute Paarlberg's conclusion. In addition to that this argument also does not resonate with reports of international institution's assessment of the Africa's agriculture, which is ranked within the category of high potential. The report of the Economic Commission for Africa (2003), for example, underscores Africa's comparative advantage in the production and export of agricultural goods.

Peasant agriculture has also been disparaged as the main source of insufficient food production in Africa. The World Bank (2008), for example, believes that the food crisis in Africa is by and large a function of unviable peasant agriculture. The World Bank, like many proponents of the neo-liberal paradigm, are particularly unmoved by cultivation in small plots, use of crude farm implements such as hand hoes, predominance use of family labor and a general subsistence orientation of the peasantry. The World Bank (Ibid) believes that large commercial investors have the potential to use land effectively and produce efficiently than the 80 per cent of the

peasants swarming the sector. As such, the World Bank has been advocating for a *de-peasantization* policy with the aim of reducing the number people involved in farming to mirror the one-digit figures of developed countries (Holt-Giménez and Patel 2009: 45). The rural people should, therefore, leave the countryside to provide labour in other sectors.

Generally, the World Bank's view overlooks the fact that peasants have been the major source of food in many developing countries, and sometimes producing above 100 percent self-sufficiency ratio. It is the system in which they operate that has made them less productive. Regarding the *de-peasantization* policy advocated by the World Bank, three critical observations can be made. First, the policy is implicitly condoning incidences of land grabbing by large investors and the displacement of poor people from their fertile land believing that large investors are a solution to the food crisis. Second, taking Tanzania as an example, there are too few non-agricultural sector jobs that could accommodate the uneducated poverty stricken rural people. This is partly because, apart from lacking the required skills, the other sectors, such as industry and the service sector, are not very well developed and cannot offer adequate opportunities to such people. Meanwhile, the poor, who will be displaced from their land, will neither be able to produce their own food nor have income to access food regardless of its availability.

Finally, large investors taking land that is suitable for food production may not necessarily produce food crops. For example, Tanzania has witnessed a scramble for large tracts of land for biofuel production (Madoffe et al 2009, Kamata 2009). The nation's capacity to produce enough food is thus affected by land used for production of crops for biofuel. In the long run this will exacerbate the food shortage leading to escalating food prices. Even when these investors produce food, their target could be external markets rather than domestic market. In this paper we argue that an analysis of food shortages in the context of peasant agriculture should be aligned with the principles of food sovereignty in terms of the peasants' control of the production process and their role in the market. Most importantly, the role of the state to overseeing the food production process of the peasantry is fundamental to guaranteeing availability of food and food sovereignty. The role of state is analyzed within the broader perspective of state developmentalism as one of the theories of political economy.

Conceptualizing Food Sovereignty in the Context of the Developmental State

Food sovereignty sums up the peasants' desire of a democratic control of the food system as opposed to the corporate control by the multinationals (Holt-Giménez & Patel 2009). As such, food sovereignty is both a means towards that desire and an end in itself. As a means, food sovereignty calls for producers' control of the production process including land, water, and other productive resources (Wittman et al 2011, SWAC 2007). Other actions that are

fundamental as a means towards food sovereignty are protecting seeds as a major source of food, protecting internal markets from overly competitive imports, and the public support in terms of investments geared towards ensuring a sustained local production (SWAC 2007). As an end in itself, food sovereignty imply a condition where there is food self-sufficiency that has been realized through the consumption of domestically produced food; food imports do not displace local production; food producers have fair prices and are protected from cheap externally dumped food; and food producers have autonomy and control of the production process. As such, it becomes the producers' right (the peasants) to the control of the food system.

In realization of the democratic control of the food system, however, multiple actors must play certain roles. Apart from the food producers to utilize their rights effectively, the state must also play a very significant role policy wise. For example, the state must formulate policies that will ensure peasants have control of the production process, including some critical legislation regarding ownership of land and other productive resources and the protection of seeds. In addition to that the state must ensure food producers have a fair share of the benefits obtained from their investment in the farm. It is important, therefore, to discuss the nature and character of a state that might be inclined to facilitate the realization of food sovereignty.

For majority of Sub-Saharan Africa, the agricultural sector is considered to be the backbone of the economy. In Tanzania for example, as per the budget speech of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives (URT 2013), the sector as the whole employs over 75 percent of the population. The agriculture sector contributes 95 percent of the food consumed domestically and contributed 26.8 to GDP in 2012. The sector has also attracted significant foreign currency through exportation of crops. Agriculture is also identified as an engine that provides a forward and backward linkage with other sectors in the country. For example, 65 percent of raw materials used in the domestic industries come from the agricultural sector. The above facts indicate that the country will not achieve sustainable development at the level of reducing poverty for a majority of Tanzanians without investing a great deal in the agricultural sector.

As a theory, state developmentalism emerged as a critique of the neo-liberal theory, which calls for a minimalist role of the state- tying it to its traditional ones like maintaining law and order and macroeconomic stability- so as to allow the market to operate freely (Mhone 2003). Developmentalism assumes that although the market is a fundamental force of the economy, at times it can fail to address pressing socio-economic issues affecting the society. As such, where there are market imperfections, the state must play an activist/dirigist or deactivist role to govern and guide the market toward attainment of the goal of economic development

(Mhone 2003; Clark & Jung 2002). Proponents of this theory believe that the developmental state has transformed the countries of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore from agrarian economies to lively industrial economies (Kim 1993; Clark & Jung 2002). According to Johnson (in Kim 1993) states must adopt the following orientation in order to be developmental in nature:

- They must be plan rational rather than market rational in the sense that the developmental project is not left in the hands of the market alone;
- States should play an actual role in the design and implementation of the developmental project rather than merely formulating rules to regulate the economy. Thus, the state should be developmental rather than regulatory;
- Developmental states prioritize domestic growth policies rather than incentivising predatory foreign investments. If external economic resources are to be sought, they must be used productively and selectively to serve local interests and the national development project.

The developmental state theory has however faced some criticism especially with its application to the African context. As pointed out by Mkandawire (2001) some critics believe that it is impossible to have developmental states in Africa. It is argued for example that African states lack an ideology that is consistent with developmentalism. In addition to that African states have failed to establish themselves as legal-rational institutions instead they are patrimonial in nature. As Mkandawire puts it (2001), African states are seen as “essentially rent generating institutions that inhibit efficient allocation of resources”. Dependence is also heavily pronounced as a condition that may deprive African states of their autonomy to play the developmental role. However, as Mkandawire (ibid) argues, these weaknesses merely represent contextual challenges facing the African states if they are to be developmental in nature, which is not an impossible task. In this paper we propose that African states must overcome these challenges to be developmental in nature for them to realize the desired end of food sovereignty.

The State of Food in Tanzania

Tanzania has experienced inconsistencies with regard to the food security trend since 1970s. A significant proportion of the Tanzanian population was among the 500 million people in developing countries who were affected by the 1974 hunger crisis, and the first President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere had to mobilize people to plant draught-resistant crops (Kamata, 2009). The Tanzania Government also declared food shortage of about 174,000 tonnes in 1995, and it was compelled to seek food aid from donors who donated 64,500 tonnes of maize and

9,500 tonnes of rice (URT 1995). In 2000, the Rapid Vulnerability Assessment Report carried out by the Tanzania Food Security Information Team (FSIT) reported that 33 districts in 11 regions had about 1.3 million people who were food insecure. Likewise, the assessment carried out by FSIT between October 2009 – March 2010, which is cited in the report of Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET 2010), shows that more than 1.5 million people in 63 districts of 15 regions, were food insecure. The 2011/2012 Budget Speech also reported that 56 districts in Tanzania were affected by food shortages. More recently, in the 2012/2013 budget speech the Government also admitted to have sought food aid from international organizations such as the World Food Program (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The hunger incidences are an embarrassment to a country that is touted to hold a comparatively high potential for agricultural production. According to Lele (1989) Tanzania is not only endowed with arable land, which is about 56 per cent of its total usable land, but also it has bimodal patterns of rainfall in some parts of the country to support food production twice a year. In addition to that, the country has about 29.4 million hectares suitable for irrigation farming but only 1 percent of this land is being utilized. The World Bank study (2000) also indicates that Tanzania has a strong comparative advantage in maize, paddy and all other traditional export crops that could contribute significantly to national wealth creation (World Bank 2000).

Generally, as noted above the agricultural sector is in crisis. Given its importance in the national economy, poor performance of the agricultural sector has affected different segments of the Tanzanian population. While peasants are deprived of attractive returns for their inputs in the production of agricultural products, the Government has failed to secure enough revenue due to low exports. Rural household have failed to produce sufficient food for their use and for sale to meet other basic needs. Urban dwellers are also affected by skyrocketing food prices resulted from its unavailability. Therefore, poor performance of the agricultural sector in Tanzania has left both producers and consumers vulnerable.

The Peasantry and Food production in Tanzania

Over 80 percent of the people who are involved in the agricultural sector are peasants. The Tanzanian government is touting peasants as the main producers of food to feed the country. The Government believes that the country is most likely to meet the food self-sufficiency ratio if peasant agriculture is not affected by rain failure or other natural disasters (URT 2013). Ironically, the peasants, who presumably feed the nation, are a more vulnerable group when the country is stricken by the hunger crisis. Worse still, the FAO study, which was carried out by Maltsoğlu & Khwaja (2010) (see table below), shows that over 70 percent of people with both income and food poverty are those who are involved in the production of food and cash crops.

Table 1: Distribution of Poverty by Main Source of Cash Income in Tanzania.

Cash Income Source	Percentage of the Poor
Sales of food crops	49.6
Sales of livestock	7.2
Sales of livestock products	1.4
Sales of cash crops	20.5
Business income	8.4
Wages and salaries in cash	3.6
Other casual cash earnings	4.9
Cash remittances	2.3
Fishing	1.5
Other	3.3

Source: Data from FAO carried out by Maltsoğlu & Khwaja in 2010.

The critical question at this juncture is whether or not peasant food production is unsustainable and undesirable for Tanzania's food security as the neo-liberal scholars would like us to believe. And to answer this question one must examine the challenges that the peasants face, inhibiting in turn, the realization of their great production potential. The subsequent sections will discuss some of the critical issues regarding peasant food production in Tanzania.

Systemic Challenges to the Peasant Food Production

One of the main challenges facing peasants is the ownership and use of land. Land is an essential resource for food production. Section 76 (1) of the Regulations guiding the Village Land Act No. 5 of 1999 entitles the Village Council to allocate about 20 hectares (equivalent to 50 acres) to an individual or group under a certificate of customary rights. However, majority of the villagers are unable to cultivate the whole land due to various reasons. It was noted for example, that peasants are able to use up to 5 hectares per season to cultivate food crops, which is hardly 25 percent of the land they are entitled to own (Mbunda 2011, Maltsoğlu & Khwaja 2010). As such the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) has described Tanzania in its website as having large and underutilized land, which is referred to as 'virgin land'. It is stated that of the 44 million hectares of arable land, only 23% is being utilized for agriculture. On the one hand, the TIC's description serves as an enticement to potential foreign investments in agriculture while on the other hand it continues to offend some analysts who think this description sets a scene for future conflicts (Sulle 2010; Chambi & Baha, 2010).

Table 2: Arable Land for Agriculture in Tanzania.

Land use	Million Hectares
Total usable land	94.5
Arable land	44
Area suitable for irrigation	29.4
High development potential	2.3
Land under medium and large farming	1.5
Range land	50
Land under livestock	26

Source: TIC Website

The security of tenure for peasants over ownership of land is at stake given the fact that majority of major foreign investments in the agricultural sector are attracted to use the same village land. It is reported, for example, that land used by companies in the Rufiji River Basin such as the Korean Rural Community Cooperation (KRC), which is estimated to be in between 50,000 – 100,000 hectares is out-rightly owned by villagers (Kamata & Mwami 2011, Locher & Sulle 2013).

Second, farm implements present another critical challenge to peasant agriculture in Tanzania. In 1968, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's first President and father of the nation, wrote in his *Ujamaa* book that Tanzanians have failed to use land effectively because they farm using hand hoes. Almost forty years later, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Cooperatives (URT 2006), reiterated the same thing, stating that the low production of agricultural goods is caused by, inter alia, crude technology used in the production process. Peasants, who are the majority in the agricultural sector, rely on a hand hoe for production. According to Maltsoğlu & Khwaja (2010) only 10 percent of the Tanzanian crop producing land is cultivated by using tractors. Again, only 20 percent of the land is cultivated by using ox ploughs. The remaining area, which is 70 percent, is cultivated by using hand hoe, a farming implement for the majority peasants. This can explain why peasants are unable to use all the land that they are legally entitled to own to maximize production.

Access to some key agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, seeds and pesticides is another perilous challenge to peasants who are engaged in food production in Tanzania. With regard to fertilizers, Tanzania ranks down the ladder among countries with the lowest chemical fertilizer application in its agricultural sector. The Agriculture Council of Tanzania's study (ACT 2012) on distribution, access and application of agricultural inputs noted that the actual demand of chemical fertilizers is 385,000MT, but only 43% of this quantity is supplied in Tanzania. That is

not to say, all the fertilizer that is supplied is applied by the producers. The ACT study also indicates that only 11.6 percent of households engaged in agricultural production use chemical fertilizers. According to Minot (in ACT 2012) the unparalleled application of fertilizers to majority peasants in Tanzania is explained by the fact that chemical fertilizers are sold at prices that are unaffordable to majority of the producers. However, there are producers who believe that chemical fertilizers are of no use to their agricultural system. Some of them either farm in naturally very fertile lands or use organic fertilizers for production. Other producers are simply uneasy with the inconsistent nature of the use of the chemical fertilizers. They believe that if their land gets used to chemical fertilizers, outputs will be gravely affected the moment the chemical fertilizers become unaffordable or inaccessible.

Seeds also present a severe challenge to peasants engaged in food production. The debate on seeds revolves around either using improved seeds or the peasants should retain their traditional seeds to avoid dependency and problems of inaccessibility. Although there are local companies that supply improved seeds such as Katrin (supplying paddy) and Uyole and Ilonga supplying maize, a substantial quantity of such seeds are imported. It is reported for example that, between 2000 and 2009 improved seeds imported from the United States of America alone totaled 2,163,383 kilograms, higher than any other country (ACT 2012). The use of imported improved seeds has created dependency to some of the food producers, who are forced to buy the seeds every cultivating season (Mbunda 2011). Unlike the traditional seeds, improved seeds cannot produce the same quantity and quality of outputs when the previous yields are used. However, like fertilizers, improved seeds have been approached cautiously by peasants because of unpredictability in terms of supply as well as skyrocketing prices, which have a direct bearing to their food system. The ASDP report (2011) noted that only 19.5 percent of the households in Tanzania use improved seeds, while majority opt to stick with their traditional seeds.

Table 3: Application of Seeds, fertilizers and Chemicals in Tanzania

Source: Data from ASDP Evaluation report 2011, modified by the author.

Input	Quantity (in %)
Improved Seeds	19.5
Chemical Fertilizers	11.6
Insecticide/Fungicide	14

Moreover, the production process carried out by peasants is mostly rain-fed. Dependence on seasonal rains has affected output levels especially when there are rainfall variations and drought. In its budget speeches, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, admits that, variations in rainfall have serious ramifications on the country's food self-sufficiency (URT 2011, URT 2012). Equally, the 2009 Tanzania Economic Survey reveals that production of crops (mostly food crops) was not satisfactory that year mainly because of adverse weather. Maize, which is the staple food crop in Tanzania, decreased in terms of production by 6.5 percent. Such a decrease endangers food security at the household level and thus the sale of surplus produce is out of bounds for the affected households.

The solution to dependence on rain-fed crop production is the use of water for irrigation. Official data show that a total of 29.4 million hectares are suitable for irrigation farming in Tanzania. However, only 326,492 hectares have been developed for irrigation farming. This is an insignificant size of the land that is suitable for irrigation farming. Water for irrigation can be captured from rivers, lakes, dams and rainfall. However, the infrastructure required for sustainable irrigation farming is expensive for a single or even a group of peasants. It was noted, for example, in Chalinze- Coastal region, there are seasonal rivers crossing the farming area inhabited by peasants, but they have no means to harvest such water to be used for irrigation farming (Mbunda Op cit).

Capital is another major challenge for peasants to augment their food production. A study carried by the Food and Agriculture Organization (Maltsoğlu & Khwaja 2010) indicates that only 22 percent of agriculture is commercial. It is instructive to note that this commercial agriculture involves the cultivation of cash crops such as coffee, sisal, cotton and biofuel crops rather than food. A large percentage of the farmers, who are also food producers are peasants, living below the poverty line (Ibid). If food production is to improve their wellbeing peasants must be able to afford improved seeds, chemical fertilizers and insecticides, which is again a major challenge to them. As noted earlier, over 49 percent of the poor in Tanzania earn their income by selling food crops.

The market for food crops has been very unpredictable, and quite often, operate against peasants. The scenario in Tanzania was summed up by Hon. Anna Tibaijuka, Minister for Lands and Housing Development in her contribution on the African Development agenda at the Mwalimu Nyerere Festival Week in 2013. Tibaijuka said that the problem of peasant agriculture in Tanzania starts with a good harvest. When crop yields are high for every producer, the prices are driven down by unfair competition. The food merchants take advantage of the situation to buy crops at very low prices. The producers are then forced to sell products below the cost of production, so that they can meet other basic needs including health care, clothing and school

fee for their children. The unpredictability of the market has crippled the 'capital' of many small-scale producers who attempt to 'invest' in the food production sector. Peasants also have very poor storage capacity to be able to withstand the temptation to sell their crops when prices are low. In the study on *Kilimo Kwanza* and small scale producers (Mbunda 2011), Simanjiro (located in Arusha region), provided a good example, of the market operating against small producers. These producers were aided by irrigation water, and they produced in relative high quantity paddy and onions. However, during harvest, the market was unfavourably hostile to the producers forcing them to sell below the anticipated selling price in order to minimize loss and to meet other demands.

In sum, the major challenge for peasant food production is lack of control of the production process. Uncertainties exist in terms of the land they use should use for production, where they are likely to face competition over it from large scale farmers including multinational corporations. Peasants are dependent on imported seeds, fertilizers and other chemicals, which are in the hands of multinational corporations. They are not sure of accessing such inputs because they lack capital. In addition to that, they operate in an environment where the market for their crops is unpredictable, but they also face competition from food importers who flood the domestic food market with relatively low priced stuff.

To the large extent, these challenges can be overcome if the food system is eventually transformed. It is proposed in this paper that the state must play a very important role if the food system is to be altered. However, the state in Tanzania has largely perceived food shortages as an emergency resulting from crop failure instead of addressing the above challenges with a view to augment peasant food production. The role of the state in the general context of food production in Tanzania is analyzed in the subsequent sections:

The State and Agriculture in Tanzania

The role of the state in the agricultural sector in Tanzania can be analyzed depending on the leadership of the time and landmark issues that shaped the country's political economy. Shivji (2009) classifies the first two decades after independence, which is the 1960s to 1970s as the phase of developmentalism. This phase was guided by the Arusha Declaration on Socialism and Self-Reliance, adopted in 1967 under the first President and Tanzania's statesman Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. The state in this phase had the task of building the nation and building the economy. Shivji (Ibid) believes that the state preceded the nation in the first decade of its independence that is why it had to embark on a national building project. For a country with diverse history and over 120 tribes, it was necessary to forge a common history. Tanzania is touted to have been very successful in its nation building project.

The task more challenging task was that of developing the economy. The Arusha Declaration identified agriculture as the engine of development and it adopted it as a national project. In pioneering agricultural development, the state implemented two parallel programs. First, the state took a central role in the production of crops through the National Agriculture and Food Corporation (NAFCO) and keeping livestock through the National Ranching Company Limited (NARCO) with the view to ensure food security and to eliminate external dependence. Secondly, the state thought to promote economic development through creating a robust agrarian society in rural Tanzania. As such, the state organized peasants to live and work together in communes, popularly known in Tanzania as Ujamaa villages, with the view to creating a classless society without 'exploitation of man by man'. It is believed by some analysts that, the Tanzania state played a developmental role, which included availing people in the ujamaa villages with agricultural inputs and extension services (Shivji 2009, Sundet 2007,). Agricultural inputs that the state provided as subsidy to ujamaa villages are fertilizers, insecticides and improved seeds (Bryceson 1993).

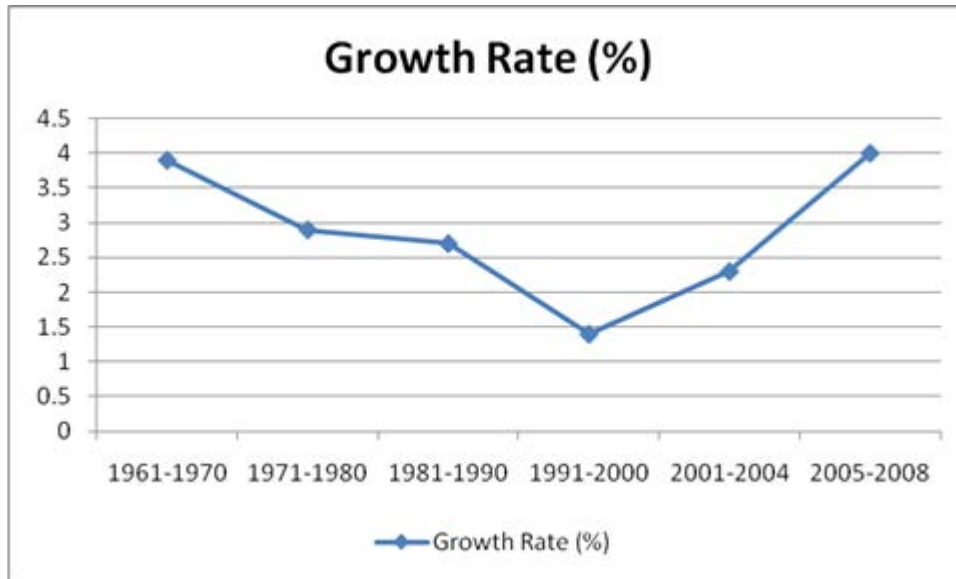
There is also evidence that, as Mbilinyi et al (1999) attest, the Government introduced crop schemes and soft credit programs all targeting peasants to help them augment their production. In addition to that, pan-territorial pricing mechanisms were introduced aimed at setting uniform prices for the country so as to achieve regional equality and encourage all parts of the country to produce (Suzuki & Bernard 1987). This pricing policy was used for food crops such as maize, paddy and wheat. The state also introduced marketing development boards that were engaged in buying crops, particularly maize, which was highlighted as staple food crop in the country.

The second phase in our analysis of the role of the state falls within the third decade after independence, which is the 1980s. Shivji (2009) refers to this phase as the 'lost decade' inasmuch as the Tanzanian state was torn between continuing to pursue state guided developmental project and the *Ujamaa* village policy or to adopt the neo-liberal paradigm proposed by the international financial institutions (World Bank and the International Monetary Fund). This decade was characterized by an economic crisis, which the international institutions perceived to have emanated from the failure of state's *Ujamaa* policies. As such, a debate was raised as to whether it resulted from malfunctioned domestic policies or the hostile international market (Bryceson 1993: 22). The crisis forced Tanzania to seek assistance from the IMF, which saw an agreement being reached for a three-year standby facility (Ibid). However, the agreement collapsed partly because the Government had exceeded the budget limit which was imposed by the IMF. Mwalimu Nyerere, who was President from independence up to 1985, had some serious reservations to the IMF conditions. Nyerere was reluctant to accept even the World Bank's proposed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) which were devised and

launched in 1982. The structural Adjustment Programmes, advocated by the World Bank, proposed among other things, getting rid of budget deficits and cutting subsidies for agriculture. Faced with the economic crisis and the pressure of the international institutions to reform, Nyerere opted to step down as President and Ali Hassan Mwinyi took over. Although President Mwinyi accented to the SAPs when he was elected to office in 1985, he was still cautious about it, allowing only moderate reforms (Bryceson 1993: 28). The agriculture sector was thus left in the hands of the market, which as Tony Waters (1997) argues, did not improve the agricultural sector in the Tanzania.

The third phase is referred to as the age of globalised neo-liberalism. This phase began in 1990s with a set of policies advocating for marketization, liberalization, and privatization. In Tanzania, the neoliberal policies were legitimized by the 1991 Zanzibar Resolution, which dismantled completely the principles of the Arusha Declaration on *Ujamaa* and Self-reliance. Apart from opening up the market, known commonly with a Swahili coining '*Ruksa*', the Zanzibar Resolution, legitimized economic aggressiveness not only to the citizens but also the political leadership. Contrary to the ideals of the Arusha Declaration, leaders were now allowed to receive double salaries as well as to invest and obtain income from the investments (Tripp, 1997). Shivji (2009) believes that neoliberal policies are merely a slight modification of the Structural Adjustment Programs, because they partly seek to address the same issues such as poverty, debt relief, AIDs fund, and a modest subsidy for primary education.

The adoption of neo-liberal policies had some serious ramifications to the agricultural sector in Tanzania. For example, these policies eroded the state's support of the agricultural sector. According to Mbilinyi et al (1999), the equity policies of the late 1960s and 1970s were reversed and farm support to food producers was swiftly withdrawn. World Bank study (2000) shows that in the 1980s subsidies directed to the agricultural sector had reached USD 10- 17 million but they were reduced to zero in 1994. It is not surprising therefore that in 1990s the growth rate of the agricultural sector in general fell to 1.4 percent. At the same time, however, market liberalization was entrenched and market oriented strategies of agriculture were adopted. Farm inputs were sold at high prices, and crops such as maize and rice were bought directly by petty traders at very low prices. Consequently, peasants could not obtain the desired returns from their farms and majority of them abandoned the use of farm inputs such as improved seeds, chemical fertilizers and insecticides/fungicides. This resulted into reduced quantity of food produced, leading to food shortages to the peasants themselves and the nation at large.

Figure1: The Growth of the Agriculture Sector since 1961.

Source: Data obtained from a FAO study by Maltsoğlu & Kwaja (2010)

Bringing the State Back into the Agricultural Sector

The Tanzania Government renewed its commitment to the agriculture sector during the preparation of Vision 2025 in 1995. However, the commitments remained in papers for almost 10 years of President Benjamin Mkapa's leadership (1995- 2005). Towards the end of his office tenure, President Mkapa, who was a strong advocate and a preacher of globalization, admitted plainly that his Government had committed a grave mistake of ignoring agriculture (Kamata and Mwami 2011). It is also instructive to note that, given his staunch support for globalization, investments in agriculture during his tenure were done within the parameters of the market in line with his policy of privatization. For example, privatization of farms and assets under NAFCO as the other agricultural related enterprises were done under his leadership. The effects of his disregard of the agricultural sector were discernible and quantifiable. For example, in his ten years of presidency the growth of maize as a staple food crop rose only slowly, while the growth of paddy took a downward trend (Maltsoğlu & Kwaja 2010)).

In 2006, Tanzania launched the Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP, as a 7 years plan. With the sectors growth rate recorded at 4 percent in 2011, optimists would argue that some progress has been achieved due to the implementation of the ASDP. However, the Government has acknowledged that additional efforts are required to improve the performance of agriculture. To that effect the *Kilimo Kwanza* initiative for Mainland Tanzania, and the Agricultural Transformation Initiative (ATI) for Zanzibar, have been launched in order to improve the performance of the sector.

Kilimo Kwanza (Agriculture First) is an initiative, which envisages to increase the current agricultural sector's growth rate of 4 to 10 percent. The *Kilimo Kwanza* resolution was launched on 3rd August, 2009 in Dodoma by the fourth phase President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete as the Tanzania's Green Revolution strategy aiming at modernizing and commercializing agriculture. This initiative is conceived as multidimensional bringing together different sectors from the public, private and civil society that are expected to interact strategically in order to improve the agriculture sector. The *Kilimo Kwanza* initiative comprises policy instruments and strategies designed to transform the sector. The *Kilimo Kwanza* resolution (URT 2009) is guided by ten pillars, which are:

1. Political will to transform agriculture through creating a national vision on *Kilimo Kwanza*;
2. Financing agriculture;
3. Institutional reorganization and management of agriculture;
4. Paradigm shift to strategic agricultural production;
5. Availability of land for agriculture;
6. Incentives to stimulate investments in agriculture;
7. Industrialization for agricultural transformation;
8. Science, technology and human resources to support agricultural transformation;
9. Infrastructure development to support agricultural transformation;
10. Mobilization of Tanzanians to support and participate in the implementation of *Kilimo Kwanza*.

The design of *Kilimo Kwanza* was largely influenced by the private sector with the view to attract more private investors in the agriculture. One of the strategies employed to achieve that was the launching of the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT). SAGCOT, which is also known as the TAZARA corridor, is an international public-private partnership strategy launched at the World Economic Forum on Africa in May 2010 in Dar es Salaam. SAGCOT is mandated to mobilize private sector investments and partnership to help achieve the goals of Tanzania's green revolution. The SAGCOT plan covers almost 1/3 of Mainland Tanzania, and it is formed along the traditional trade route linking Tanzania to the land locked countries in the south-eastern Africa- covering the regions of Dar es Salaam, Coastal, Morogoro, Iringa, Mbeya and Rukwa. By 2030 this region is expected to produce 680,000 tonnes of field crops (maize, soya and wheat) 630,000 tonnes of rice, 4.4 million tonnes of sugar cane, 3,500 tonnes of red meat, and 32,000 tonnes of high value fruits. The implementation of SAGCOT is still in the pipeline.

The *Kilimo Kwanza* initiative has, however, been heavily criticized when considered from the perspective of peasants. For instance, the initiative is criticized for marginalizing peasants who, as noted earlier, are the main stakeholders in the agricultural sector in terms of numbers. This began with the preparation of the initiative, which, is believed to be an affair of the business community under the Tanzania National Business Council (TNBC) and no deliberate efforts were done to consult groups of crop producers, livestock keepers and fisher folks (Mbunda, 2011). While peasants are unsure of their role in *Kilimo Kwanza*, SAGCOT has proposed an inclusive farming model that can benefit both large investors and small scale producers as out growers in the big farms. However, given the fact that peasants are unaware of international trade negotiations for the sale of crops, or even the real prices, worries are widespread that the scheme is merely set to exploit the peasants' labor.

The *Kilimo Kwanza* initiative is also viewed as setting stage for rural land grabbing. For example, pillar No. 5 of *Kilimo Kwanza* (5.1) undertakes to amend the Village Land Act No. 5 of 1999 so as to facilitate what they consider to be 'equitable access' to village land for investments. To facilitate the access to land for investors, the Government seeks to create land banks that could be readily available for agricultural investments. The Government's intention to amend the Village Land Act No. 5 of 1999, which at least in principle assures the impoverished rural people of their only asset- the land - has raised a lot of concerns. Generally, the *Kilimo Kwanza* initiative seems to abide by the neoliberal virtues of business oriented large-scale investments, and free market as the guiding principles. This does not seem to settle well with over 80 percent of the peasants in the sector who are marginalized by the market.

A critical Examination on the Role of State in Peasant Food Production

After the Zanzibar Resolution, which buried the Arusha Declaration, there is no document that has entrusted the state with key roles in the Agricultural sector that the *Kilimo Kwanza* booklet. In this initiative, the state's roles cut across all pillars. For example, the document states explicitly that the state will oversee equitable land distribution and regulating the use of land as a major means of production. The assumption here is that, all land users, including peasants will have a fair share of land for production. Moreover, the state promises to create the infrastructure necessary for agriculture to take off inasmuch as infrastructure is one of the thorny areas in rural Tanzania. It is poor infrastructure that has hindered the access of chemical fertilizers and seeds by majority peasants in the countryside.

Through *Kilimo Kwanza*, the state also pledged to offer both fiscal and non-fiscal incentives in order to encourage the participation of the private sector in the production process. It is acknowledged that fiscal incentives like soft loans were very useful to peasants during the *Ujamaa* era, and will continue to have a special place for the success of rural agriculture

(Mbilinyi et al Op Cit). The state has also assured producers that it will work to regulate the market so as to insulate producers from external competition and to stabilize prices to ensure that producers get a desirable return from their farm work. The state also pledges to provide budgetary and financial support for the implementation of *Kilimo Kwanza*.

The *kilimo Kwanza* initiative is an indication that Tanzania has reverted to embracing agriculture as a national project to meet national food demands as well as improving the life of those employed by the sector. The agricultural sector is also linked to many other sectors such as trade, industries and transportation. For example, as seen earlier, a large percent of raw materials used for domestic industries come from the sector. The interdependence that exists between the agriculture with other sectors implies that once the agricultural sector has been transformed, the whole economy will grow. It is imperative at this juncture to analyze the role of the Tanzania state as to whether or not it plays the developmental role.

In the theoretical analysis of the developmental state, Clark & Jung (2002), hold that there are three institutional characteristics that a state must possess to be categorized as developmental. These are strength, autonomy, and developmental commitment. Strength implies that the state has power to implement its policies. The policy implementation framework rests on the assumption that they are acceptable and valued by the society inasmuch as they possess both personal benefits to individual members of the society and contribute to the national development project. In the case of the Tanzanian state the strength has to be measured in terms of enforcing the implementation of its agricultural policies and initiatives. It is important to acknowledge that in implementation of such policies the state must use 'carrots' and/or 'sticks'. The state has to use incentives and what Max Weber referred to as authoritative or repressive power to coerce other actors to respond and abide by the implementation of the national project.

The incentive package of the state includes creating a conducive environment for agricultural investments like providing capital, irrigation infrastructure, necessary transportation infrastructure, farm implements and other farm inputs. The Tanzania state has shown commitment to offer input subsidies to peasants through the National Agricultural Input Voucher Scheme (NAIVS), which began as a pilot study in 2008 then launched in 2009 (Baltzer & Hansen 2011). The scheme, involves mainly the supply of farm inputs such as seeds and chemical fertilizers. The initiative was adopted in order to support food production by augmenting rural agriculture through empowering farmers with productive resources. NAIVS is premised on the logic of increasing peasants' input purchasing power, but at the same time nurturing supply chains and competition in market terms among the input suppliers and agro-

dealers. The market component in the NAIVS offers an implicit explanation as to why the World Bank is funding scheme.

Although the scheme has operated for short time to draw a meaningful evaluation, but there are key challenges related to access of the agro inputs by peasants, the distribution process and the way inputs are applied in the farms. According to the ACT (2012) study, NAIVS has benefited a handful of farmers while marginalizing the majority. That is because; the value of the voucher offered by the Government to the producer does not even meet half of the input demands. Majority of peasants are also poor in such a way that they fail to top up in order to get the inputs, ending up colluding with some fraudulent input supply agents who then buy the vouchers from them at a throw away price. Even when the producers intend to use the inputs, the ACT study (Ibid) noted that the supply is always delayed due to poor infrastructure in the countryside. It was also found out that some greedy suppliers have been supplying fake inputs to the disadvantage of the producers (Ibid). The project suffers systemic lack of commitment starting with the District Agricultural Officers, input supply agents, and Ward Executive Officers who represent peasants at the local level. Tanzania is also a huge country with diverse weather conditions and distinct soil structures. Scientifically, the differences in soils would require different varieties of inputs. Nonetheless, NAIVS has adopted a blanket approach to the application of fertilizers without paying attention to the utility of chemical fertilizers to the diverse nature of the soils in the country.

I for one would commend the NAIVS initiative as it lay the groundwork of what the state has to do in order to improve rural agriculture. However, NAIVS exhibits a lack of detailed project planning and implementation strictness on the part of the state. Even, when other actors do not abide by the standard for the smooth implementation of the project, the state has a legitimate right to use force against them.

Strength as an institutional feature of the developmental state is however closely related to autonomy. As such, to play a meaningful role in the economy, the state must act independently of pressures from both local and external constituencies. Autonomy presupposes that at least the state is self-sufficient to certain levels especially in financial terms. However, the Tanzania state has declared its dependence to external funders in many ways. For example, in pillar 2.1 (3) of the *Kilimo Kwanza*, which is regarded as a blueprint of Tanzania's green revolution, it is stated unequivocally that Tanzania wishes to encourage development *partners* to support the initiative. There is a basket under the Agricultural Sector Development Program (ASDP) which is used to mobilize donor funds in order to implement agricultural programs in the country. Again, as noted above, even the National Agriculture Voucher Scheme (NAIVS) is funded by the World Bank. The dangers of financial dependence are twofold. First, funds solicited from donors may

not be forthcoming to sustain the projects, or if available may not come on time. This will affect the smooth running of the agricultural project.

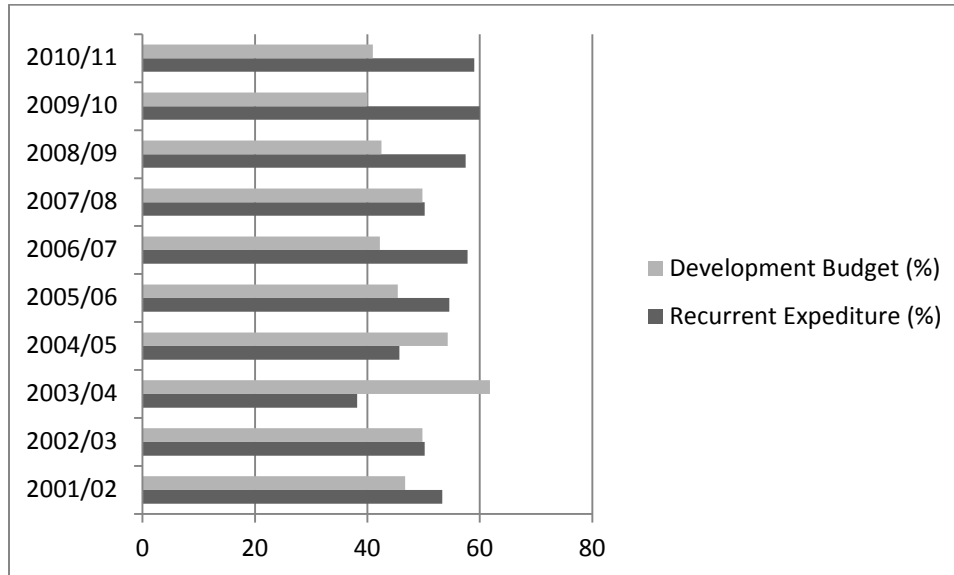
The second problem emanating from dependence is that donor whims can prevent the state from acting in advancing the development agenda. For instance, donors would like states to adhere to international agreements like those reached under the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Agriculture, which require, among other things, states to get rid of all sorts of distortions in agribusiness. Even when exemptions are allowed, often the content and period of implementation is limited (Makandawire 2001). As such, the state is not supposed and may not be able to insulate local investors in the agricultural sector from international competition, because it is against international rules. This will most certainly affect local producers, especially when their sales income may not reflect the cost of production.

The last institutional character is that of commitment to development. The state's commitment to development is first and foremost reflected in its budget. Clark & Jung (2002) aptly argue that the state must not only invest heavily in the national project but also play a 'deactivism' role, which entails limiting the size of the government and unproductive activities that do not directly contribute to the national project. However, the budget that is allocated to agriculture annually raises a lot of questions as to whether the state has a developmental commitment. In the 2010/2011 financial year, for example, the Government allocated 7.78 percent of the total budget to the agricultural sector. This allocation falls short of the national target of at least 10% and that of the African Union's Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security (2003), which called for at least 10 percent allocation of the total budget. Surprisingly, in the 2011/2012 financial year, the agricultural sectors budget was only 6.8 percent of the total budget. This is an obvious backward step, which raises doubts as to whether Tanzania is prepared to honor the regional commitment.

In addition to that, one of the gaps identified regarding financial commitment is that development budget is usually small in amount compared to recurrent budget. As indicated in figure 2, a close examination of the budget allocated to the ministry of agriculture from 2001-2011 indicates that over 50 percent of the budget is allocated to recurrent expenditure rather than development of the sector. Only between 2003/04 - 2004/05 did the Government allocate more than 50 percent threshold of the sector's budget for the development of the sector. This implies that key projects that could transform the agricultural sector are not receiving adequate fund. It was also uncovered in the speech of the Shadow Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives (2013) that not all fund allocated for the development of the sector were released by the Government. Henceforth, the fund that is said to develop the sector remains on papers. Instead of developing irrigation schemes and other infrastructures, these

key projects are starved of funds while unfaithful officials pay themselves in terms of per diems in largely unproductive sessions.

Figure 2: Recurrent versus Development budgets of the Agriculture Sector



Source: Data obtained from budget speeches of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives.

It is also evident that the state has failed to strategically play what Clark & Jung (2002) refer to as a 'deactivist' role in giving priority the agricultural sector than the others. This involves cutting spending in order to ensure that the national project is not starved of financial and human resources. The ministries of education and health in Tanzania always have the lion's share of the budget compared to agriculture, which ironically is regarded as the backbone of the economy. Although education and health are equally important ministries for the development of national workforce but they are oriented toward welfare than economic development per se. Investing heavily in other sectors than agriculture and food production is unjustifiable from the developmentalist point of view, if agriculture is to be national project.

Conclusion

In this paper we have noted that a recurrent food shortage in a country like Tanzania, that boasts high potential for food crop production, is a consequence of a malfunctioning food system. The food system, which is guided by free market has marginalized the peasants who ironically the main stakeholders in the sector. While the Government acknowledges the peasantry as the foundation of food production in the country, the policies and initiatives it adopts do not directly intend to lift the peasants' production capacity. For instance, *Kilimo*

Kwanza, and SAGCOT appears to align with large scale investors rather than helping the majority peasants involved in the sector. The preference for large scale investments in food production is an indication that the state has lost trust in peasants. We argue in this paper that forcing peasants to relinquish land in the countryside is not a panacea to the recurrent food crisis in a country that is largely agrarian. The food crisis will only be resolved if first, the principles of food sovereignty are recognized by the state and adopted as a guiding framework to transform the agricultural sector. In that respect, the agricultural sector has to be made a national project tied to the goal of ensuring food self-sufficiency, poverty alleviation and an engine for the development of other sectors. Since the abandonment of the Arusha Declaration on Ujamaa and Self-Reliance, the state has no clear ideology to guide the path of its development agenda. Consequently, the state has been easily swayed by foreign actors leaving it sandwiched between being a market pimp and playing a developmental role. We emphasize in this paper that the state must orient itself ideologically towards being developmental to attain that end. The state must be autonomous and should have the strength and commitment to invest significantly in the agricultural sector while cutting spending in activities that do not directly contribute to the national project.

References

- Agricultural Council of Tanzania (2012) *Distribution, Access and Application of Agricultural Inputs*, ACT Research Report: Dar es Salaam.
- Baltzer, Kenneth & Henrik Hansen (2011) *An Evaluation Study on Agricultural Input Subsidies in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Institute of Food and Resource Economics, University of Copenhagen.
- Bryceson, Deborah (1993) *Liberalizing Tanzania's Food Trade*, Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers.
- Chachage, Chambi & Bernard Baha (2010) *Accumulation by Land Dispossession and Labour Devaluation in Tanzania: The Case of Biofuel and Forestry Investment in Kilwa and Kilolo*, Dar es Salaam: Land Rights, Research and Resources Institute.
- Clark, C & C. Jung (2002) "Implications of the Asian Flu for the Developmental State Theory: The Cases of South Korea and Taiwan", in *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 29, NO. 1. pp. 16-42.
- Economic Commission for Africa (2003) "The Doha Round and African Development: Turning Words into Deeds", the ECA Position Paper Series, Ethiopia: ECA.
- Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) (2010), "Tanzania Food Security Outlook- October 2009 to March 2010." Available on www.fews.net/tanzania.
- _____ (2000), "Tanzania Food Security Update" available on www.fews.net/tanzania.
- Holt-Giménez, Eric & Raj Patel (2009) *Food Rebellions! Crisis and the Hunger for Justice*, Nairobi: Pambazuka Press.
- Kamata, Ng'wanza (2009) "Imperial Projects and Food Crisis in the Periphery" in *Chemichemi*, Issue No. 1 April.
- Kamata, Ng'wanza & Abunuasi Mwami (2011) *Land Grabbing in a Post Investment Period and Popular Reaction in the Rufiji River Basin*, A Haki Ardhi Research Report: Dar es Salaam.
- Kim, Eun Mee (1993) "Contradictions and Limits of a Developmental State: With Illustrations from the South Korean Case", *Social Problems*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 228-249.
- Locher, Martin & Emmanuel Sulle (2013) "Foreign Land Deals in Tanzania: An Update and a Critical View on the Challenges of data (re)production" LDPI Working Paper 31.
- Lele, Uma (1989) "Sources of Growth in East African Agriculture" *The World Bank Economic Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 119-144.
- Madoffe, Seif et al (2009) "Biofuels and Neo-colonialism" in *Chemichemi*, Issue No. 1 April.
- MAFC (2006) "Follow-up of the Implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action" A Report prepared by the Ministry.
- Maltsoglou, I & Y. Kwaja (2010), *Bioenergy and Food Security: The BEFS Analysis of Tanzania*, Rome: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
- Mbilinyi, Majorie et al (1999) *Rural Food Security in Tanzania: The Challenge for Human Rights, Democracy and Development*, University of Dar es Salaam: Institute of Development Studies.

- Mbunda, Richard (2011) "Kilimo Kwanza and Small-Scale Producers: An Opportunity or a Curse?" Unpublished Research Report, Dar es Salaam: Hakiardhi.
- McIntyre, B.D et al (eds) (2009), *Agriculture at a Crossroads: A synthesis of Global and Sub-Global IAASTD Reports*, Washington: International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge Science and Technology for Development.
- Mhone, G., (2003) "Developmentalism and the Role of the State" Paper Presented at the Workshop on Growth and Development for the Premier's Policy Development Unit of Kwa Zulu Natal Provincial Government in February.
- Mkandawire, Thandika (2001) "Thinking about Developmental States in Africa" *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 25, pp. 289-313.
- Shivji, Issa (2009) *Accumulation in an African Periphery: A Theoretical Framework*: Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers.
- Sulle, E & F. Nelson (2009), *Biofuels, Land Access and Rural Livelihoods in Tanzania*, London: International Institute for Environment and Development.
- Sundet, Geir (2007) "Beyond Developmentalism in Tanzania" *Review of African Political Economy*, 21:59, 39-49.
- Suzuki, Yuriko & Andrew Bernard (1987) "Effects of Panterritorial Pricing Policy for Maize in Tanzania" International Food Policy Research Institute: Massachusetts.
- The Sahel and West Africa Club (2007) *Food Sovereignty: From Principles to Reality*, A Document prepared for the Regional Forum on Food Sovereignty, Niamey.
- Tripp, A.M., (1997) "From the Arusha Declaration to the Zanzibar Declaration" in *Changing the Rules: The Politics of Liberalization and the Urban Informal Economy in Tanzania*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- URT (1995) "Budget Speech for the Ministry of Agriculture in the 1995/96 Financial Year" Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Agriculture.
- (2006) *Follow-up of the Implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action*, Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives.
- (2007) "Budget Speech for the Ministry of Agriculture in the 2007/08 Financial Year" Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives.
- (2009) *Kilimo Kwanza: Mapinduzi ya Kijani*, Dar es Salaam: AP Media &PR Consult Ltd
- (2010) "Budget Speech for the Ministry of Agriculture in the 2010/2011 Financial Year" Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives.
- (2011) "Budget Speech for the Ministry of Agriculture in the 2011/2012 Financial Year" Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives.
- Waters, Tony (1997) "Beyond Structural Adjustment: State and Market in Rural Tanzania Village", *African Studies Review*, Vol. 40. No. 2. pp. 59-89.
- Wittman, Hannah, Annette Desmarais & Nettie Wiebe (Eds) (2011) *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

World Bank (1986) *Poverty and Hunger: Issues and Options for Food Security in Developing Countries*, Washington D. C: The World Bank Group.

----- (1993) *Overcoming Global Hunger*, Washington D. C: The World Bank Group.

----- (2000) *Agriculture in Tanzania since 1986: Follower or Leader of Growth?* Washington D.C: The World Bank Group.

----- (2008) *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development*, Washington D.C: The World Bank Group.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY: A CRITICAL DIALOGUE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PAPER SERIES

Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
YALE UNIVERSITY
SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2013



PROGRAM IN
Agrarian Studies
YALE UNIVERSITY

<http://www.yale.edu/agrarianstudies/foodsovereignty/index.html>

A fundamentally contested concept, food sovereignty has — as a political project and campaign, an alternative, a social movement, and an analytical framework — barged into global agrarian discourse over the last two decades. Since then, it has inspired and mobilized diverse publics: workers, scholars and public intellectuals, farmers and peasant movements, NGOs and human rights activists in the North and global South. The term has become a challenging subject for social science research, and has been interpreted and reinterpreted in a variety of ways by various groups and individuals. Indeed, it is a concept that is broadly defined as the right of peoples to democratically control or determine the shape of their food system, and to produce sufficient and healthy food in culturally appropriate and ecologically sustainable ways in and near their territory. As such it spans issues such as food politics, agroecology, land reform, biofuels, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), urban gardening, the patenting of life forms, labor migration, the feeding of volatile cities, ecological sustainability, and subsistence rights.

Sponsored by the [Program in Agrarian Studies at Yale University](#) and the [Journal of Peasant Studies](#), and co-organized by [Food First, Initiatives in Critical Agrarian Studies \(ICAS\)](#) and the [International Institute of Social Studies \(ISS\)](#) in The Hague, as well as the Amsterdam-based [Transnational Institute \(TNI\)](#), the conference “Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue” will be held at Yale University on September 14–15, 2013. The event will bring together leading scholars and political activists who are advocates of and sympathetic to the idea of food sovereignty, as well as those who are skeptical to the concept of food sovereignty to foster a critical and productive dialogue on the issue. The purpose of the meeting is to examine what food sovereignty might mean, how it might be variously construed, and what policies (e.g. of land use, commodity policy, and food subsidies) it implies. Moreover, such a dialogue aims at exploring whether the subject of food sovereignty has an “intellectual future” in critical agrarian studies and, if so, on what terms.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

[Richard Mbunda](#) is a lecturer and PhD student in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He specializes in International Politics particularly International Political Economy. His recent work investigated the Kilimo Kwanza initiative as an agricultural transformation framework to find out whether it is an opportunity or a curse to small-scale producers, and its implication to food and rural livelihood. The study was funded by the Land Rights and Resources Institute (Haki Ardhi) in 2011. His PhD study is on the politics of food, where he is focusing on peasant agriculture and the quest for food sovereignty in Tanzania.