

'Merging in the Circle'

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The Politics of Tanzania's Poverty Reduction Strategy

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Policy-oriented research typically starts at the wrong end. A better way is to look at 'really existing' policy processes, to study the historical processes in which policy-makers, private interests and public officials interact to produce outcomes that are often at variance with the intentions of any of them.

— Gavin Williams

The will to empower others and one-self is neither a bad nor a good thing. It is political; the will to empower contains the twin possibilities of domination and freedom.

— Barbara Cruikshank

Main arguments

This report documents an empirical, field-based study of the politics, and political consequences, of public policy formulation in Tanzania. This Tanzanian case study is one of five country studies being carried out in collaboration between the University of Helsinki (Finland) and the Chr. Michelsen Institute (Norway) under the auspices of a research programme entitled *Consultation and Empowerment: Governance implications of Participatory Public Policy Formulation in five developing countries*. Funding for these studies has been provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland (Tanzania and Honduras, as well as program coordination), Norad (Malawi and Zambia) and Sida (Vietnam).¹

In 1999 the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund announced that Tanzania was eligible for debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. In order to qualify for debt cancellation, the Government of Tanzania was obliged to fulfil a number of conditions. One of these was to prepare a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The formulation of the PRSP was to be carried out 'in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders.' Proceeding from these facts, the main research problem addressed here is to determine what organizations, interest groups or social forces have been able to take advantage of the political space that emerged as a result of the compulsory consultations associated with the PRSP in 2000.

Fieldwork for this study was carried out in Dar es Salaam, Dodoma and Mtwara Region in March/April 2002. A research team from the University of Helsinki and Mzumbe University (former Tanzania Institute of Development Management) carried out extensive interviews with more than 100 individuals representing three aggregate groups of stakeholders: the state sector, the donor industry and non-state organizations. The authors also consulted a massive, and growing, literature on participation in public policy, the politics of aid, Poverty Reduction Strategies and post-colonial African politics (lists of interviewees and secondary sources are appended to the report). The main focus of the analysis is on changing relationships between players in the public policy arena. Attention is given to the shifting alliances between the three main groups of actors (state, non-state, donor), and between those included in the inner circles of policy formula-

¹ The results of this programme can be monitored via the programme website at <<http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/kmi/research/consultation.htm>>.

tion and those excluded from these circles within each of the three groups. Due to the newness of the PRS, primary attention was given to the process of policy formulation. Fieldwork at the District and sub-District level, however, provided insights into how grassroots political structures and relations are likely to affect policy implementation.

The **main findings** of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. Tanzania's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) was produced in partnership by a group of state and donor technocrats. This partnership portrays itself, and the PRS, as highly consensual, representing the convergence of aims and interests of all major stakeholders. The consultative process of policy formulation is cited as further evidence of the Strategy's broad political base. In contrast to this view, this study concludes that the social and ideological foundations of the PRS are narrow, representing the views of a small, homogenous 'iron triangle' of transnational professionals based in key Government ministries and donor agencies in Dar es Salaam. The content and process of the PRSP thus reflects a depoliticized mode of technocratic governance.
2. In concurrence with several earlier accounts, the study found the actual consultations about the PRSP to be shallow and tendentious. The informed and professional input of the main non-state advocacy coalition TCDD was sidelined when it raised issues that were out of step with the donor/state consensus. 'Zonal' meetings for rural citizens were thrown together in an ad hoc fashion for a haphazard assembly. The wish-lists of village representatives were recorded in the policy paper, but the underlying causes of these needs were not analysed or reflected in the formulation of the policy.
3. In its substance, the PRS represents a limited and short-sighted approach to Tanzania's development options which replicates the neo-liberal conditionalities of earlier structural adjustment policy. The Strategy privileges allocations to social sector spending (primary health and education) at the expense of the longer-term structural issues like factor productivity, employment, the viability of small-holder agriculture and agro-industrial linkages. The Government's responsibility for promoting economic transformation is largely restricted to budgetary instruments for the management of aid-sponsored public expenditure. Tanzania's marginal position in the global market is taken for granted. The neo-liberal policies of privatisation, trade liberalization and economic deregulation have not resolved core economic problems in the past and no reasons are given as to why the same measures should be more effective this time around. In leaving crucial policy issues aside, the PRS process deteriorated

into an exercise of 'budgetism' as against a genuine consideration of the various policy alternatives available to Tanzania.

4. Over the past several years, the Tanzanian donor community has put considerable effort into improving the co-ordination of its activities. Progress has also been made in harmonizing donor agency procedures with those of the Tanzanian Government. This trend of co-ordination and harmonization cements the bonds between the parties to the partnership and contributes to the lowering of the transaction costs of aid management. At the same time, these arrangements also streamline the negotiation and disbursement of new lending from the international financial institutions. Since democratic public oversight of foreign lending is virtually non-existent, there is a serious risk that the streamlining of new credits will lead to the rapid accumulation of new debt for social sector investments. While improving the access of all citizens to adequate education and health facilities is a medium-term goal of the highest priority, in the absence of substantial actions to improve factor productivity and create jobs social sector spending alone cannot safeguard against the negative economic and political consequences of a growing debt burden. In sum, the lack of a strategy for economic transformation in concert with the removal of bureaucratic obstacles to new credits is likely to deepen Tanzania's already crippling long-term aid dependency.

5. Domestic advocacy organizations have ventured to challenge these trends, but with little success. Many factors contribute to this: Tanzanian advocacy groups generally function on a voluntary basis and are seldom well organized. Their narrow (urban, cosmopolitan, professional) social base undermines their claims to represent a broad popular mandate, and limits their chances to forge alliances with popular movements. The intellectual challenges of formulating alternatives to the hegemonic neo-liberal policy regime are all but overwhelming for organizations working on a voluntary or ad hoc basis. Leading advocates are ignored when their arguments are too critical, or co-opted into the mainstream by the Government and its partners.

6. Of late, the large transnational private aid agencies active in Tanzania (the so-called international NGOs) have become proactive in the realm of policy advocacy. The PRS process, and especially the establishment of a Government-led Poverty Monitoring System provided these agencies with a new level of access to the inner circles of the policy elite. There are signs of domestic advocacy groups being 'crowded out' of policy debates due to the superior resources and readiness of transnational agencies, which are becoming a surrogate representative of Tanzanian civil society in the state-donor partnership.

7. The dominance of the public policy arena by a narrow corps of transnational development professionals occludes the possibility of deepening democratic oversight of measures for national development. At the same time, the sites and structures of policy implementation are overseen by a de facto single-party political establishment driven by clientelist relations and procedures. In this context, public assets allocated for the reduction of poverty are highly susceptible to fungibility and abuse as the local politico-administrative elite can distribute resources among themselves via weakly regulated mechanisms of direct expenditure and subcontracting. The stalled process of decentralization, which has increased the discretion of local government authorities without putting effective financial controls in place, aggravates this problem. This disjuncture between policy formulation and policy implementation forms an obstacle to poverty reduction inasmuch as the social relations of governance at the local level preclude an effective implementation of the PRS.

8. In this way, the constitutional system of representative democracy upon which Tanzania's political system is nominally based is undermined from both above and below without providing a viable alternative mechanism for citizen oversight of government and donor actions. The above-mentioned modalities of policy processes introduced or refined under the auspices of the PRS have, in part, exacerbated this problem.

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Acronyms

BWI	Bretton Woods Institutions
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CCM	Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Tanzanian ruling party)
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDF	Country Development Framework
CG	Consultative Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Aid Committee (OECD)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ESAF	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (IMF)
GoT	Government of Tanzania
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
JSA	Joint Staff Assessment (World Bank /IMF)
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NEC	National Executive Committee (CCM)
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PMS	Poverty Monitoring System
PRBS	Poverty Reduction Budget Support
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Support Credit (WB)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (IMF)
SWG	Sector Working Group
Ths	Tanzania shillings
TCDD	Tanzania Coalition of Debt and Development
TPAA	Transnational Private Aid Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
URT	United Republic of Tanzania
VPO	Vice President's Office
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization

Foreword

Partnership triumphant?

The official narrative about the Tanzanian Poverty Reduction Strategy is strikingly self-congratulatory. Government officials and donor representatives are virtually unanimous about how the new pro-poor policy partnership has empowered local stakeholders (an outcome of the consultative process of policy formulation), enhanced national ownership of key policies, and deepened consensus among the core actors. According to the triumphalist narrative, Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa is fully committed to the PRS; the Ministry of Finance has taken over full management of the main instrument of financial monitoring, the Public Expenditure Review (PER), while the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) is becoming an increasingly accurate link between rhetoric and allocation. The parties to the emerging ‘pro-poor policy partnership’ in Tanzania view the current state of the aid relationship as a win-win situation: the Government of Tanzania has qualified for HIPC debt relief (thus improving its eligibility for further foreign support), bilateral donors are protected from the embarrassments of poor financial management, while the World Bank and the IMF have greatly streamlined the procedures required for the negotiation and disbursement of new credits.

A distinct group of non-state actors has also welcomed the pro-poor policy partnership. The most enthusiastic response has been among advocacy organizations and networks in the urban centers who have been offered limited opportunities to ‘merge in the circle’ of the national policy-making elite. At the local (District) level, the PRS is largely unknown. Civic and other private actors at the District level have nonetheless welcomed the general trend toward decentralized oversight over public expenditure and growing allocations to spending ministries at the District level. This has increased the volumes of funds available to private actors with close ties to local government administrators and politicians through the subcontracting of public services and investments.

From the perspective of Tanzania’s development partners – the international public sector actors who payroll Tanzania’s development budget and provide generous incentives for domestic development managers in the public and voluntary sectors – there have been tremendous

improvements in Tanzania's development management system over the past five years. Growth rates have improved, inflation has fallen, and foreign reserve ratios have grown. All in all the economy seems much more stable. Best of all, Tanzania has given increased priority to its debt servicing obligations under the HIPC debt relief arrangements, and is now eligible for a new bundle of credits. From its mid-90s status as a troublesome and indisciplined client, Tanzania has evolved into one of the most prized partners of the transnational development community, a showcase of the virtues of partnership. As a result, Tanzania is accumulating a large mass of new debt.

The key concept undergirding this transformation is that of 'partnership' between state actors and the transnational aid industry. In Tanzania, this partnership has been successfully engineered by a core group of players within both camps who share a commitment to a specific 'way of doing business.' Apart from their close personal contacts, these players have many characteristics in common: educational background (often in American or British universities), lifestyle and vocational habitus – socialization into a professional culture that shares analytical predilections, a vocabulary of policy discourse, an understanding of what constitutes authoritative knowledge, and a sense of the 'rules of the game' guiding policy processes. Their water-tight consensus about implicit procedural rules might be portrayed in abbreviated form as a commitment to 'managerialism' (a faith in the expertise of the professionalized 'new public manager' to achieve optimal policy outcomes), and 'budgetism' (a faith that the optimal allocation of public resources through official budgetary mechanisms constitutes the government's main tool for addressing social issues). This transnational policy elite exercises its considerable power through its hegemonic control of the budgetary process.

These articles of faith are not unique to the 'pro-poor policy partnership' in Tanzania. Their source is in the international aid industry. Their introduction and institutionalization is the result of the aid cartel's systematic efforts at 'building the capacity' of Tanzanian public institutions over many years. Managerialism and budgetism are not static doctrines; they reflect a complex of ideas and practices that are constantly contested, negotiated and adapted to emerging situations. There is no doubt a uniquely Tanzanian variety of the state/donor partnership. Still, in its general contours, the current consensus unquestionably reflects the strategic adaptation by the Tanzanian policy elite to pressures and incentives disseminating from the transnational actors. Donors have powerful and well-entrenched fellow travelers in key policy agencies – especially, but not exclusively in the Ministry of Finance and the Vice-President's Office – where a corps of depoliticized budgetists have made a survival strategy of adapting themselves to the roller-coaster ride of donor whims. Via the modalities of the PRS process, this alliance has fur-

ther consolidated and is being cautiously extended beyond the state sector to select strands of 'civil society.'

A defining characteristic of the new policy elite is its dissociation from political processes, including those of representative democracy. Donors commonly avoid the appearance of engaging in 'politics', and have typically eschewed the vocabulary of social interests or demands. There is a well-established tradition in the development industry of effecting far-reaching political solutions – measures affecting the livelihoods of millions of citizens – via technocratic measures. This approach was refined to precision during the era of Structural Adjustment lending. Decisions to dismantle public economics, liberalise currency restrictions, remove tariff barriers, and so on were introduced, not via statutory political channels, but via conditionalities on external financing negotiated between IMF and Ministry of Finance technocrats.

The current consensus about the crucial role of 'local ownership' in successful policy implementation has heralded in a new 'post-conditionality' phase of the aid relationship. Central to this is a new 'consultative' mode of development policy formulation. Meeting the post-conditionality imperative of stakeholder consultation implies new demands for the credibility of depoliticized decision-making. The legitimacy of post-SAP policies is being sought through the establishment of direct channels of communication between the policy elite and 'the poor' – a sort of 'fast-track' democracy based on localized forms of 'participatory' and 'consultative' interaction. The fast-track mode of legitimization (epitomized in this study by Zonal Workshops and Participatory Poverty Assessments) bypasses the structures of representative democracy while leaving the patrimonial structures of political clientelism intact.

Two perspectives

The aim of this study is to examine the dynamics of the new policy partnership as evident in the PRS process, and to interrogate its consequences for the deepening of a culture of democratic politics in Tanzania. Two contrasting hypotheses suggest themselves. One hypothesis echoes the self-awareness of the main actors – that the PRS and the coalition that has rallied behind it is a grand step forward in development management and represents an arrangement that is likely to produce tangible improvements for the most vulnerable segments of the Tanzanian population. This view privileges 'process' (improved modalities) over 'outcomes' (which are always 'not-yet' visible) and reduces the political implications of the emerging partnership to the technical concerns of 'good governance.'

The second hypothesis is based on a dual sense of skepticism about the politics of partnership. This skepticism is directed, first, toward the commensurability of the creditor interests

that dominate the partnership with the requirements of poverty reduction, and second, toward the depoliticization of decision-making about fundamental means and ends of development policy. This position suggests that the specific social interests and professional ideals upon which the policy partnership is based encourage an enclavic and self-referential view of policy alternatives and act to exclude critical social and political perspectives on development processes.

The focus in this study is on evidence that gives credence to the skepticist thesis. This is a conscious reaction to the mainstream portrayal of the Tanzanian PRS process in triumphalist and self-congratulatory terms. While the claims of the triumphalist consensus are not without merit, it is felt that in the name of pluralism the countervailing thesis also deserves elaboration. Does this mean that the report represents an intentionally subjective and tendentious view? We think not. To explain our approach, some comments on methodology are in order.

A note on methodology

Our approach to this study was predicated on the importance of grounding analysis in first-hand empirical material as far as possible. We felt that too much of what was considered to be ‘authoritative knowledge’ (Moore 2001) about the PRS was based on second-hand accounts recycled from one rapid assessment to the next. We decided from the outset to privilege first-hand accounts whenever possible.

We entered the field with the aim of identifying the interaction of players in the political space created by the ‘consultative imperative.’ The intention was to study as concretely as possible the factors affecting the opportunities of players to improve their leverage on public policy as a result of the requirement that the PRS be formulated ‘in consultation with key stakeholders.’² A notion of the public policy process was thus the pivotal element in our empirical orientation. The PRSP was an outcome of public policy formulation, and was therefore formulated in what political anthropologists have long termed an *arena* or *field* defined by a constellation of influential players (Swartz 1968). Their relations with one another – of alliance, disregard or overt competition – constitute the *social relations of governance* through which struggles over influence and outcomes are played out. We tried to visualize the constellation of players with the aid of a ‘molecule’ sketched in figure 1.

² What made consultation imperative was the link of the Poverty Reduction Strategy to HIPC debt relief. In order to qualify for a partial cancellation of outstanding debt, the Bretton Woods institutions demanded that Tanzania prepare a PRS. The PRS formulation was to be consultative. What this meant was rather vague. The government needed to demonstrate that consultations with stakeholders, including the poor, had been held, but not that the consultations would have had any substance or impact on the PRSP.

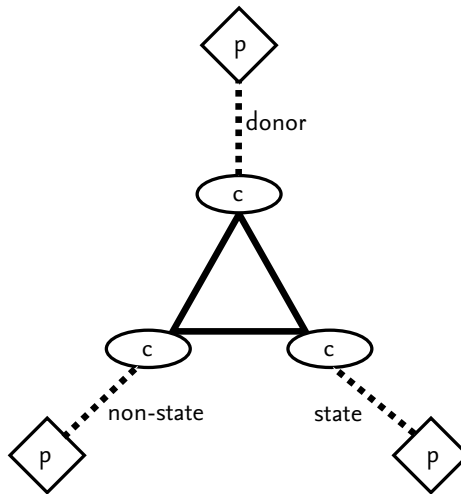


Figure 1. A 'molecular' model of the public policy arena.

The figure depicts three groups, or sectors, of actors relevant to the public policy process: donors, the state and non-state actors. Within each sector is a group of 'core' actors (represented by the ovals marked 'c') in direct control of policy formulation. A hypothetical coalition of these core players (referred to in policy analysis as an 'iron triangle') is situated in the centre of the molecule. Other players within each sector have less leverage on policy formulation. These more peripheral players are portrayed by the rectangles marked 'p' in the figure.

Historically, the policy elite in Tanzania has been based on an exclusive, dyadic link between state and donors. The triangular formation at the centre of the above figure reflects our hypothesis that the coalition of core actors is being expanded to include actors from the non-state sector (representatives of 'civil society') as a consequence of the consultative imperative associated with the PRS process. On the basis of this conceptualisation, the following issues attracted our interest:

- (1) *The reconfiguration of relations among core players:* Did any new actors gain access to the policy elite and thus increase policy leverage? Were any traditional players excluded? How did the presumed incorporation of non-state actors affect the dynamic of the 'iron triangle,' and the relationship between the donors and the state?
- (2) *Changing relations among actors within the three sectors.* How did the consolidation of a core triangle of actors affect relations between core and periphery? Of particular interest was the relationship between 'core' actors in the non-state sector and those not included in the process.

- (3) *The empowerment/marginalization of policy ideas and agendas: Which development concepts and goals gained currency as the new coalition of core players emerged?*

In designing our fieldwork strategy we selected actors from within each 'sector.' We also divided our time between Dar es Salaam, Dodoma and Mtwara and, as far as feasible, sought to follow concrete links between these three sites, up and down the 'levels' in the Tanzanian politico-administrative structure. For example, while none of the more important state agencies that figure in the Dar based policy elite is represented at the District level, the Local Government Reform Team is active in all three sites; we thus conducted interviews with LGRT representatives in both Dar and Mtwara. Dar-based agencies like the Finnish Embassy, Save the Children and Concern Worldwide support offices and projects in Mtwara; and Tanzanian 'civil society networks' have contacts in the Mtwara region. Parliamentarians move fluidly in all three arenas. Consequently, such 'multi-sited' actors became key interviewees.

In the course of our discussions and interviews with the players so identified a number of 'significant incidents' came into view. Such events or processes appeared significant to us because they seemed to express an *ascendant* property of the configuration of relations – something that might well define the way the constellation would develop in the future. As such an incident or tendency came into view we chose whether or not to follow it up and down the 'levels' and to flesh out its implications for future relations among actors. We latched onto a number of such incidents such as the harmonisation work of the Development Assistance Committee of donors in Dar, the decentralization process under the administration of the Local Government Reform Programme, the Participatory Poverty Assessment exercise organized under the auspices of the Government's official Poverty Monitoring System, and the Policy Forum of CSOs seeking to coordinate their efforts to leverage poverty reduction policy. In some cases, incidents overlapped. For example, some members of the Policy Forum are also members of the PPA Consortium. Our interest in decentralization led us to look at the role of District Councils in PRS implementation; this in turn led us to the baffling case of the 'HIPC classrooms' (see Chapter 6).

The practical implication of this is that by the end of our three-plus person months of fieldwork, we had collected a rather 'lumpy' set of data: generally thin, given the extensive ground to cover in a short time, but with thicker coagulations of anecdotal information related to a number of (presumably) significant processes or incidents. Analyzing the data and composing this report has been something of a jig-saw puzzle, and we have had to rely heavily on secondary and theoretical literature to help reconstruct the logic of the system of which all of these incidents would simultaneously be a part.

The report covers a lot of ground in attempting to situate our lumpy body of empiria in a coherent context. It is worth noting that ‘initial conditions’ had a strong impact on the path of analysis and hence, one expects, on the interpretation and results. Had we stumbled on, or opted to pursue a different set of incidents, the overall logic of the system might appear quite different. Is the analysis then inevitably arbitrary? Hopefully not. Does this mean that the findings presented here are subjective and their validity questionable? Obviously it does, to some extent. The counter-issue is whether any similar analysis could be any less dependent on initial conditions, any less constrained by the specific perspective to which its authors have access. In any event we make no claims for the universality of findings or for the irrefutability of observations. We don’t claim to tell the final truth. We believe that we do have a point (or rather, several points) which are backed up by the careful and reflexive analysis of empirical data. For our purposes, the success of our analysis stands or falls on its ability to describe the ‘system logic(s)’ that link the actors, sites and levels of the Tanzanian public policy arena with one another.

Acknowledgements

The primary data from Tanzania discussed in this study was collected in Dar es Salaam, Dodoma and Mtwara Region (Mtwara and Masasi Districts) during March and April, 2002. We are very grateful to Dr Montanus Milanzi of Mzumbe University for his collaboration in the data-collection and its initial analysis. Regretfully, he was unable to contribute to the written report. We are indebted to Mary Joseph at the Finnish Embassy in Dar es Salaam and Julie Adkins of the RIPS programme in Mtwara for invaluable support, logistic and otherwise, during our stay in Tanzania.

Thanks are also due to the many state, donor and civic representatives in Tanzania who graciously gave up your time and thoughts to help us understand the politics of the PRS. Many of you will no doubt take issue with our interpretation and conclusions. We hope you will nonetheless recognize our sincere intent to grasp a very complex set of issues and relations, and our commitment to long-term, sustainable transformation in the interests of all Tanzanians.

Versions of sections of this study have been presented to a Nordic Africa Institute workshop on ‘Africa: a future beyond crises and conflicts’; to a departmental seminar at the programme on *Sociologies, histories et analyses des dynamiques culturelles* at the Ecole des Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Marseille; to a workshop convened by the Nordic Network on Local Governance at Uppsala University; and at the departmental Research Seminar of the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Helsinki. We have also discussed the findings at length with our collaborators in the research program on *Consultation and Empowerment: Gov-*

ernance implications of *Participatory Public Policy Formulation in five developing countries* at the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen, Norway. We are grateful for the helpful comments we received from all. Special thanks to Maaria Seppänen, our colleague at the University of Helsinki who has written a parallel report on Honduras for the Consultation and Empowerment program, for her enthusiasm and encouragement.

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I Introduction: theme and concepts

The pro-poor policy process as a political arena

The purpose of this study is to reflect on how externally promoted demands for public consultation and civic empowerment translate, variously, into mechanisms of increased control and expanded degrees of political freedom for different sets of actors in Tanzania – one of many poor, heavily indebted, aid-dependent African countries. The empirical focus is on the reconfiguration of the relations between donor, state and non-state actors in the course of formulating and implementing Tanzania's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) since late 1999. The analysis seeks to document changes in the structure of political opportunities related to public policy-making. An important empirical theme that emerges concerns the role of public and private transnational players in the constitution of the post-developmental Tanzanian state.

The analysis reveals the emergence of parallel trends associated with (and catalyzed by) the PRS policy process. These are the depoliticization of governance and the transnationalization of political space. In concert, these trends work to consolidate a hegemony of creditor interests in the development policy arena. Unlike the aggressive modalities of SAP, this hegemony is established under the current conditions of 'post-conditionality': less directly, via a rhetoric of mutual gain and through the decay of mechanisms of democratic accountability. The result is deepening control exercised by a delocalized class of transnational functionaries over the political space where public resource allocation decisions are made. In the longer term – to paraphrase Callaghy's (2001: 144) kindred analysis of debt relief in Uganda – the most significant consequences of the donor-imposed imperative for 'consultation' and 'civic participation' in public policy may not relate to poverty reduction at all, but to 'the new configurations of power and transboundary formations that it has helped to unleash.'³

³The concept of a transboundary formation has been proposed by Latham (2001).

Policy coalitions

The notion of an ‘iron triangle’ is often used in policy studies to characterize a coalition of public and private interests that has captured or dominates a policy process. Empirical analyses of iron triangles identify a grouping of politicians, bureaucrats and private actors (e.g., business or civic lobbies) whose coordinated action blocks or advances a specific policy agenda.⁴ Ewald (2002) invokes the iron triangle metaphor to characterize the bonds that have emerged in recent years between government, donors and non-state actors in the formulation of Tanzanian economic policy. Undeniably, this image of a state/donor/civil society coalition corresponds closely to the empirically observable congregation of actors around the Tanzanian Poverty Reduction Strategy – these are precisely the players that populate the pivotal sites of the PRS policy process: consultative workshops, interagency task forces, thematic committees, participatory poverty assessment teams, etc.

The image of an iron triangle captures the exclusive, interdependent character of the politics of policy formulation in Tanzania, but it offers little to help understand the complex dynamics and tensions *within* the configuration. The geometrical trope of a triangle confines the configuration of actors to a two-dimensional plane of inclusion/exclusion that obscures, among other things, the dynamic relationship between public/private, on the one hand, and domestic/international on the other. One needs to ask to what extent does it make sense to think about a development partnership in the context of a nationally bounded, domestic policy process?

Graham Harrison’s recent analysis of ‘post-conditionality’ policy processes in Tanzania challenges the view of a policy process as a discretely bounded domestic arena. According to Harrison (2001: 661, 669), “the national-international boundary has been rendered so ... porous by a historically embedded ‘mutual assimilation’ of donor and state power” that ‘rather than conceptualizing donor power as a strong external force on the state, it would be more useful to conceive of donors as *part of the state itself*.’

Harrison’s empirical observations concur with recent attempts to theorize the systematic incursion of external actors in domestic political processes. In the African context, Robert Latham’s (2001) attempts at formulating generic concepts for characterizing the transnationalization of political space seem pertinent. Latham calls attention to the widespread ‘transterritorial deployment’ by external actors of more or less permanent ‘installations’ within domestic political

⁴ Iron triangles are conceptually related to notions like epistemic community, policy network and so on which emphasize the socio-political dynamics of policy-making. Thus, where coalitions obstruct policy reform, research in this vein has paid attention to the conditions by which triangular cartels can be ‘broken’, allowing for the formation of a more loosely bound policy network in which a reform coalition may prevail (e.g., Peterson 1993)

space in Africa – embassies, multilateral missions, branches of transnational agencies and multinational enterprises, and so on (p. 75 et seq.). The growing assertiveness of external actors in local political arenas through the agency of their transnational networks results in new hybrid forms of ‘global/local linkages’, and in a blurring of the boundaries between the internal and the external in political space, as Harrison suggests. Latham et al (2001) refer to such a political configuration as a ‘transboundary formation.’ They suggest that the ways in which such formations emerge – the dynamics of the interaction of domestic and transnational actors in national political arenas – is of increasing relevance for understanding the constitution of order and authority in postcolonial Africa.⁵

The post-conditionality policy regime is reflected not only in aid discourse, but also in the aid business itself. The World Bank, along with the rest of the donor community, maintains that the failures of the past ‘one-size-fits-all’ policy prescription have been acknowledged, and that the old model has now been replaced with a country-tailored, locally owned and participatory approach that customises policies to fit local circumstances. The Bank even claims to have abandoned the rigid blueprints and stringent policy conditionalities of the structural adjustment framework: the number of macroeconomic conditionalities on loans has been reduced by 40% on average. After some two decades of structural adjustment across the African continent, the Bank now affords a degree of flexibility in macroeconomic policy while shifting its disciplinary attentions to a new policy areas with a large potential for new lending, the social sector and state (governance) reforms.⁶

In practice, this change of approach relies on the Bank’s existing intimate involvement in the management of state governance. The Bank is now replacing old loan conditionalities with advice and capacity-building. Instead of economic micromanagement, a system of audits, benchmarks, track records and Joint Staff Assessments have been put in place to inform loan decisions. The Bank is moving from ex-ante blueprints into a more nuanced ex-post assessment with adaptable triggers. The idea is to create more competition for aid between developing countries by promising to reward ‘good performers.’ While the principles and content of policy have not changed, their adoption has become more subtle. African civil servants are well exercised in ‘guessing what Washington wants,’ as one Tanzanian interviewee noted.

⁵ Of specific relevance to this study, Thomas Callaghy (2001) has applied these concepts to his study of public policy processes in Uganda to illustrate the interplay of domestic and transnational forces in the negotiation of Uganda’s debt relief program.

⁶ In the social sector lending, policy conditionality has increased from 3% in the 80s to 21% at the turn of the millennium, on average in all regions (World Bank, 2002: 6).

These arguments transect the recent work of Philip Cerny (2001) who argues on a general theoretical level for the need to see national policy arenas as subordinate to the interests of both private and public transnational actors. In Cerny's view policy decisions are increasingly made within 'a complex, uneven and asymmetric set of multi-layered cross-cutting processes and nodes of interaction.' The multi-layeredness of policy arenas leads Cerny to embellish on the concept of iron triangle, supplanting it with the notion of a 'golden pentangle.'⁷ In addition to the conventional triangle of private, bureaucratic and political actors, Cerny identifies a pentangular coalition that encompasses two additional sets of transnational players: multilateral governance institutions (World Bank, IMF, WTO, etc.); and 'cross-border non-governmental structures and actors, from transnational markets to civil society' (ibid., 4). Cerny would have us see domestic policy processes as embedded in a

transnational rearticulation of social and political coalitions, as actors attempt to cope with and control the implications of globalization. Sovereign national political structures have little intrinsic coherence in this model. On the contrary, the growing prevalence of transnational forces are seen to generate complex and fluid structures of governance that subsume domestic level policy processes... and incorporate domestic actors into wider, cross-cutting arenas (ibid.).

The structure of political opportunity

Historically, demands for public consultation and participation in policy processes have largely been championed by mass social movements representing the interests of domestic citizens. This is scarcely the case in Africa. In Tanzania, issue-based advocacy groups seldom transcend the social confines of a small, if visible, urban professional elite. Domestic political space is effectively colonized by the hegemonic *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM – 'Party of the Revolution') which holds the Presidency, government power and 91 % of Parliamentary seats. Organized forms of political opposition or citizen activism on the ground are negligible (Mmuya 1998). The lack of organized popular demand for public participation has allowed for the domination of the pro-poor policy initiative by forces with at best tenuous links to the masses of Tanzania's rural poor.

Indeed, it would seem, at least in the first round of the PRS process, that the major beneficiary of the 'consultative imperative' has been an emerging transnational policy elite, comprised of high-ranking civil servants in the Tanzanian government and their international allies: multilateral donor agencies and transnational private aid agencies (the so-called 'INGOs'

⁷ It is not clear why Cerny's pentangle is forged from precious metal. Nothing in his analysis indicates that transnational coalitions would be of any intrinsic value or benefit to anyone but the already powerful.

or international non-governmental organizations). As a new element in the formula, private aid agencies attract especial notice. Evidence suggests that these well-resourced, highly professional exponents of 'global civil society' have managed, by entering into an opportunistic albeit tense alliance with public bi- and multilateral aid agencies, to co-opt the narrow political space precariously occupied by those few domestic actors which exhibit markings of incipient social movements.

Thus this narrative about the Tanzanian Poverty Reduction Strategy might be read as a story about how the dynamics of an emergent transboundary formation affects social and political mobilization. The problem that arises is of a conceptual framework to deconstruct the complex articulations of the 'global' and the 'local' implicit in this formulation. While not earlier applied to an African context, the analysis of *political opportunity structures* offers a perspective on how various actors have been able to cash in on the political space opened up by the consultative imperative of the PRS (McAdam et al 1996). In this connection, the notion of opportunity structure describes the range of factors that affect the relative success of various actors in promoting their respective agendas, as well as how they relate with one another (e.g., making alliances attractive or redundant) within the political space of public policy-making in Tanzania. Interventions or events such as the PRSP throw up new opportunities, reconfiguring relationships between actors within these spaces or bringing in new actors, and opening up the possibilities of a shift in direction (Grindle and Thomas, cited by Brock et al 2002: 37).

In this study, we employ a constructivist version of the opportunity structure concept. In this connection, a constructivist perspective directs attention not only to the play of interests in the pursuit of agendas, but also to the iterative processes by which the interests (and self-awareness) of various actors are produced and negotiated as opportunity structures vary and alliances evolve and dissolve. Developed to illuminate the political trajectories of issue-based social movements, a constructivist version of political opportunity theory can suggest sensible explanations concerning how specific policy coalitions impact on the formation of articulated demands for representation and accountability among the purported targets of public policy. It is especially germane to consider how changes in the political environment affect the strategic choices of the various players, as well as the way that individuals within corporate entities modify their aims and behavior in response to rapidly transmuting opportunities.

Structure of the presentation

The study comprises two main parts. The first part dwells at some length on the historical context of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in an attempt to ground and clarify the main conceptual

elements in the analysis. This discussion is the focus of Chapters Two and Three. Readers primarily concerned with the primary empirical materials and their analysis may wish to jump to the second part of the study, encompassing Chapters Four to Six. The individual chapters are organized as follows:

In **Chapter Two** we attempt to sketch the critical elements in the political context of the PRS process. This encompasses a discussion of the post-developmental policy regime and how it relates to the organization of the aid relationship and its legitimation via an ideology of populist neoliberalism. **Chapter Three** addresses recent trends in Tanzania's aid relationship in greater detail. This involves a critical discussion of the current 'pro-poor policy partnership' and processes of 'multilateralization' based on the co-ordination and harmonization of aid procedures.

Chapter Four analyses the formulation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in detail, with specific attention to the role of civil society organizations in the process. This theme is continued in **Chapter Five** which interrogates the way in which the PRS process affected the relationship between transnational private aid agencies (the so-called Northern or international non-governmental agencies) and domestic advocacy groups. Where Chapters Four and Five examine the possibilities of citizens to exercise direct leverage on the PRS process, **Chapter Six** explores the role of the statutory structures of representative democracy in policy formulation. The sixth chapter also develops an argument about the impact of grassroots political structures on the implementation of a Poverty Reduction Strategy. Finally, in **Chapter Seven** we consider the political outcomes of these changing alliances and opportunities. This involves reflecting on the state of democratic politics in the light of these trends.

Throughout the substantial sections of the study, our primary emphasis is on shifting alliances and coalitions within the policy arena. This evolving configuration of tensions and allegiances among parties to the policy elite is referred to here as the 'social relations of governance.' The continuity of creditor interests notwithstanding, the pro-poor partnership signals important shifts in the social relations of governance. Hence, the dynamics of the networks, alliances and competition among groups and individuals within these broad categories is also of special interest. A central empirical finding of this study is how the politics of 'partnership' affect relations among non-state actors (i.e., within 'civil society'), changing the relationships between groups that have been included in the partnership and those that have not.

In sum, the study seeks to address the following issues: What social forces have advanced their capacity or exercise political initiatives? What political agendas have enjoyed an enhancement of their legitimacy? How have changes in political relations affected the accountability of those exercising power? What effects are pro-poor policy rhetoric, aid partnerships and consulta-

tive imperatives having on political selfhood in Tanzania? How do these events and processes affect the dialectic of domination and freedom implicit in the 'will to empower' driving demands for popular consultation and participation?

2. Context: the post-developmental state in Tanzania

Developing poverty

Looking back on the final decade of the twentieth century, it is evident that the highly indebted postcolonial states of Africa have entered a new phase of state formation.⁸ One could provisionally term this phase ‘post-developmental,’ although this label tells more about what ended than what has begun in the wake of the Cold War.

Post-developmental state formation was initially spearheaded by the structural adjustment programs of the eighties and early nineties. The neoliberal policies of structural adjustment sought to dismantle the regulationist regimes which were seen to constrain the progressive agency of entrepreneurialism and market forces in postcolonial African economies. Setting policy conditions on the availability of development financing (loans and grants from multilateral development banks and bilateral aid agencies) was the primary lever employed by the creditors (the ‘international development community’) to promote the neoliberal agenda. According to neoliberal theory, deregulation was an instrumental goal to the primary aim of stimulating growth. Two decades of structural adjustment – comprising the privatization of assets and the deregulation of trade and currency buffers – were relatively successful in undermining the capacity of postcolonial governments to control their economic environments. By the latter part of the 1990s, however, the major actors in the international development community were obliged to admit that structural adjustment had failed to deliver growth.

Instead of the promised economic renaissance, Africa was staggering under an overwhelming debt burden, poverty levels were on the increase and the productive sectors of the economy continued to grow more slowly than the population. With rates of social exclusion

⁸ There is a long-running debate about post-colonial state formation (Blom Hansen & Stepputat 2001).

approaching 80 to 90% of the population,⁹ expanding tracts of the continent were embroiled in violent cycles of 'complex political emergencies.' Caught in the crossfire of 'aid fatigue' among Northern taxpayers, and public outcry by humanitarian advocacy groups over the growth of poverty throughout the 90s, the aid community regrouped mid-decade to considered its strategic options.

Rather than admit to a systemic error in their policy analysis, the multilateral development finance agencies and their bilateral allies – that loose consortium of players that William Easterly (2002) has recently termed the 'aid cartel' – opted to blame the victim. 'Weak state capacity' and 'poor governance' were identified as the main cause of poor policy performance (World Bank 1997). To some this appeared as a concession to those who insisted on the need for greater state regulation. Yet, instead of revising lending conditions to allow for greater state control of the economy, the development finance community opted for a stick-and-carrot approach that retained the basic, anti-regulationist elements of structural adjustment.

The carrot was debt relief in the form of the HIPC initiative (thus garnering support from the transnational humanitarian lobby); the stick was making the incremental relief conditional upon far-reaching programs for state reform in accordance with principles of the 'new public management' whereby government merely 'facilitates' market mechanisms of distribution. The essence of 'post-developmentalism' then, is its retreat from a nationalist programme of industry-based accumulation. Structural adjustment programmes (SAP) were developmentalist in their rhetorical emphasis on growth and productivity. In practice, domestic industries collapsed under the onslaught of cheap, liberalized imports brought in by SAP conditionalities. The post-SAP, post-developmental regime, in contrast, no longer has a focus on productivity and growth, and certainly places no premium on domestic accumulation and industrialization.

Since around 1997, the contours of this new strategy have been worked out and provisionally tested in 'the field': Tanzania and Uganda, two of Africa's most indebted economies, have been major laboratories for the new phase of post-developmental politics. In both of these countries, the international aid agencies have convinced state representatives to remake their multilateral aid relationships into a new breed of 'partnership.' Under the terms of this partnership, the donor community promises African governments greater 'ownership' of their social policies. For the elected leadership, the main perk was the increased leeway for political maneuver that the

⁹ Measured, for example, as an effect of absolute poverty (<\$1 daily assets). In the 90s, a majority of the 28 world's poorest countries experienced either a decrease of revenues, increase of poverty, decrease of life expectancy or a combination of these (Annual Report on Development Effectiveness, World Bank, 2000; quoted by Jubilee Plus 2001). Tanzania is one of these countries: half of its population subsists on less than \$0,65 per day.

(partial) relief of foreign debt can provide. In return, recipient/partner governments are required to commit themselves to a multi-tethered program of state reform.

Some of the new generation of reforms address familiar issues of administrative inefficiency – civil service reform, decentralization, anti-corruption campaigns, etc. have been promoted through foreign aid programs for decades. The new core of the agenda comprises a radical renovation of the mechanics of public financial management. Among the pivotal components, recipient governments must, first, tie their budgets to a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) that conforms to criteria defined by the IMF; second, the public books are to be available for routine audits by donor representatives in the form of a Public Expenditure Review (PER); and third, the bulk of budget expenditures must be targeted to the over-riding goal of poverty reduction as defined in a Bretton-Woods endorsed Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). In the past few years, the focus of World Bank's policy-based lending has expanded strongly towards the social sectors and public sector reform.¹⁰ Undergirding these arrangements is not only the promise of debt relief, but also the eventuality of new credits under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) of the IMF – successor to the defunct Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility – or accessing World Bank's policy-based loans, the Poverty Reduction Support Credits (PRSCs).

The new partnerships are based on consensus and intimacy among state and donor actors. The management of public finances is based on very close day-to-day working relations between donor and government technocrats, and a diverse assortment of institutional arrangements (task forces, working groups, ad hoc committees, workshops) through which state and donor actors share responsibility for policy choices and the analysis of their implications. A new, and we will argue, definitive feature of the current phase of post-developmental state formation is an attempt to draw a select class of 'constructive' non-state actors – policy advocates and self-styled representatives of 'the poor' – into the circle of consensus and intimacy which cements the partnership.

By defining the reduction of poverty as the over-riding normative framework for all public policy and expenditure, and by seeking to extend the policy consensus to include 'civil society,' the current wave of post-developmentalism reveals itself as neo-liberalism reconstituted in a populist mode – 'structural adjustment in the name of the poor' in the words of Malaluan and Guttal (2002). At the rhetorical level, poverty reduction strategies identify growth as a primary objective; at the level of regulatory instruments and budgetary allocations these frameworks

¹⁰ From 18% of Bank's policy-based lending in FY80-88 to 45% in FY 98-01, and to 80% of all PRSC loans for FY01-03 (World Bank 2002).

translate almost exclusively into expanded social sector spending (necessitating substantial new lending from international financial agencies).

The populist element in the reform agenda is unmistakably evident in the political mechanisms prescribed to enhance the legitimacy of the new partnerships. The cornerstone of the populist strategy is the accentuated emphasis on a vaguely defined and amorphous notion of 'the poor' as the primary source of political legitimation – 'adjustment with a human mask' to quote the phrase used by UNRISD in 1990 (Thérien 2002: 250). At its most tangible, the terms of the new partnerships stipulate that the operational means and ends of poverty reduction be formulated on the basis of 'widespread consultation with civil society and other stakeholders.' The 'consultative conditionality' that has been one of the criteria for Bretton Woods assessment of any PRS is thus a hallmark of the emerging trend toward populist neoliberalism.

Paradoxes of populist neoliberalism

Weyland's (1999) comparison of Latin America with Eastern Europe in the nineties identifies a number of points of communality between neo-liberal and populist politics. Both neo-liberals and populists tend to be hostile to the institutions of constitutional democracy; both act in a political universe populated by self-interested individuals rather than organized, corporate groups. Both populists and neo-liberals tend to fuse their alliance at the apex of the state apparatus. Both perceive prolonged economic crisis as an opportunity to consolidate power.

These features also pertain to the post-developmental partnership between the Tanzanian state and its external financiers. To bring the Tanzanian case into focus, however, one important stipulation must be added. Where Weyland locates affinities between the neo-liberal and populist agendas in the domestic political arena, the 'populist neoliberalism' invoked here clearly transcends national boundaries and must be seen as a reflection of transnationalized political structures. Hence, the populism that characterizes the post-developmental partnership in Tanzania does not primarily refer to the means by which President Mkapa and the CCM seek to legitimize their electoral mandate. Rather, populist neo-liberalism describes above all the rhetoric and measures through which transnational actors evoke the interests of 'the poor' to legitimize their penetration of domestic politics.¹¹

Is this to imply that populist neoliberalism is intrinsically bad? Is poverty reduction merely the rhetorical smokescreen by which a transnational conspiracy asserts virtuous ambi-

¹¹ Perhaps it would be more accurate to speak of the interpenetration of the state and transnational actors, since one feature of the post-developmental partnership is the 'reciprocal assimilation' (Bayart 1993) of domestic and international elites.

tions in order to obscure its true, sinister intent? It is beyond our means of our empirical data to address this fundamental, and fundamentally normative issue comprehensively. Our capacity for judgment is constrained by the complexity and multi-layeredness of the processes involved, as well as by the fact that these are to a large extent emergent, incipient phenomena, which have not revealed their full nature. In thinking about the implications of the post-developmental partnership two sets of assumptions guide the analysis.

First, it is obvious that there is something fundamentally amiss in the way that the intermeshed systems of international development finance and national policy formulation are constituted. Witness the failure of two decades of stringently conditional aid to engender substantial levels of economic growth; the severe aid dependency resulting from dealings with the 'aid cartel';¹² the progressive consolidation of hegemonic and unaccountable power wielded by the aid agencies over national policy processes; and the continuation, despite vows to the contrary, of high levels of unsustainable lending to non-productive sectors. Despite HIPC and the PRS there is no indication that Tanzania would be in any better a position to repay its debt (or be any less aid dependent) forty years down the line when the current wave of IDA loans are due (Saussier 2002: 5-6).¹³

Secondly, the convergence of neo-liberal and populist tendencies is fraught with contradictions, both analytical and political. Three political fault lines are immediately apparent. One is the tension between 'domestic' and 'external' interests. These interests are portrayed in the rhetoric of Poverty Reduction policies as coterminous, implying that creditor and recipient interests are identical, while the everyday experience of ordinary citizens suggests otherwise. A second tension exists between the liberal rhetoric of democratization and good governance, and the lack of institutional mechanisms for holding the policy elite (and especially its powerful external actors) accountable for the consequences of its dictates. A third fault line runs between the hegemonic consensus presumed to undergird the poverty reduction partnership, and the pluralism upon which the liberal agenda of democratization is predicated. In brief, then, the consolidation of a neo-liberal state-donor partnership that invokes a populist mandate raises a slew of alarms concerning the political implications of this emerging 'transboundary formation.'

¹² Hosting more than one hundred different donor agencies, Tanzania remains one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world. This is the case despite the fact that the share of aid has fallen from 29% of GDP in 1990 to 15% of GDP in 2001. Aid is the dominant source of external transfers into Tanzania, and it seems that aid levels are higher than the country is able to absorb (Bigsten & Danielson 2001: 24-26).

¹³ In fact, it has been estimated that Tanzania's total debt will in 2010 be about three times as large as it was prior to the HIPC debt relief in 2000 (Danielson 2001: 18), due to new loans contracted mainly from the multilateral financial institutions (World Bank and African Development Bank).

One should ask, above all, a) to what extent is a policy regime grounded in populist neoliberalism commensurate with growth in productivity and job creation; and b) what forms of (democratic) politics are compatible with populist neoliberalism?

It is not the aim of this study to provide a normative assessment of the 'post-developmental partnership.' Instead, we hope to explore the hypothesis that a systemic lack of accountability within processes of development resource allocation (from taxpayer to donor agency; from donor to recipient via various mediating agencies; and from national governments to downstream recipients) reduces the pursuit of efficacious development policies to a *game-like* process dominated by considerations of power and prestige, prevalence and survival, benefit and advancement that affect (to a greater or lesser degree) the actions of both individuals and organizations.¹⁴

We attempt to accomplish this by exploring the transnational configuration of actors around the Tanzanian Poverty Reduction Strategy, fleshing out the game-like characteristics of the process and trying to identify the interests, incentives, mechanisms of accountability, and political outcomes instantiated in the reconfiguration of alliances and coalitions among actors. The main point then is not whether populist neo-liberalism is a good or bad thing, or whether the Tanzanian PRS genuinely reflects the needs and priorities of 'the poor'. Rather, we are interested in whether the introduction of a new 'pro-poor' policy regime has changed the exercise of political power (in the broadest possible sense) in such a way that the policy initiative is in the hands of people whose *immediate, primary* and *over-riding* interest is poverty reduction through enhanced growth, productivity, employment and local accumulation.

The conceptual entry point is provided by the populist elevation of popular consultation as the decisive means of legitimizing the state-donor partnership; the empirical narrative revolves around an analysis how different actors have capitalized upon the opportunities for self-representation and influence implicit in the political space of consultation, and reflects on the possible implications of the observed reconfiguration of relations among the main players for the structuration of political space and opportunities in the longer term. Of primary concern, then, is not how successfully the consultative imperative has promoted the participation of 'the poor' or of 'civil society' in the definition of poverty reduction goals and measures – a number of other studies have addressed this issue quite comprehensively. Rather, we are interested in mapping the dynamics of the social relations of governance which have been evolving under the contingencies of the populist-neoliberal partnership, and in the implications of this partnership for the exercise of post-developmental politics in highly indebted and aid dependent African states.

¹⁴ For a fascinating, if exceedingly formalized application of game-theoretical precepts to the analysis of aid relations see Ostrom et al (2001).

3 Poverty Reduction & the structure of political opportunity in Tanzania

A state of partnership

PARTNERSHIP I. The fact or condition of being a partner; association or participation. Now esp. of relationships in industry and politics: ...**1933** *Planning* 25 Apr. 2 It aims at giving labour effective **partnership** in industry and at creating a new attitude of mind to replace sterile hostilities; **1941** *Ann. Reg.* 1940 140; The attainment by India of free and equal **partnership** in the British Commonwealth; **1959** *Times Lit. Suppl.* 31 July 449/2 It has been a cardinal principle in Rhodesia that the way should be open not for apartheid but for **partnership**, and that the new State will avoid the racial impasse of the Union [of South Africa]...¹⁵

The rhetoric of partnership has colonized the vocabulary of international relations in the new millennium. It would be naïve to assume that all of the current evocations of partnership – from Strategic Partnerships for Peace with NATO, to the New Economic Partnership for African Development – refer to a similar sort of relationship, or imply an identical set of stakes and modalities. It would be similarly careless to accept the rhetoric of partnership, with its implications of mutual interests and shared risks, at face value. Given the inequality of the endowments and entitlements of players in various global arenas, parties to international relationships have very unequal possibilities to choose which alliances they enter into, or to influence the terms of these coalitions. Indeed, the above extracts from OED provide historical evidence that ‘partnership’ is commonly invoked when the more powerful party to an asymmetrical relationship feels threatened by impending hostilities and confrontation by subaltern actors.

Partnership is hardly a new term in development discourse, but only in the latter half of the 1990s was it translated into concrete modalities governing relationships among and between

¹⁵ Extract from Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Edition 1989; consulted at <<http://dictionary.oed.com>>.

donors and recipient agencies, both public and private. The multiple functions that this rhetoric performs can be unpacked in various ways. On one level, partnership signals the attempt of a cosmopolitan technocratic elite (one that cuts across donor and recipient organizations) to bracket the destructive outcomes and embarrassing failures of Structural Adjustment by the symbolic declaration of a new era of 'post-conditionality'.¹⁶ HIPC is the crowning manifestation of donor good will, and the related PRS expresses recipient commitment to a new phase of responsible governance.

For governments of poor countries, a partnership for debt relief with the wealthy can be portrayed as a major political success, legitimizing their mandate to rule. On another level, the rhetoric of partnership works to rally dwindling public support among taxpayers and philanthropists in affluent economies for the development endeavor that provides reciprocally assimilated technocratic elites with a *raison d'être* and comfortable livelihoods. While the main driving force behind the new development partnerships would appear to be the self-interested project of reciprocally assimilated cosmopolitan elites it does not follow that the rhetoric has no practical or political substance. The last ten years have seen a dramatic recrafting of the practices and procedures governing aid relationships, nowhere more so than in Tanzania. Both donors and recipients alike have changed the way in which they 'do business' with one another. The gradual demise of the self-referential bilateral development project in favor of program aid, direct budget support and sectoral programs (so-called SWAps) epitomizes the ongoing shift in the dynamics of aid relationships.¹⁷

More profoundly, the changing modalities of the aid business are reflected in the way that aid programming and domestic policy formulation have been converging. The policy platforms of public and private northern aid agencies – with their trinity of liberalization, poverty eradication and good governance – are virtually indistinguishable from the new generation of 'locally owned' development policies of recipient governments. Tanzania is no exception. The conditionalities of HIPC and the PRSPs have been a major catalyst in taking this convergence onto a new plane. The consensus around aims is also reflected on the institutional plane. In numerous debt-stricken countries, representatives of donor and government agencies have established multilateral task forces and standing joint committees to negotiate the parameters of the MTEF and to carry out joint Public Expenditure Reviews. These trends are heralded as the keys to a new era of efficiency and accountability in the governance of aid resources. Yet, the same developments have led several observers to suggest that the new partnerships represent a

¹⁶ The notion that some aid relationships are no longer based on donor-imposed conditionality has wide credence; even critical scholars evoke post-conditionality without irony (e.g., Harrison 2001).

¹⁷ See Gould (2001) for a further discussion.

radical revision of the mechanisms of political accountability, moving decision-making powers over public resource allocation away from statutory democratic structures into the hands of technocrats (Eberlie 2001, Ewald 2001).

This criticism clashes starkly with the way the architects of the new development partnerships represent their political intentions. These partnerships, it is claimed, are grounded in the inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders in public policy processes. Indeed, broad-based consultation with non-state actors concerning the means and ends of the PRS is a formal requirement for reaching the HIPC completion point.¹⁸ Without belaboring the distinctions between these conflicting notions of representation it is evident that quite different conceptions of participation and inclusion are at stake. What the champions of the emerging 'states of partnership' and their critics advocate are, to invoke a somewhat different vocabulary, competing imaginings of the state-society relationship, and, more pointedly, of the democratic process (cf. Blom Hansen & Stepputat 2001). From one perspective, 'consultation' implies extensive and broad-based engagement with affected interest groups over fundamental principles (cf. Shivji 1998); from another, consultation can be a limited, technical mechanism – a condition to be fulfilled in order to legitimize a predetermined concept.

In order to assess conflicting claims about the foundations and outcomes of the new development partnerships, more focused empirical analyses of these emerging relationships are needed. What occurs when (northern) creditor agencies and (African) recipient governments declare mutual aims and shared risks around the task of poverty eradication? Who designs the agenda? What are the mechanisms of inclusion in the partnership? How are the benefits and risks to be shared among the partners (and how are these assignments arrived at)? What modalities of arbitration, controlled by whom, exist in the event that the partnership unravels?

The present enquiry is driven by a robust academic skepticism about constitution and outcomes of the new partnerships. There is little doubt that the increase in communication and trust among donors and recipients, and their growing consensus around basic principles of economic management could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public investments. In a society run on democratic principles, better economic management should benefit the majority of the population, which is now languishing in abject poverty. But does the new partnership promote or erode principles of democratic political process? On what vision of leadership and accountability is it based? Is the commitment to poverty reduction recorded in national policy documents congruent with political will and administrative capacity on the ground?

¹⁸ 'Completion point' refers to the moment when the Bretton Woods institutions ascertain that a debtor country has fulfilled all conditions for debt relief under the HIPC facility.

The composition and genealogy of the poverty partnerships arouse doubts. Skepticism is further fueled by the fact that (a) the policy principles of SAP that exacerbated poverty and social exclusion have been retained intact in PRS. Only the mechanism of legitimation of these principles ('participation of civil society') seems to have radically changed. In this respect creditor, not recipient interests prevail; (b) there is no space within the HIPC/PRS partnership for debate about 'sustainable debt' nor, revealingly, for serious engagement with the broader issues of growth and employment which define what is 'sustainable' under HIPC/PRS. Established patterns of aid disbursement appear to have changed only to the extent that the new debt currently being accrued is almost exclusively for social sector expenditures (such as the building of primary school classrooms). While obviously of immense social (and political) value, there is little theoretical or empirical basis to assume that such investments will generate public assets in the mid- to longer term, thus enabling Tanzania to repay such credits when they mature.¹⁹ Subsequent sections take up this narrative in greater empirical detail.

The State-Donor partnership in Tanzania

In 1994, there was a virtual breakdown of relations between the Tanzanian government and aid donors, leading to a discontinuation of aid disbursements. The immediate reason cited for the aid freeze was financial mismanagement (corruption and under-taxation). The diplomatic rupture and concomitant freeze in donor funding culminated a long roller coaster ride in Tanzania's aid relationship since the late 1970s. Aid flows ebbed in the early eighties when Tanzania's economy hit rock bottom, and President Nyerere resisted the neo-liberal reform package advocated by the Bank and the Fund. The hesitant liberalization measures introduced by President Mwinyi from 1986 were welcomed warmly by the donors, and aid levels were raised in support of structural adjustment reforms. As the social costs of the reforms became evident, the government began to voice reservations over the scope and tempo of macro-economic reforms, the breakup of state ownership of national assets and market liberalization (Gibbon et al). Reform measures agreed upon in government-donor negotiations stalled in the implementation phase, and despite good performance in the macro-economic indicators (relative to other African adjusters), Tanzania came under Bretton Woods-led attack for renegeing on its commitments (Helleiner et al 1995).

The Nordic donors – whose collective economic and political stake in Tanzania was substantial – sponsored a fence-mending operation in 1995. The result was a report on 'Development

¹⁹ Most of the debt Tanzania is incurring for social expenditures is in the form of IDA credits. While the conditions of these loans are soft in a commercial sense (low interest, no repayment on principal for ten years), they do incur servicing costs and have to be repaid 40 years down the line.

cooperation issues between Tanzania and its aid donors' prepared by a 'group of independent advisors' chaired by the Canadian academic Gerald Helleiner.²⁰ The 1995 'Helleiner report' questioned the validity (or reasonableness) of donor criticisms, placing a large share of blame for the government's half-heartedness in complying with conditionalities on 'donor procedures.' The report specifically assigned the bulk of the responsibility for undermining government commitment on the World Bank, which was characterized as 'an institution encouraged by its superior manpower and other resources to be self-confident to the point of arrogance, with little consideration of other's views' (Helleiner et al 1995: 13). The operational prescription was to pay serious attention to local/government ownership of reform programs.

Between 1995 and 1998, the World Bank responded to these and other criticisms with a new aid management strategy. The Tanzania country office became a forerunner in the campaign spearheaded by newly instated Bank President Wolfensohn to reinvent the Bank, or at least its public image. Tanzania's Country Director, hitherto based in Washington, was 'decentralized' to Dar es Salaam, allowing for the Bank to respond quickly to feedback and initiatives from the Tanzanian government, civic groups and other donors. The World Bank/Dar es Salaam office recruited economics professor Benno Ndulu (one of the 'five wise men' behind the 1995 Helleiner report), as a Deputy to the Country Director, thus providing the Bank with a Tanzanian face of integrity, palatable to both government and donors. During this period, the multilateral donors made a concerted effort to encourage Tanzanian government efforts to formulate 'home-grown' policy documents such as Vision 2025, the National Poverty Eradication Strategy and the Tanzania Assistance Strategy.²¹ An important symbol of the change in donor attitudes was the shift, in 1997, of the site of the crucial Consultative Group meeting between donors and the Government from Paris to Dar es Salaam.

By 1998/9, the electrical charge of the government-donor relationship had reversed. President Mkapa (1999:4-5), speaking in Stockholm in August 1999, summed up the new mindset like this:

²⁰ A full collection of five reports by Helleiner on Tanzania's aid relationship over the period 1995-2001 is to be published by the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF). ESRF has recently been awarded a contract to facilitate 'Helleiner 3', the institutionalization of an 'Independent Monitoring Group' to preempt future ruptures between Government and donors.

²¹ Vision 2025 was the first official affirmation of the demise of the 'socialist' (*ujamaa*) policy regime initiated by President Julius Nyerere. NPES outlines a general set of principles intended to guide 'pro-poor' development policy. While considered 'home-grown' in conception, the preparation of both documents was supported by donor agencies. In contrast with the later PRSP, both the Vision and NPES documents were ratified by supreme political organs.

Today positions have moved on both sides. Tanzania has accepted, and embraced, basic economic principles necessary for growth, including a conducive and stable macro-economic framework, a liberalized trade and payments regime, and other attendant fiscal and monetary policies...

The donor community has likewise conceded ...that a good and stable macro-economic framework, on its own, is not sufficient to generate growth and development.'

It was now recognized, claimed Mkapa, that there is a 'need for a broader development agenda that goes beyond macro-economic fundamentals to include issues of social justice, equity, participation, political and economic sustainability and inclusion.' Things were in place for Tanzania to enter the HIPC pipeline, and thus qualify for a new generation of aid conditionalities, marketed under the 'broader development agenda' of poverty reduction. Two years later, in the Consultative Group Meeting of 2001, the President stated that

the relationship between my Government and members of this Consultative Group... has improved tremendously; it is almost a complete transformation... You tested me on my practical commitment, in terms of results, on critical issues of policy, of governance, of prudent monetary and fiscal policies, of macro-economic fundamentals, of structural reforms, of a discernible focus on poverty, and on ownership of the development process. I think we have passed the test, and you have responded liberally (Mkapa 2000: 14).

The politics of harmonization

Not only were the donors introducing a new 'socialized' rhetoric of aid in the latter half of the 1990s, as Mkapa indicates, they were also changing the way the aid business was organized – its basic modalities. Although it is an over-simplification of a many-stranded process, one could argue that a key to understanding the new development partnership (and its associated modalities of aid) is the 'multilateralization' of relations within the so-called donor community. At the core of this process are the 'new mechanisms and modes of operation... being set up so as to strengthen linkages between the World Bank and IMF in the day to day planning and administration of their respective and joint programmes' (Mbilinyi 2001: 1). Through this convergence, claims Mbilinyi, the Bretton Woods institutions 'are asserting ever more power over micro-policy as well as macro-policy at national level' (ibid.). This influence is exercised directly on the Tanzanian government, but also indirectly, via other donor agencies, through the 'harmonization' of aid.

Multilateralization refers above all to aid management practices – the growing predominance of aid modalities which are not controlled by any one actor. This may be seen to imply that multilateralization involves the suppression of the national or institutional interests of the donors. But herein lies the paradoxical nature of the multilateralization process as it plays itself

out in practice – if the recipient’s will to impose a nationalist framework on the aid agenda is weak, coordination and harmonization can imply the ‘unilateralization’ of aid modalities. Those players within the donor camp with the most resources (and the greatest capacity to invest in extended negotiation processes) can, along with their allies in the state sector determine the contours of ‘harmonized’ practices.

To avoid misunderstandings it is important to stress four interrelated points. First, the process of multilateralization is a contested one; it is not the outcome of a grand consensus among donor governments. Even within one bilateral agency there can be greater or lesser support for multilateral modalities. Second, multilateralization is not a result of a centrally coordinated design or intention. The empirical form of the emerging multilateral modalities does not reflect the will of any given actor. Indeed, the rhetoric and procedures of the agencies conventionally termed ‘multilateral’ (i.e., UN and Bretton Woods agencies) are also undergoing realignment under the sign of the new development partnership. Still, in the Tanzanian case, it is evident that creditor interests prevail, and are played out, through the multilateralization process.

Third, multilateralization does not imply the elimination of contradictions, conflicts of interest and mutual elbowing for power within the ‘donor community.’ There remain clear pecking orders, competing blocks and cliques as well as heated words at times, and representatives of one agency or clique can, and do, say terrible things another’s agency’s actions, procedures or personnel. Multilateralization is about a convergence of concrete governance practices – a disciplining of the body, so to speak, more than of the mind, which remains able to think and speak freely in private – and the style of ‘doing business.’ Missions should be ‘coordinated’; events such as meetings and documentation should express ‘local ownership’ of the aims and policies upon which the partnership is predicated.

Fourth, in its current form, the trend toward harmonization and coordination is more prevalent in rhetoric than in practiced. Despite verbose commitments to promoting the coordination of aid, a large proportion of disbursements still occur outside the baskets of programme aid and budget support.²² Nevertheless, there is no doubt that harmonization will remain a key rhetorical rallying point for state/donor dialogue in coming years.

In retrospect it is evident that Helleiner’s report of 1995 signaled many of the things to come, underscoring Tanzania’s role as a forerunner in and major laboratory for experimentation with new modalities. Helleiner found that a major reason why the aid relationship in Tanzania had deteriorated so dramatically was because of the immense ‘transactions costs’ to the Tanzanian

²² In financial year 1998, for instance, 72% of total donor financing in Tanzania did not enter the budget frame (Mjema 2000: 20).

government of accessing aid. Transactions costs were seen to be ‘an excessively heavy burden on the scarce financial and managerial resources of countries such as Tanzania’ (Helleiner 1995: 19). Every donor had its own Country Assistance Strategy, its own accounting techniques and reporting format. The fiscal years adhered to by donors differed from that of Tanzania and also among themselves. Each donor needed to send a separate mission to plan, appraise, negotiate, monitor and evaluate each of the interventions in its aid portfolio. And each mission demanded audiences with key officials in the Treasury and in sector ministries. Government had little time for anything other than catering to donor procedures. It has been noted that the Tanzanian public service still typically produces 2400 quarterly reports a year for external donors, and is visited by 1000 donor ‘missions’ (Kelsall 2001: 4, quoting James Wolfensohn).

Tanzania’s was not the only government to complain about the high costs of managing aid. Helleiner’s linking of transaction costs to poor ownership (read: non-performance on macro-economic reforms) crystallized a line of thought that had been gestating among aid managers since the early nineties. In 1998, the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC)²³ issued a ‘Working Checklist for Strengthening Development Partnership.’ A central element of the OECD/DAC recommendations concerned finding means of moving ‘toward the simplification and harmonization of [aid management] procedures.’

Issues of aid coordination and harmonization have become critical reference points in negotiations among donors, and constitute a cornerstone of the new development partnership. These procedural issues are at the core of the new modalities of aid and represent the main means by which multilateralization is being accomplished. Witness two central ‘Principles for Promoting Harmonisation and Aid Effectiveness’ (March 20, 2002) agreed upon by the Tanzania/DAC:²⁴

1. The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) is the dominant instrument and overarching objective for Government and development partners. Efficiently/effectively linking our work with PRS is the main rationale for harmonisation.
2. However framed (harmonisation, effectiveness, transaction costs) we must evaluate our performance in terms of facilitating Government delivery of the PRS outcomes.

²³ The DAC is a loosely constituted intergovernmental forum which has been instrumental in articulating the emerging multilateral perspective on aid modalities. Much of the analytical work appears to be carried out under the auspices of semi-formal working groups comprising networks of like-minded senior aid managers based at aid agencies in OECD member countries. The DAC has a Paris-based secretariat which coordinates and oversees the dissemination of the Committee’s work. As far as we know there have been no independent analyses of the way the DAC functions, nor of its influence on development policy processes and communities.

²⁴ The Tanzania/DAC is a loosely institutionalized forum where the representatives of OECD member country aid agencies meet to discuss issues of common interest.

Table: Principles of aid harmonization in Tanzania²⁵

Main areas of activity	Instruments	Principles/goals
Reflecting Development Assistance in the Budget	Harmonization of reporting	The DAC target is to include all development assistance in the budget book for FY03 (submission deadline in April 2002). Exceptions would be IMF PRGF assistance (disbursed to central bank) and some assistance to NGOs and private sector
Working More Effectively at Sector/ Thematic Level	Sectoral programmes and basket funds; Joint sector reviews	Joint missions should move to replace bilateral consultations (and not present an additional burden on Government). The timing and format of reviews must complement key processes such as the PRS Review, the PER and the budget exercise.
Linking Sector/ Thematic and Macro Work	Calendar of key annual processes	Ensure appropriate linkages of sectoral investments to PER/MTEF, PRSP and poverty monitoring system. The calendar can also be used by the PRBS group to structure deliberations on levels of budget support.
Monthly DAC Meetings	Use DAC meetings to actively seek ways to promote harmonisation, identify best practice and to ensure that work of respective members contributes to the key processes in Tanzania, in line with TAS.	<p>The DAC should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) assimilate examples of best practice, identifying a methodology by which sector/thematic work can link to key processes; ii) ensure that best practice is disseminated; iii) address cross-sectoral issues more coherently; iv) gauge consistency of DAC assistance with TAS and assess quality of inputs to key processes; and v) ensure timely, comprehensive and coordinated inputs to the budget exercise, PRS Review and other major processes.

²⁵ Adapted from 'Principles for Promoting Harmonisation and Aid Effectiveness (Draft Two)', Prepared by Tanzania DAC Secretariat (20th March 2002). The principles are 'based on two local DAC meetings held on 7th and 20th February 2002... [and] represent a general framework to be implemented on a voluntary basis by development partners.'

On one level, harmonization is clearly a positive response to recipient demands for lowering transaction costs. Experienced aid managers are sympathetic to the plight of the harried Tanzanian civil servant. Many realize that the tax on administrative capacity resulting from uncoordinated aid has become a bottleneck hampering their own performance. Growing credence of the once heretical claims that the policies of structural adjustment are a source of instability may have also inspired some managers to reflect more generally on ways in which aid and its procedures were 'a part of the problem,' and not a solution. Harmonization could thus be seen as an expression of post-SAP good will.

Yet, invoking matters of conscience can hardly explain the multilateralization process adequately. It is important to keep in mind that the degrees of maneuver open to donor agencies in their mutual negotiations are constrained by certain relatively inflexible imperatives. Despite the relative autonomy with which many agencies appear to work, their directorates are held accountable to taxpayers via national parliaments or Boards of Directors.

The imperative of accountability encompasses weaker and a stronger elements. The weaker elements relate to political consistency and financial management. In political terms, agencies must be able to defend their disbursements on the basis of the official policies of their governments. The weakness of this mechanism is that the policy pronouncements are generally vague (restating the abstract goals of poverty reduction, market integration and good governance), and measurable indicators of policy success are seldom specified. In practice, few expenditures cannot be linked in some way to policy. (The inverse is also true: an unpopular program can be easily terminated since its contribution to policy aims will be hard to substantiate.) Given the current obsession with good governance, issues of financial accountability should be viewed somewhat more stringently. Yet, the daily gossip of donor communities is rife with accounts of how such and such an agency 'lost' so and so many millions due to recipient malfeasance. Such mishaps seldom lead to a suspension of disbursements, and when they do, normal relations are generally restored before long.

Such behavior expresses a double standard in the way donor governments view issues of financial hygiene. Events that would spark a major scandal in the domestic arena are quickly papered over in the domain of foreign aid. A reasonable explanation for this is that the second, stronger imperative affecting donor strategy concerns volumes of disbursements. Parliaments will react forcefully if approved allocations are not disbursed, and aid managers live constantly under the threat of cuts in their operational budgets (and possibly in staff), if they fail to move the money entrusted to them. This trend is accentuated by the adoption of new public management doctrines and result-based assessment as the basis for career incentives. For the financial

agencies proper, such as the World Bank and the IMF, disbursement is the ultimate imperative; for the individual functionary, career advancement is largely contingent on the speed by which disbursements are effected.

'Disbursement anxiety' affects different agencies, and managers at different levels, to different degrees. Although it lies at the core of creditor interests, the need to spend money does not exhaustively explain agency strategy and behavior. The politics of aid are rife with territorial and personal rivalries; some agencies are under pressure to promote their own domestic business constitutencies. Ideology – a normative belief in the vital importance of 'good governance' or 'poverty reduction' also plays a role. Still, we argue, the bottom line will always be institutional survival as translated into tangible incentives for staff, mission and agency performance.

Paradoxes of multilateralization

One might conclude, then, that multilateralization is contingent upon the extent to which it is compatible with the imperative to disburse. Since, for the bilaterals, disbursement is immediately linked to national financial institutions and political mechanisms, this would seem to suggest that multilateral harmonization militates against disbursement. A number of agencies have indeed resisted multilateralizing trends for this very reason. Harmonization is, indeed, the site of a power struggle among donors in which nationalist and moralist tendencies compete. The flag-wavers (US, Japan, Germany) resist the initiatives of the harmonisers who claim to speak for a good greater than that of the strategic or commercial interests of national entities. Harmonizers (like the EU, the Nordics, Holland, Canada) have yet to advance their positions relative to flag-wavers in the primary game of disbursements. The harmonizers can nonetheless expect that their self-discipline will be rewarded as the norms of multilateralism come to dominate the partnership. They have committed a part of their bilateral aid to direct budget support through the Poverty Reduction Budget Support facility, the successor to the Multi-Lateral Debt Fund, and strongly emphasize that the PRS priority sectors are now the basis of their bilateral support.

These norms are hotly debated. Harmonizers will compete heatedly among themselves to occupy the moral high ground. Indeed, claims about the validity of a particular procedure are often based on the extent to which the claimant is best in tune with the predicament of the recipient. The long-term scenario, however, is more complex. In structural terms: volumes of aid disbursement are threatened by problems of 'capacity' and/or 'governance.' Recipient governments' capabilities to utilize aid are blocked by the high transaction costs associated with aid delivery. Harmonization is seen as a solution in that uniform procedures – the consolidation of individual national decision-making and monitoring processes into a single multilateral

transaction – would free up large amounts of recipient administrative capacity to use, as against merely negotiate, aid. Or, to cite the Tanzania/DAC:

Harmonisation should be seen not as end in itself, but as a means to accelerating implementation of the Government's poverty reduction programme. In a simple 'input-output' equation:

$$\frac{\text{Impact of aid (promoting poverty reduction)}}{\text{Transaction costs of delivering aid}} = \text{Development effectiveness}$$

We can, therefore, promote harmonisation (and thereby increase development effectiveness) by becoming more effective – greater impact – and by becoming more efficient – lowering transaction costs.²⁶

Many managers also understand that future disbursements are threatened by unrecoverable debt. Multilateral coordination (the identification of mutual interests through the negotiation of procedural issues of harmonization) has been efficacious in putting HIPC in place quickly and in a way that did not imply dramatic concessions for the IFIs. The concrete achievement of mutual procedures around HIPC convinced many managers that it is their long-term interests²⁷ to align themselves with the multilateralization agenda. These arrangements are now being further polished and institutionalized through the PRS.

The harmonization agenda promotes rules and institutions of multilateral governance. The legitimation for these rules and institutions is based on the pursuit of a supranational good – benefits that accrue only if narrow national interests are put aside in favor of a collective, global good. The partnership between Tanzania and the donor community is increasingly justified –and consolidated –in line with the principles of multilateralism. There is little doubt that the harmonization of aid disbursement practices makes life easier for the Tanzanian civil servants entrusted with managing the government's external finances. Yet there is a double irony here – first, that the Tanzanian government is drawn into the auspices of an iron triangle of multilateral interests with promises of greater national ownership. And second, that the rhetoric of multilateralism ensures that those players with the greatest capacity on the ground to participate in preparatory drafting committees, and so on, are able to define the 'collective' agenda. Today, as in 1995 when Helleiner first recorded his cryptic observations, these players are the World Bank and the IMF.

²⁶ Agenda for DAC Harmonisation Meetings 7th and 20th February 2002, Agenda Item 2. Identification of transaction costs and suggested solutions (mimeo), emphasis in original.

²⁷ In the rapid rotation lifeworld of the aid executive, 'long-term' interests refer to issues that are likely to follow them to their subsequent posting. The range of such issues is broader the higher up one is in the management hierarchy.

Building the pro-poor policy partnership on a foundation of multilateralism delimits the range of issues which potential new parties to the partnership can influence. As the political basis of the multilateral policy partnership is expanded to encompass representatives of 'civil society', these new entrants are finding that certain basic principles are non-negotiable. One such principle is the hegemony of creditor interests and the sanctity of the disbursement imperative; a second is the concentration of policy-formulation power in the hands of a transnational technocratic elite, schooled in the populist neo-liberal mindset of post-developmentalism.

This trend can arguably enhance the 'efficiency' of aid management and allow for donors to keep better track of their collective monies. But it may well be costly for Tanzania's political system, and may have damaging effects for the deepening of a genuinely participatory, democratic and pluralist culture of politics. This theme is explored in the next chapter.

4 Changing political opportunities of non-state actors

The partnership that has gradually consolidated among aid agencies and the Tanzanian government since 1997 is reflected in the reconfiguration of players participating in public policy processes. A novel feature of the PRS is the extent to which a certain category of private, non-state actors have succeeded in legitimizing demands for inclusion in the direct exercise of decision-making power.²⁸ The extent of domestic private or civic influence on the PRS and subsequent policy decisions has been slight, and in terms of practical outcomes the donor-government axis (in overall conformance with Bretton Woods priorities) continues to dominate public policy making (Evans et al 2001, McGee et al 2002, World Bank 2002a). Yet, the consultative imperative championed by the World Bank and others has established a moral leverage point via which non-state actors – self-proclaimed representatives of ‘civil society’ – can justify their access to the ‘epistemic community’ that frames public policy.²⁹ The dynamics of private access to public policy processes is the focus of this and following chapter.

What began with an informal Consultative Group civil society shadow meeting in Dar es Salaam in 1997 and led to ad hoc non-state participation in the PRSP zonal and national

²⁸ We use the term ‘non-state actors’ here to refer to those specific private organizations that have competed to capture the political space engendered through various mechanisms of consultation, participation and partnership associated with the Tanzania PRS. While hardly a rigorous concept (the vast majority of non-state actors, including the conventional business community, falls outside its scope), it is preferable to the misleading and ambiguous notions of ‘non-governmental’ or ‘civil society’ organization. The use of these established terms must be limited in this connection due to their pivotal role in the legitimation of political privileges in the public policy arena – the very phenomenon which the current study seeks to problematize.

²⁹ The notion of epistemic communities as participants in public policy formulation has been elaborated by Peter Haas (1992); Thomas Callaghy (2001) has recently applied this perspective to the global debt reduction policy regime.

workshops in 2000 is now becoming more firmly established. The main context for the institutionalization of non-state participation in public policy processes is the Poverty Monitoring system (to be discussed in detail below). Recent donor assessments of public consultation in the PRS process have consistently underscored the need to deepen and further institutionalize civic participation, legitimizing the demands of non-state actors for direct access to policy processes (Evans et al, *op.cit.*; McGee, *op.cit.*). It is likely that these demands will lead to the further routinization of direct non-state involvement in public policy processes.

This shift in the opportunities of actors outside the narrow political elite to participate in policy formulation is hailed on several fronts as a major breakthrough in opening up policy processes to civic oversight. It is indeed evident that the formulation of the PRS has coincided with the introduction of new forms of interaction between public and private interests around the definition of development means and ends. Looking more closely at the emerging structures and relationships of consultation and participation, however, suggests that what is occurring is not a simple instance of greater public accountability to civil society.

Political space has indeed opened up for private, non-state actors to promote their interests, or those of their constituencies. But having recognized this basic fact, it is necessary to ask which actors have capitalized on this opportunity and to consider the tangible consequences of their 'empowerment.' Three specific issues invite closer scrutiny. One concerns the mechanisms of selectivity: which (categories of) actors have been privileged by the methods of inclusion employed, and how has the selection of participants influenced the content and quality of advocacy? How, if at all, has the way in which access to the policy arena has been regulated affected the range of issues which can be influenced? Has the broadening of the basis of policy debate modified the hegemonic grip of creditor interests on the broad contours of Tanzania's development strategy?

These concerns are closely related to the second issue: the changing relationships between actors. What sorts of alliances are being forged around the mechanisms of consultation and civic participation? What sorts of political bargains undergird these coalitions? Our evidence indicates that actors whose right to represent 'civil society' is recognized by the government and its partners win this recognition in exchange for tacit promises of cooperation. Such alliances, once forged via the contingent conjuncture of a 'consultation' can take on a life of their own and leave a lasting imprint on the social relations of governance – the shadowy realm of personal and vocational networks based on shared ideals, vocabularies, organizational cultures and professional habitus which frame the lifeworlds of the transnational technocrats that formulate policy content.

The third issue concerns the implications of these shifts in political opportunity structures for how legitimacy is defined within the political system as a whole. At issue here is the

relationship between a fast-track model of democratic planning (via which ‘civil society organizations’ convey the ‘voices of the poor’ directly into the policy arena), and the statutory structures of political representation delineated in the Tanzanian constitution. This group of issues relates to major political dilemmas: the marginalization of Parliament; disjuncture between the powers invested in the Party and that exercised by the technocracy and its allies; and the consequences of this for strengthening and streamlining mechanisms of downward accountability. These points are taken up in greater detail in Chapter 6. Such themes also frame the ensuing narrative of how non-state actors were selectively involved in the PRS process.

The participation of non-state actors in the Tanzanian PRS

While the World Bank imposes the ‘process conditionality’ of consultations in the formulation of a PRSP, it does not actually require that contributions made in this process would be taken into account in policymaking. Similarly, little effort is made to ensure that the public has an overall view of the constraints on policy choices. For example, the Letter of Intent that spells out the conditions a government must meet to qualify for PRGF credits was not available to the public until after it was approved (Hudock 2002: 4, 6).

This ambivalence about the status of non-expert views is reflected in the formulation of the PRS document. According to official documentation, the main channel for civic consultation in the formulation of the PRSP was a series of Zonal Workshops on Poverty Alleviation organized in May of 2000, a month after Tanzania reached the HIPC ‘decision point.’ The major national policy advocacy groups view the situation differently. After the Executive Directors of the Bretton Woods institutions indicated, in September 1999, that Tanzania would be eligible for debt relief under the HIPC initiative, two governmental bodies were established to manage the process of fulfilling the creditors’ conditions. These were an Inter-Ministerial Committee and a Technical Committee of key civil servants. The immediate task of the Technical Committee was to draft an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. In order for Tanzania to reach the PRSP ‘Decision Point’ for inclusion in the Enhanced HIPC Initiative, the I-PRSP needed to be endorsed by the Boards of the Bank and the Fund.³⁰

No representatives of non-state actors or their organizations were invited to participate in either of the Government’s PRSP committees. In December 1999, however, ‘a number of

³⁰ In addition to preparing an I-PRSP, reaching Decision Point required Government to sign a new three-year agreement with the IMF – a Poverty Reduction Growth Facility – encompassing nearly three dozen conditions pertaining to Government’s economic and fiscal policies.

NGOs received letters individually from the chairperson of the Government technical Committee on the PRSP' indicating 'the intention of the Government to involve NGOs in the process' (TASOET 2000: 2). The means of civic involvement were not stipulated in the letters. Recognizing both the opportunity for policy influence, and the risks of an uncoordinated response to the Government's overture, some leading Tanzanian advocacy organizations formed a network to coordinate civic input in the PRS policy process.

At a workshop convened by Oxfam and the Tanzanian Coalition on Debt and Development (TCDD)³¹ at the end of January 2000, twenty-eight CSOs met to deliberate on how to respond to the Government's offer of consultation. During this meeting, participants engaged in an animated debate concerning whether or not they should participate in the PRS process. Some expressed the view that since the PRS was a conditionality imposed upon Tanzania by the World Bank and the IMF for HIPC relief, CSOs should remain 'outside' the process. The whole PRSP idea was considered 'foreign', since Tanzania had already formulated a National Poverty Eradication Strategy in 1997 and was at the time working together with the donor community to produce a Tanzania Assistance Strategy (Muna, Mwakasege & Manyama interviews). This position remained in the minority. The majority felt that despite the dangers of being used to legitimize a Bretton Woods conditionality, the PRS process represented an 'open door' for engaging in policy dialogue with the government.

The workshop designated the TCDD/PRSP network as their 'focal point' for dialogue with Government on the PRSP and established five sectoral committees 'to comment on the draft government paper [the Interim PRSP] ...; to raise questions of clarification; and to provide input into the final government paper.'³² In addition to having an immediate impact on policy formulation, the TCDD/PRSP coalition had broader objectives. According to their report (TCDD 2000: 2),

it is intended that civil society organizations (CSOs) be integrated more fully into the long-term Tanzania Assistance Strategy (TAS) to which PRSP ultimately belongs, by becoming members of each TAS task force, along with the Technical Committee.

³¹ TCDD is a coalition of national advocacy groups concerned with debt established in 1998 with the strong 'facilitation' of Oxfam/Tanzania (Likasi interview).

³² Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: Input from Civil Society Organisations. Draft paper prepared by the TCDD/PRSP Drafting Committee on the basis of Reports by Working Groups on Food Security, Health, Education and Poverty Analysis (11 March 2000). The following organizations participated in the Civic Input Workshop and subsequent Working Groups: TGNP, TCCIA, TACOSODE, TASWA, Maarifa ni Ufunguo, Economic Writers, RFS, CCT-RES, CARITAS, HakiArdhi, TASOET, TAHEA, SCF-Tanzania, NGOTAC, ELCT, CSSC, CBHCC, CBC Inc., Mwl. Nyerere Foundation, TANGO, TAMPO, Kuleana, IDS, WRDP, BUMAGU, and Kigamboni Woman Group. TASOET acted as the secretariat of the TCDD/PRSP network.

The five TCDD/PRSP working groups quickly produced a ‘civil society input paper’ that offered a commentary on the Government’s sketchy (five page + annexes) Interim PRSP document. Where the intellectual basis of the I-PRSP is extremely lean, the TCDD/PRSP contribution expounds at length on the ‘conceptual framework of poverty and development’ (ibid.: 3-7). The TCDD/PRSP argues that the government’s poverty reduction strategy should be founded on a holistic vision of people-centred, poverty-free development, based on full and equal access to food and nutrition for all; to education, health, water and other basic services; to sustainable livelihoods and incomes, and to the resources necessary to achieve the same; control over key resources; good governance and full participation in policy-making, implementation and monitoring; and strengthening of sustainability and self-reliance from the grassroots to the national to the global level (ibid.: 7).

The TCDD/PRSP working group on ‘Macro’ issues, furthermore, offers a critical commentary on the ideological framework underpinning the HIPC-related poverty reduction exercise. The I-PRSP eschews reflection on the sources or causes of poverty in Tanzania. In contrast, the TCDD/PRSP document takes the structural roots of poverty as its point of departure and proceeds to assign a substantial share of the blame for Tanzania’s dismal economic performance and its massive debt burden on the ‘structure of the global economy’ as well as on the ‘creditor community.’ A central thrust of the critique revolves around the undemocratic nature of development financing. The TCDD/PRSP position advocates making ‘the decision-making for loans and grants...as participatory and transparent as possible’ (ibid.: 11). The authors are concerned about the sustainability of debt relief and demand that the government considers the extent to which ‘ongoing economic structures, production patterns and marketing systems ensure further debt? How can new debt be stopped?’ (ibid.: 20).

The authors of the civil society input paper refuse to accept the established neo-liberal macro-policy measures – ‘liberalisation of trade, privatization, fiscal austerity, retrenchment and cost sharing’ – as an unchallengeable given, and demand that macroeconomic policies be reviewed and changed, making them ‘pro-poor, pro-rural, pro-women and pro-youth’ (ibid.: 10). The document calls, among other things, for ‘support systems... to protect the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, livestock-keepers and small business people, including subsidies for farm inputs and progressive tax systems.’ Domestic industry also ‘needs to be protected, and economic development oriented to regional and domestic markets as much as the global market’ (ibid.). The paper’s sectoral analyses reflect these same lines of reasoning.

The message from the organizations participating in the TCDD/PRSP network to the government was clear: the ‘home-grown’ TAS constitutes the valid policy framework to which

the creditor community's PRS exercise is to be subordinated. The government should resist the pressures of external financiers – whose previous poor advice and bad credits are a major cause of prevailing levels of poverty – and revive what might be termed a Nyerereist (Lwaitama 2002) ethos of 'grassroots self-reliance.' In doing so, the advocacy groups presume to speak for the mass of the primary producers – the workers, cultivators and livestock-keepers – whose livelihoods have been undermined by neo-liberal structural adjustment programs.

At root, the TCDD/PRSP document represents a nationalist response to the perceived threats of the mode of globalization championed by the transnational creditor community. This is particularly apparent in the way the I-PRSP and the TCDD/PRSP documents relate to the private sector. The residual populism of the TCDD/PRSP perspective makes it fundamentally hostile to 'big business' and to 'the inequities and impoverishing aspects of the global capitalist system' (ibid.: 21-2). Nonetheless, the authors position themselves firmly in support of private local business and a domestically controlled industrial sector. This view is informed by the authors' 'prioritisation of increased employment as a cornerstone of economic restructuring and poverty reduction strategies' (ibid.: 13).³³ The I-PRSP, in contrast, speaks euphemistically of 'higher growth,' and of an improved environment for 'robust private sector development' in order to 'enhance private investment and lower the cost of doing business' (§4, 8), yet offers no concrete measures for stimulating domestic industry. The only direct reference to employment in the I-PRSP celebrates the reduction of state employment by 87,000 workers as part of the on-going Civil Service Reform (Annex II, §4a).

The drafters of the official PRSP document patently ignored the TCDD/PRSP input. It is not mentioned as an element in the consultations feeding into the formulation of the PRSP. Thus, the critical views of the national(ist) advocacy groups were buried under a blanket of silence.³⁴ Instead, the official draft of the PRSP festively cites the input of 'the poor' via seven Zonal Workshops as a major source of inspiration for the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy. For this round, the advocacy groups' aim of gaining access to the iron-triangle of development policy formulation was singularly unsuccessful.

The Zonal Workshops

Initially, unspecified Government officials proposed that the Tanzanian Coalition on Debt and Development coordinate the zonal workshops. This arrangement with TCDD was later over-

³³ The favorable view of local business may be attributed, in part, to the membership of the Tanzania Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the TCDD/PRSP 'Macro' Working Group.

³⁴ As far as we can ascertain, the only TCDD/PRSP recommendation adopted in the Government's PRSP is that the goal for the percentage of under two year-old children immunized against measles and DPT be increased from 75% to 85%.

turned, and invitations to the workshops went out via Regional authorities (Likasi & Muna interviews). A total of 804 Tanzanians participated in seven Zonal Workshops. According to the official report workshop participants comprised, in the aggregate, villagers (53%), councilors and other elected representatives (27%), District Executive Directors (14%) and NGOs (7%). The national policy advocacy groups withdrew from the consultations following the sidelining of TCDD, and there is no record of their participation in zonal workshop deliberations.

According to TCDD Executive Secretary Mwakasege (URT 2001a: 11): 'the tight time frame associated with the preparation of the PRSP has limited a wider participation of civil society stakeholders in the process.' Civic participation was also restricted by the fact that most NGOs 'did not have adequate background information on the HIPC initiative as a whole and the PRSP process in particular.' According to one external assessment, the consultations were 'hastily prepared' and 'rushed', and were heavily criticized by civic organizations as 'opportunistic and tokenistic' (Evans et al 2001, Chapter 9: v, vi, 10). All in all, it is difficult to accede to the claim of the Bretton Woods' Joint Staff Assessment that the PRSP formulation would have been 'characterised by ... the broad-based participation of civil society (JSA 2000, cited in Evans et al 2001: 10), regardless of the fact that this claim is echoed by at least one Tanzanian organization (Kajege n.d.).

On the basis of the official report, the Zonal Workshops provided a miniscule number of Tanzanian citizens with an opportunity to articulate concerns concerning their immediate socio-economic conditions. In accord with numerous other surveys of local developmental needs, participants expressed a desire for improved economic infrastructure and better social services. The top five priority issues identified by zonal workshop participants were, predictably: education, agriculture (extension, inputs and pricing), health, infrastructure (roads, transportation and electricity) and water.

It is evident that the culture of state-society interaction evoked by the 'workshopping' mode of consultation employed by the government (Shivji 2002; Shivji interview) encouraged the articulation of what Judith Tandler (2000) has termed 'micro-ized and projectized' demands. There is no indication that workshop participants would have expressed opinions about the Government's fiscal policies and macro-economic framework, about foreign aid or public indebtedness, about international trade policy, or about any other aspect of the nation's long-term development strategy. Nor were they asked to. One suggestion is cited (out of a total of 230 recorded recommendations) according to which the government should 'provide [a] conducive environment for agro-processing industries to be revived or established' (op.cit.: 70). Otherwise, the need to promote employment by enhancing industrial development, intersectoral linkages and economic growth was passed over in silence.

A supplementary National Consultative Workshop was organized in Dar es Salaam in August 2000 to discuss the first draft of the final PRS document. This workshop was attended by 209 participants including the entire corps of Regional Commissioners, fifty-odd civil servants (including a dozen Permanent Secretaries), several dozen representatives of embassies and international organizations, and a comparable number representing 'NGOs and the private sector.' Of the private transnational agencies only two (Care and Concern Worldwide) were involved at this stage.

The report on the national consultative workshop reflects a wide-ranging discussion that touched on many critical policy issues. The Government's submission stressed the importance of the PRS as a condition to be fulfilled in order to qualify for HIPC debt relief. The key analytical submission, by an economist at the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF, one of the two main sources of donor-sponsored policy analysis), highlighted the necessity of stimulating 'export-led growth in the rural areas' (URT 2001a: 34). TCDD's Mwakasege cautioned participants of the need to 'critically examine new loans,' and a number of unidentified participants called for a clearer linkage between poverty reduction and employment creation, industrial development and international trade. The main focus of the deliberations over the means of poverty reduction, however, underscored the 'voices of the poor' as reflected in the proceedings of the zonal workshops. Poverty reduction was largely discussed as a function of social service provision and infrastructure development.

The 'full' PRSP

In technical terms, the government's production of the PRSP was an impressive performance. The consultation and drafting processes kept strictly to the designated timetable (see timeline). Of utmost political importance was the Bretton Woods endorsement of Tanzania's qualification for debt relief – reaching the HIPC Decision Point in March 2000. This entitled the Government to a new tranche of IMF credits and allowed the Government to take credit for hundreds of millions of dollars of new foreign assistance – a claim which the CCM Government exploited immodestly in its campaigns for the October elections that year.³⁵ The final prize, Completion Point, was achieved in December 2000.

Reviewing the events and reading the document one is struck with how economically the Tanzanian Government fulfilled the formal requirements for debt relief eligibility. The entire process from the establishment of the authoritative bodies responsible for managing the process

³⁵ Strictly speaking, HIPC does not make any new funds available. What is popularly termed 'HIPC money' refers to the resources Tanzania is not required to devote to debt servicing.

Table: PRSP Process in Tanzania

1999	
November	Formation of Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee and Technical Committee
2000	
February	I-PRSP approved by Cabinet
March	I-PRSP endorsed by IFIs HIPC Decision Point. Three-year PRGF loan granted by IMF. Prospectus of final PRSP produced by Technical Committee
May	Seven Zonal Workshops (simultaneously over two days)
June	Cursory briefing in Parliament Draft final PRSP produced by Technical Committee Consultations with donors ³⁶
August	Consultations with Regional Administrative Secretaries National consultation workshop
September	Final PRSP approved by Cabinet
November	Final PRSP endorsed by the IFIs. HIPC Completion Point. PRSP implementation began
2001	
March	Seminar chaired by President and attended by Regional and District leaders
June	Seminar organized on environmental concerns in the PRSP Poverty Monitoring Master Plan (PMMP)
September	1st PRSP Progress Report

(in November 1999), through the drafting of the Interim PRSP, the discussion of a Draft PRSP at Zonal Workshops, a Parliamentary briefing and a National Consultative Workshop and on to Cabinet approval took only nine months. Tanzania traversed the path from Decision Point to Completion Point in about the same length of time.

Different state and non-state actors participated in this process for various reasons. It is hard to avoid the impression that, from the point of view of the national leadership, the produc-

³⁶ Donors were also closely involved in Sectoral Working Groups which formulated sectoral programmes and in the zonal and national workshops on PRSP, to an extent that the whole PRSP process can be seen as donor driven. Wangwe (2001: 10) notes that 'GoT makes deliberate effort to regain ownership over the reform process but at the same time it is expected that donors will adjust aid policies and delivery mechanisms.'

tion of a PRSP was above all about accessing debt relief, 'another loop to jump through,' in the words of one senior civil servant. The CCM leadership could hardly have been adverse to the prospect of going into the general elections with the promise of a \$3 billion concession from the creditors in its pocket. While advocacy groups complained about the hurried timetable imposed by the creditors, it is quite likely that the donors' allies within the Government were equally eager to complete the process as quickly as possible. In any event, within the elected timeframe there was little opportunity for negotiation concerning substantive policy issues. Rather than being a 'participatory public policy-making process,' the PRSP consultations in Tanzania were primarily about legitimizing the technocratic partnership and prioritizing public expenditure to be funded by new grants and loans. There was certainly no possibility to engage with critical advocacy groups on the real causes of poverty and the responsibility of the creditor community for the plight of the Tanzanian poor.

The Poverty Monitoring System: Extending the partnership

The most institutionalized form of incorporating select non-state actors in the policy community can be found in the government's Poverty Monitoring System (PMS). Non-state involvement in the formulation of the PRSP was sporadic and hastily organized. It is significant that as the donors and the government are moving into the implementation of the PRS, the partnership is being expanded and a highly selective mode of non-state participation is now integral to the process (Evans & van Diesen 2002).

This section zooms in on the Poverty Monitoring System as an example of the transnationalization of public policy processes. At the same time, case analysis of the PMS (and the associated Participatory Poverty Assessment exercise) provides a opportunity to examine the relations between 'local' and 'global' configurations of civil society. Before proceeding to the case materials, it will be useful to briefly pause and reflect on the intellectual and rhetorical baggage that accompanies the notion of civil society in such an analysis.³⁷

'Civil society'

The creditors' rationale behind demanding the direct participation of 'civil society' in the formulation of poverty reduction policy is based on perceived deficiencies in the mandate of the

³⁷ 'Civil society' is less of an idea than a fetish for scholarly and pragmatic discourse on contemporary politics (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999). No attempt is made here to summarize the voluminous literature on the concept and reality of 'civil society' in Africa. The point of this section is to identify the range of ideals and expectations which various actors bring to the participation of civil society in public policy processes.

Government to legislate equitably for certain segments of society – the poor, vulnerable, marginalized, women, ethnic minorities, etc. Statutory mechanisms of political representation are deemed inefficient to bring the demands of these groups to bear on public policy to a degree commensurate with their share in the population, or with the gravity of their needs. In general, this ‘democracy deficit’ is classified along with corruption and other abuses of power as a problem of ‘governance.’ The donor community has since the late 1980s increasingly privileged the importance of ‘good governance’ as a fundamental precondition for success in achieving developmental goals (Abrahamsen 2000). By the same token, ‘governance conditionalities,’ i.e., meeting normative standards of political process or public management as defined by the creditor have similarly been applied – albeit highly selectively – in the development financing protocols of both bilateral and multilateral agencies.

Experience convinced donors that demands for good governance imposed from without needed to be supplemented by social pressure from within if political and administrative systems were to be successfully re-engineered. In their search for a strategic change agent to promote better governance, donors drew on the ethos and vocabulary of the democratization rhetoric of the 1980s which pitted nascent anti-totalitarian citizens’ movements in East Europe against moribund authoritarian regimes. Inspired by the success of these civic movements in driving political reform, Western donors identified the indistinct entity of Civil Society as the domestic agent with a natural mandate to articulate demands for democratic governance in the poor countries of the South. In this way ‘civil society’ plays much the same role in post-developmental discourse that the ‘middle classes’ occupied in the classical modernization discourse after World War II. In Southern and Eastern Africa, where structural adjustment wiped out what little there was of the middle strata, and where ‘civil society’³⁸ remains more promise than achievement, ‘NGOs’ were quickly taken on board as the operational proxy for Civil Society (Sen 2002).

Given this context, it is not surprising that most of the rhetoric in the 1990s about the role of NGOs *qua* civil society in promoting democracy, human rights or poverty eradication is cast in a celebratory mold. As William Fisher (1997: 442) has noted, ‘[t]he optimism of the proponents of NGOs derives from a general sense of NGOs as ‘doing good,’ unencumbered and untainted by the politics of government or the greed of the market. In the mainstream literature, organized networks of non-state actors are credited with blocking bad policies and with preventing damaging interventions, with upholding democratic values and ensuring that the voices of disenfranchised and marginalized citizens are heard (Keck & Sikkink 1998). NGOs also actively

³⁸ Whether in the Hegelian/Marxian sense of ‘bürgerliche Gesellschaft’ or in the Tocquevillean sense of an associational realm ‘between state and market’; see Jürgen Habermas (1962: 453); Alasdair MacIntyre (1994).

promote the perception that they represent the genuine, autonomous interests of 'the people.' Representatives of private development agencies on all levels commonly defend their moral claim to emancipatory agency, identifying themselves as agents of 'empowerment,' or as surrogate 'voices' for the down-trodden.³⁹ Yet, as Fischer points out, there is little empirical evidence to support these claims about the virtuous outcomes of NGOs: 'The literature as a whole is based more on faith than fact' (op. cit.: 44r).

An idealized and generalized way of discussing NGOs reflects the longing of an aid industry disillusioned with state performance to identify an alternative force that can challenge and reform the public structures which are presumed to be complicit in the production and maintenance of poverty. In its classical formulation, the liberal imagining of civil society represents an oppositional space 'outside' the problem complex responsible for thwarting development efforts (ibid.). This problem complex encompasses two main elements: the over-politicization of development management (rendering public program susceptible to co-option by rent-seeking elites); and, intricately linked to this, bureaucratic inefficiency (the failure of state agencies to perform in an instrumental-rational, consistent, and result-driven fashion). To ensure the credibility of its endeavors, the post-developmental aid industry thus requires reliable, efficient and apolitical non-state allies.⁴⁰ It is this need that generates an idealized notion of virtuous NGOs. To some extent, it is this same need which is behind the introduction of an consultative imperative in donor-driven policy processes.

We say 'to some extent', because the changing politics of aid discussed in earlier chapters have affected the configuration of relations among actors in domestic development arenas in Tanzania. The run-up to the new millennium saw a realignment of donor attitudes towards both state and civil society, and this is having paradoxical outcomes for the role of non-state actors in the operationalization of the good governance agenda. The emerging trends in aid management

³⁹ "TANGO and TCDD represent and perform their function as the 'voice of the voiceless' and the custodian of the interest of the poor by providing checks and balances to data and information generated by Government-led poverty (PRSP) monitoring process" – TANGO involvement in PRSP and its impact in poverty eradication initiatives (nd. [ca. 2000], mimeo).

⁴⁰ Given the density of rhetoric around 'market-driven' development processes, entrepreneurialism and the private sector one would expect that the domestic business community would figure as a strong ally in contemporary policy partnerships. In Tanzania this has not been the case; the domestic business community has been virtually absent from the PRS policy process. One explanation for this lies in the endemic competition between private business and the technocracy (what Issa Shivji (1976) once termed the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie') for the control of external resources; from this perspective, partnership with state actors would preclude a coalition with domestic business. It is also one of the central ironies of post-developmental aid that despite their commitment to market-driven solutions, public aid agencies have yet to establish workable modalities for supporting for-profit organizations.

– harmonizing aid in accordance with state protocols, basket approaches to sectoral programs, direct budget support – are all factors that bolster the institutional pilings of the donor-state partnership. Donors continue to express concern about governance but are increasingly bypassing non-state actors to promote these issues more immediately, through a complex of ‘jointly-managed’ instruments like the Public Expenditure Review, the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility – all of which subordinate the internal operations of the state to intimate scrutiny by its creditors. The mediation of ‘civil society’ as advocates for political reform is thus less urgent; it can also become a nuisance if NGOs challenge the integrity of the state-donor partnership.

What’s more, aid agencies express growing disillusionment with the empirical performance of NGOs. Local organizations especially are increasingly portrayed as elitist, self-serving, inefficient, unaccountable and corrupt.⁴¹ The liberal rhetoric of democracy and participation persists, but from the donor perspective the empirical reality of NGOs *qua* Civil Society is not living up to expectations. As a result, the status of ‘civil society’ in post-developmental discourse is deteriorating from one of primary *change agent* to that of *subcontractor* to the policy partnership.

It is important to note that behind this general trend is a steep process of differentiation in the non-state sector. Those organizations with experience, financial security and administrative stability have consolidated their positions as reliable brokers between the state and donors, between the state and non-state actors and between donors and the non-state sector. The transnational private aid organizations (also known as international non-governmental organizations), especially, have been extremely successful in cornering the demand for reliable, flexible and politically neutral ‘backstoppers’ of complex subcontracting relations among the state, donors and domestic non-state organizations (see Stubbs 2003).

Domestic non-state actors also continue to be important, but not as the motor force of democratization. Rather they are increasingly seen as brokers via which ‘the poor’ can be brought directly into the policy arena. Yet, even in this function, they are largely dependent on the transnational private aid agencies to guarantee their reliability. Some mechanism for demonstrating the direct participation of ‘the poor’ in policy formulation is the *sine qua non* of the populist neo-liberal system of legitimization, and this largely explains its inclusion in PRS processes. Understanding this also helps to explain the delicacy of the position of the transnational private aid agencies, which on the one hand ground their credibility in the mandate of a global social movement highly critical of neo-liberal policy regime, while on the other hand find themselves complicit in its maintenance.

⁴¹ See Kelsall (2001) for anecdotes along these lines culled from discussions with donors in Dar es Salaam.

The more general point here is that a mechanism for legitimizing the policies of a government-donor partnership through limited, albeit direct consultation with ‘the poor’ is emerging as a countervailing ‘theory’ of post-developmental democratization, in heightening competition with the constitutional model based on representative structures. The countervailing model which privileges direct consultation over representation might be termed ‘fast-track democracy.’ The PRS process has provided a tremendous catalyst to the elaboration of this model and for experimentation with practical modalities. The Participatory Poverty Assessment attached to the Government-endorsed Poverty Monitoring System (PMS) is a case in point.

The politics of policy feedback

An examination of the PMS provides an opportunity to explore a subtle dynamic in the relationship between the state, donors and non-state actors that is emerging via the PRS process. Two main points arise:

- a) The depoliticization of policy feedback as ‘independent professionals’ (Helleiner 2002: 232) take over responsibility for brokering communication between policy makers and target populations, crowding out elected representatives and the statutory structures of policy oversight.
- b) Pursuant to the points raised in the previous section, the PMS acts as a catalyst for a realignment of relationships within the non-state sector where it appears that the transnational private aid agencies have been particularly successful in capitalizing on the political opportunities incumbent in the consultative imperative at the expense of Tanzanian actors and organizations.

The PMS is an official governmental institution intended to provide the ‘data and information required for the monitoring and evaluation of the PRS.’ The operations and findings of the PMS are to be reported on in an annual report on Poverty and Human Development as well as the factual input into the annual PRS Progress Report (URT 2001b: 2).⁴² Non-state representatives, including four national lobby networks and one transnational private agency, have been included in the membership of the National Poverty Monitoring Steering Committee (chaired by the Permanent Secretaries of Vice-President’s Office and the Ministry of Finance).⁴³

⁴² The Poverty and Human Development Report represents a unique merging of a governmental policy monitoring activity under the PMS with UNDP’s established practice of producing national HDRs, a concrete manifestation of the interpenetration of the state and a multilateral aid agency.

⁴³ These include Tanzania Coalition on Debt and Development, Tanzania Gender Network Programme, TANGO and TACOSODE, and Save the Children representing ‘International NGOs’

Openings for the involvement of non-state actors in the policy process have been established within two of the four PMS Technical Working Groups: 'Dissemination, Sensitisation and Advocacy' (DSA) and 'Research and Analysis' (R&A). The Technical Working Group on Census and Surveys (chaired by the National Bureau of Statistics), and that on Administrative Data (chaired by Regional Administration and Local Government) include donor representatives, but no non-state actors. These two groups are responsible for ensuring that routine and periodic data collected by the Government agencies are incorporated in the poverty monitoring system.

At the time of our fieldwork (March/April 2002), the practical functions of the DSA group were unclear. The government's main activity in this area has been a series of pamphlets popularizing the PRSP and the first annual PRSP report. The pamphlets were financed by DFID and UNDP and their production and dissemination was subcontracted to a Tanzanian NGO, Hakikazi ('right to work'), whose executive sits on the DSA. The terms of reference for the DSA stress the dissemination and sensitization functions and especially the promotion of 'user-friendly' guides and reports on governmental policy. It does not seem likely that the DSA will provide a channel for civic actors to advocate for significant revisions to state policies.

In terms of direct non-state influence on substantive policy issues, the purview of the Research and Analysis TWG is far more interesting, and warrants close scrutiny. Chaired by a senior government official from the Planning Commission (an agency with relatively little political weight in post-socialist Tanzania) its membership includes a roster of independent actors with significant influence within the epistemic community that defines the contours of Tanzania's post-developmental policy regime. The executives of the two main non-for-profit academic consultancy agencies, REPOA and ESRF, are members (REPOA's executive is the secretary). The R&A group also includes the World Bank's acting Country Director, Tanzanian economist Benno Ndulu (ex-Helleiner Commission). Marjorie Mbilinyi, a vocal critic of structural adjustment and a noted activist in the HakiArdhi ('right to land') movement represents the University of Dar es Salaam. UNICEF and DFID are represented by two expatriate professionals who have cultivated close ties with the non-state sector.⁴⁴ Other members represent the Bank of Tanzania, the National Bureau of Statistics, Japanese and Dutch aid as well as the two main architects of the PMS, Arthur van Diesen of UNDP and Paschal Assey of the VPO. All in all, the Research and

⁴⁴ These same individuals have been extremely active in backstopping and channelling support to earlier efforts of the Tanzanian government to formulate post-developmental policy statements (National Poverty Eradication Strategy, Tanzania Assistance Strategy, etc.). In addition to their participation in the R&A group, both represent donor interests on the PMS Steering Committee and on the Census and Surveys TWG.

Analysis working group brings together a pivotal cross-section of the transnational Dar-based cosmopolitan community of elite development professionals who have worked consistently to consolidate the state-donor partnership under the banner of Tanzanian ownership.

The PPA and fast-track democracy

With the possible exception of Mbilinyi, whose institutional mandate is ambiguous,⁴⁵ there are no representatives of the policy advocacy camp among the non-state members of the Research and Analysis group. Yet by overseeing the incorporation of a Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) within the Poverty Monitoring System, the Research and Analysis group has been responsible for spearheading the most direct and extensive opening for the influence of non-state actors on the PRS policy process. This took the form of a 'PPA Implementing Consortium' consisting of 15 'Government and academic institutions, national and international NGOs.' The management of the PPA was entrusted to ESRF (a member of the R&A TWG), as the Consortium's 'lead implementing agency.' The other members comprise three Government agencies (President's Office, Finance, the National Bureau of Statistics); five national NGOs; the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Dar es Salaam; as well as five transnational private aid agencies (including the 'supertankers' CARE, Save the Children and ActionAid).

The Tanzanian PPA is an innovative and ambitious attempt at introducing mechanism for policy feedback between policy-makers and beneficiaries. It succeeded in attracting serious and committed professionals dedicated to evidence-based policy in the service of poverty eradication. In this sense it has been quite successful. In terms of its institutional framework and its resource base, the PPA is of uncertain impact and sustainability. In promising to provide a direct link between the poor and the policy elite, and by offering an evidentiary basis for assessing the impact of the PRS, the PPA nevertheless possesses substantial symbolic value. It is also a pure manifestation of 'fast-track democracy' and has attracted intense interest among both donors and non-state lobby groups (Ehrhart interview).

The government has also committed itself to recognizing the findings of the PPA. The PRSP, for example, states that:

The integration of a regular PPA in the PRSP monitoring system... will provide invaluable qualitative data, which will serve to cross-check quantitative data, help us judge the effectiveness of policy measures and more generally help us understand the causal links be-

⁴⁵ According to the Research and Analysis TWG secretary Joseph Semboja, the members of the group are not institutional representatives, but were hand-picked for their personal qualities (interview).

tween the action programmes of the PRSP and changes in poverty. But most importantly, it will help us listen to the concerns, perceptions and opinions of the poor themselves.

And according to the Poverty Monitoring Master Plan, the PPA is 'key in ensuring [that] the views and perspectives of the poor are fed through to policy makers' (URT 2001b: 4). Given this opportunity to influence policy, both national NGOs and transnational private aid agencies demonstrated considerable interest in joining the Consortium. Skepticism was also in evidence, however; at least one major advocacy organization felt that participation in the Consortium would compromise its credibility as a watchdog over state policy and actions (Ehrhart & Ranjani interviews).

The PPA's specific goals are defined as:

- 1) Enhancing, through in-depth description and analysis, research participants' and policymakers' understanding of key poverty issues;
- 2) Exploring the (a) different and sometimes competing priority needs of poor people, (b) likely impact of policies and (c) tradeoffs and potential compromises between diverse interests in order to develop 'best bet' recommendations for poverty alleviation; and
- 3) Facilitating the constructive engagement of civil society in pro-poor policymaking processes.⁴⁶

The PPA data collection exercise involves a series of three-week cycles of participatory data collection and analysis at 30 sites around Tanzania. Five PPA research teams cover six sites each. ESRF, the Lead Implementing Agency, expects that the current PPA will be the first in a repetitive process of two-year cycles 'calculated to feed into the PRSP and other policy review processes.' Fieldwork for the first cycle took place between March and mid-July 2002.⁴⁷

The process by which Consortium members were selected was delicate and carefully managed, involving much behind the scenes cajoling and negotiation.⁴⁸ While participating agencies were promised compensation for their field expenses, they were also required to second a staff member to one of the PPA teams at their own expense. For the national organizations this was a major investment; only the relatively well-established and financially secure organizations – of which there are very few – could consider getting involved. Financial security in Tanzania is naturally very relative. Still, participation in the Consortium was presumably motivated by largely

⁴⁶ Consortium website <www.tzonline.org>.

⁴⁷ Detailed information on the PPA process is available through the Tanzania on-line web site.

⁴⁸ Interview with Charles Ehrhart (ESRF), 180302.

strategic considerations, geared toward accessing a seat at the policy 'table', rather than by the eventuality of an immediate reward.

Indeed, key players in and around the PPA see it as a project with a quite explicit political agenda (in the broad sense of the term).⁴⁹ Many see the Consortium as an opportunity to promote a coalition of reformists who reject the 'old-style' mode of political participation (through statutory channels) that, it is felt, has tended to exclude civil society. Through the assembly of the Consortium and its steering committee, the training of the research teams, and the experience of intensive collaboration in the field, the PPA participants see themselves as involved in mobilizing, sensitizing, and building up an avant garde of progressive actors linked 'downward' to grassroots communities, and 'upward' to an emerging guild of pro-poor policy advocates.

A major outcome of the PPA was to be an enhanced sense of self-awareness among non-state advocacy groups as a political force and with a clear strategy for political impact. In practice, however, the autonomous political agency of the PPA teams was compromised by the institutional setup. In dealing with the local government and rural communities, the teams were perceived as working for the government, while in Dar es Salaam they emphasized their role of representing 'civil society.' This evoked a sense of 'schizophrenia' among the participating CSOs and generated a lot of discussion in the PPA teams (Ehrhart interview).

The incorporation of a PPA in the PRS process is not unique to Tanzania. The Tanzanian programme builds on a Ugandan precedent (UPPAP). Indeed, the international consultant brought in to design the PPA methodology had previously worked on the UPPAP and brought that reference to the ESRF tender for Consortium leadership. In Uganda, Oxfam staff was seconded to work within the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. In Tanzania, the institutional design of the PPA has not fused together representatives of the government and the civil society to such an extent, but the same tendency can be seen in the practical work. The eventual design of the PMS, including the use of a PPA as a pivotal policy feedback mechanism, was vigorously promoted by UNDP who employed a British poverty monitoring expert to design the exercise. As noted, transnational private aid agencies gained significant representation in the Consortium management, securing positions on four of the five research teams.

One can say, then, that in both design and execution the PPA manifests a vision of fast-track democracy endorsed by a transnational corps of development professionals. Other

⁴⁹ This assessment is based on interviews with members of the R&A TWG, including ESRF as lead agency in the PPA Consortium, and UNDP (as a major 'backstopping agency') in March/April 2002.

elements of this vision embrace partnership with the multilateral financial institutions, a skepticism toward local political elites and a relentless search for ‘positive lessons’ and ‘best practices’ that are portable from context to context and which are contingent on the technical input of transnational development professionals. The cornerstone of this perspective is a firm confidence in the technical skills of transnational policy professionals, and in the capacity of ‘independent professionals [to act] constructively as mediators and assessors’ in the development arena (Helleiner 2002: 232).

The eventual division of privileges and duties within the PMS testifies to the strong strategic advantage of transnational actors in the competition for seats at the policy table. Transnational private actors have no stake in the two Working Groups responsible for routine data and periodic surveys. But then, these are relatively low-profile groups with few extraordinary resources. In contrast the Research and Analysis and Dissemination groups where the transnationals wield influence have received hefty donor backing for their activities. Those areas of the poverty monitoring system which rate highest in resources, visibility, momentum and impact are characterized by an intimate alliance of the domestic technocratic policy elite, multilateralist donors and transnational private actors.

In its conception, the PPA has a clear potential for bringing the practical experience of poor Tanzanians to bear on policy making. That said, there are two inherent risks in this configuration of powers around channels of policy feedback. One that has aroused critical commentary is the likely marginalization of constitutionally empowered structures of representative democracy (Booth 2001, Eberlie 2001) discussed below (Chapter 6). The second is that Tanzanian non-state actors and interests will be ‘crowded out’ of the policy process. This risk is naturally especially large for those adhering to a vision of development means and ends that challenges the transnational policy partnership.

Crowding out

Empirical observations give credence to this latter threat, but the emerging picture is not all black and white. Positions of political leverage in the policy arena are not fully established and the configuration is evolving rapidly. Players across the board have invested substantially in the politics of the PRS process, and any dramatic turns in its trajectory will affect the relationships among the players.

The transnational agencies are not unaware of the ‘crowding out’ dilemma and clearly wish to avoid it. This is evident from our interviews, as well as from the internal documentation of a network of advocacy organizations which calls itself the Policy Forum for NGOs. The

Policy Forum represents an attempt at a coordinated response by domestic and transnational non-state groups to consultative space incumbent in the PRS process. It may reasonably be seen as a direct heir to the TCDD/PRSP coalition that staged a rushed reaction to the Interim PRSP as discussed above. A main difference between the TCDD/PRSP coalition and the newer Policy Forum network is the expanded presence of transnational groups in the latter. All but one of the 28 organizations participating in the TCDD/PRSP coalition were domestic, and the group's work was managed by a Tanzanian secretariat. The self-termed Core Group of the Policy Forum comprises eight advocacy groups of which two are transnationals; one of these has taken on secretarial functions for the Forum and acts as its convener.⁵⁰

In comparison with the TCDD/PRSP coalition, then, the Policy Forum might be seen as concrete evidence of the 'crowding out' dilemma as transnational private agencies penetrate the management functions of the roughly-hewn Tanzanian policy advocacy movement. Be that as it may, the problem is recognized among the participants. A 'Strategic Plan for Civil Society Organizations engaged in Policy Processes' drafted by the Core Group states unambiguously as its first working principal that 'the Policy Group [sic] must draw its strength and credibility from being Tanzanian led and inspired.'⁵¹ Far from actively conspiring to capture political space for its own sake, the TPAAAs would prefer to see domestic actors taking the lead.

This is reflected in the effort transnationals are making to 'Tanzanianize' certain positions in their organizations. Staff recruited into policy advocacy positions, for instance, are invariably Tanzanian, as are the participants in the PPA research teams. (Indeed, these are usually the same individuals.) It would be interesting to know whether the indigenization of the strategic policy advocacy function is having an impact on the political orientation of the TPAAAs. How do these young Tanzanian development professionals view their role and mission? How do they assess the politics of policy advocacy and poverty reduction? Do they buy into a policy partnership that caters to creditor interests, or are they inclined to push their organizations to challenge the microtizing and projectizing focus of the established poverty reduction policy framework? We are not in a position to provide a comprehensive, empirically grounded assessment. Some insights into these issues, however, can be gleaned from the following account,

⁵⁰ The composition of the Core Group is TGNP, ActionAid, Hakielimu, NOCC, TCDD, Legal and Human Rights Centre, CARE and TANGO. Of these TGNP, TCDD and TANGO were part of the TCDD/PRSP group.

⁵¹ Draft Strategic Plan for Civil Society Organizations engaged in Policy Processes (March 2002 – mimeo).

which is a verbatim excerpt of a discussion with two members of a PPA research team in March of 2002.⁵²

The interview took place between 8.30 and 10 am in the courtyard of the Lutheran Guest House in Mtwara. The PPA research team had just completed its first three-week stint in Mbeya and was departing for fieldwork in Newala District the same morning.

GT: The move of the Government to include CSOs in the PRSP process is positive. Government now recognizes that CSOs are part and parcel of development. The relationship has not fully matured, but it is off to a good start toward more concrete relations between Civil Society and Government.

Earlier on PRSP was seen as just a Government initiative. Some CSOs initially argued for staying out of the PRSP because of government domination of the agenda. These people argued on behalf of an approach based on activist and protest, not constructive engagement.

They see PRSP as 'political' and their reaction is to shy away from the advocacy dimension. When we attempt to bring them up by focusing on PRSP, this political wariness is an obstacle. The political nature of PRSP is problematic for local CSOs because of the history of confrontation between Civil Society and Government in Tanzania. Local CSOs are afraid that entering into policy debates will cause a negative reaction from government.

There is now a partnership between Government and the donor community. People are being prepared for self-reliance. CSOs are maturing now to insert themselves in the partnership. CSOs are being asked what they can contribute to the policy process, if they just want to criticize, they cannot 'merge in the circle.' Otherwise, if they have nothing to contribute they have to get out.

We believe that engagement with government is a way to learn, to be involved. Government also gets experience of working with Civil Society. In our perception, this is not the time for a more radical, i.e., confrontational approach to government. At the moment, advocacy is being done at a very high level, but through the PPA we have begun to see issues at the village level for advocacy through village government, wards and districts. We are

⁵² The discussants are Godfrey Tweve [GT] of Concern Worldwide – a transnational private aid agency with roots in Ireland (see below) – and Joachim Njoki [JN] of Concern for Development Initiatives in Africa (FORDIA), a Tanzanian NGO. Tveve has been with Concern since 1997 having worked in the CSO sector since his graduation from the Institute of Development Management (now Mzumbe University). He was previously a Regional Coordinator with Concern and is the newly appointed Policy and Advocacy Officer – a newly established post – in Concern's Dar es Salaam office. The PPA exercise is seen as part of Tveve's training into this new area of activity. Tveve also participated in the TCDD 'Macro' group that prepared the civic society feedback on the PRSP. Njoki is doing an M.A. in Economics at UDSM. He has been with FORDIA since 1999 where he is the People-centred Development and Poverty Alleviation coordinator. FORDIA works out of ESRF, the managing agency for the PPA. The interview was conducted by Jeremy Gould [JG] on 27.03.2002.

identifying a number of things that we can take forward as advocacy issues at higher levels. It is better to work within the circle to influence policy directly.

JN: Through the new forms of participation, CSOs are experiencing ownership of Government programs, even at the district level. We are the owners of development, of the country. The government has even demonstrated more openness regarding the ownership of the land, as in the case of resolving disputes between pastoralists and cultivators in some areas.

At the national level there is mutual understanding, but at district level, officials are not so responsive. Districts are jealous of government funds going to NGOs. Involving CSOs in decision-making is difficult.

GT: The problem is that the focus of most local CSOs is limited to service delivery. They are not involved in policy issues. At District level, organizations like Concern are building CSO capacity to engage with local authorities and promote local development more generally. Such organizations are reaching out from Dar es Salaam to local NGOs that have varied agendas.

GT: The PPA is all about policy and feedback. The history of policy-making has been top-down... Now the CSOs are learning what issues to carry forward. The problem is of the mechanism – whom can we see, whom should we talk to in order to get our lessons across and incorporated into policy.

JN: Our responsibility is to question our leaders. There also needs to be civic education of Government officials by NGOs. ‘Participation’ has become something everyone is saying. But does it mean teaching or listening?

JG: The issues you are raising have important implications for politics and political theory. The Tanzanian Constitution provides for a political structure by which citizens can influence policy through representative organs and the ballot box. Some non-state actors argue that these structures are not functioning effectively enough and demand more direct means of bringing the experiences of citizens to bear on policy. Are your organizations offering themselves as brokers or mediators in this more direct form of democracy?

GT: We think that many voices should be heard concerning the same issues. A loose coalition can be effective. MPs are also important and need to be taken into account. But CSO voices also need to be taken seriously. We are somewhat discouraged by MPs. Now people are saying: Parliament was much more lively under the one-party system. Now the MPs are only there to safeguard the interests of the ruling party. They call it ‘working together’ and ‘collective responsibility.’

JN: We have a Constitution, but no democratic content. Democracy should not only be limited to the arena of politics. There must also be democracy in education, in agriculture and other productive activities.

These statements express a clear, if implicit, political vision. It is rather deprecatory of the statutory institutions and political mechanisms of the CCM party-state, perhaps justifiably so. It is also one of firm (self-)confidence in the capacities of politically independent, professional

development experts to act constructively as ‘mediators and assessors.’ It is, in other words, a vision highly sympathetic to a model of ‘fast-track’ democracy in determining the course of development policy. The interviewees appear as advocates for a system of democracy which would promote just and equitable outcomes; their predilection is also somewhat populist in that the ultimate vindication of their agency is contingent on their rapport with ‘the poor.’

Without in any way depreciating the astuteness and sincerity of their testimony, it is also evident that this vision reflects a convergence of interests between the strategic interests of the TPAAAs (which seek to maximize their claims of policy leverage), and the professional habitus of the policy advocates (who benefit from a growing market for their specific skills). In seeking access to policy-making circles, it is the presumed status of the TPAAAs as ‘civil society,’ representing the interests of ‘the poor,’ which constitutes their strategic edge. Similarly, the fast-track model of democratic feedback empowers a mode of development professionalism which can translate the outcomes of grassroots consultations into the established rhetoric of the policy community. It is clear why the PPA attracted so much interest from the TPAAAs, nor is it surprising that Tanzanian activists sympathize with political practices that privilege their particular mode of agency.

But fast-track democracy also has a selective affinity with populist neo-liberalism, a position that is not particularly popular in the Tanzanian NGO sector. Practices which permit the designers of neo-liberal measures to invoke the ‘voices of the poor’ in tacit support of their policies without subjecting these measures to representative popular assessment serves to legitimize a depoliticised, technocratically driven policy machine. From this vantage point it appears that facility with a ‘consultative’ instrument like the PPA makes TPAAAs natural allies of the donors and civil servants upstream that are dependent on some mode of democratic endorsement in order to legitimize their iron lock on the policy process.

The political opportunities of poverty reduction

The PPA is definitely the most dynamic element in the PMS, and probably in the system of institutions entrusted with implementing the PRS. It is thus worthy of close scrutiny, especially for what it tells about the emerging relationships among the parties to the pro-poor policy partnership. Still, there is a risk of inflating the significance of the PPA. Its status remains unclear after the end of the current two-year contract with ERSF and the Implementing Consortium. In terms of impact, many critical issues remain open; authority over the interpretation of the field data (the proprietary relationship between the Implementing Consortium, the Research and Analysis Working Group and the National Steering Committee) is undefined. At the time of fieldwork, it was unclear how the PPA findings were to feed into the PRS process. No one was able to define

the link between the 'voice of the poor' as conveyed by the PPA findings, and the budgetary framework through which Tanzania's Poverty reduction strategy is to be implemented. Indeed, the whole PPA exercise is separated from the policy-making core by a number of bureaucratic firewalls.

The Poverty Monitoring System, then, does not wield direct political clout in any measurable degree, and the higher echelons of decision-making authority are buffered against the direct influence of non-state actors (or 'the poor') by an ambiguous and multi-staged chain of bureaucratic reporting procedures. The Consortium is prepared for this struggle, however. According to the website, 'the entirety of 2003 will be dedicated to encouraging and facilitating the practical use of research results by policymakers and to preparing for the next cycle of research in 2004.'

In any event, the PPA has already proved to be an important site for forging deep alliances between national and transnational non-state actors, and has provided an opportunity for national and transnational non-state actors to seek out new kinds of alliances at district/subdistrict level. Finally, and perhaps most importantly in the long run, the PPA has been a testing ground for the crystallization of new mode of professional habitus in the Tanzanian context – the policy advocacy officer. Perhaps (like the PRS more generally), the PPA will prove to be more important as a site of forging (transnational) alliances, political strategies and professional habitus than as a instrument of poverty reduction.

5 Discipline and empower: transnational actors & civil society

Transnational private aid agencies in Tanzania

A large number of transnational private aid agencies have set up operations in Tanzania. Up until around 1998, most of these concentrated on programmes of direct development assistance to the delivery of basic services to impoverished citizens. More recently, there has been a general trend in the TPAA's of expanding their capacity to exert leverage on the Government and multilateral institutions on behalf of so-called global policy agendas. An intrinsic part of this trend has been the establishment of dedicated policy advocacy positions within these agencies at different levels of the organization (HQ, Regional support centers, Country Offices, etc). The multi-agency global campaign on behalf of debt annulment (Jubilee 2000) was a catalyst to expanding the budget share allotted to such activities, as well as to the professionalization of global policy advocacy within the very mobile corps of transnational aid agency personnel.

More than anything else, it was the proliferation and professionalization of policy advocacy functions related to debt relief which provided the TPAA's with the strategic edge to penetrate the PRS policy process in Tanzania. Immediately prior to, or in the early stages of the PRS process a number of TPAA's active in Tanzania reorganized their in-house resources in order to better respond to policy advocacy needs. A number of domestic NGOs acknowledged this strategic move and followed suit, establishing policy advocacy positions within their Dar es Salaam or Arusha offices. Additional funding has been made available specifically for PRSP policy advocacy from bilateral donors. It was invariably these personnel resources which were deployed to the PPA teams by organizations participating in the PPA Consortium.

A striking feature of the spread of professionalized policy advocacy functions, first to TPAA Country Offices and then to local NGOs is the homogeneity of the job descriptions and of the habitus of the incumbents. On the basis of a small, random sample of Dar based or-

ganizations a quite standard pattern emerges. Policy advocates are generally college graduates, often with post-graduate studies in a North American or British university. Advanced studies (in social policy or development studies) commonly followed a stint as a program officer in a Government ministry or in the voluntary sector. The motivation to embark on policy advocacy was a response to frustrations with incremental achievements (or lack of them) at the project level. The point is that the new corps of policy advocates are not necessarily ‘movement veterans’ – grassroots activists with deep ties to a social cause – but development professionals whose vocational skills have been molded first and foremost by the bureaucratic demands of the development industry.

This has also been a period of deepening partnerships. The rhetoric of local ownership familiar from public donor discourse has also taken root in the private agencies and, increasingly, TPAAAs now seek to work with or through local organizations. From the perspective of the TPAAAs, it is precisely the ‘capacity’ for policy advocacy which allows for a more intimate relationship between a domestic organization and a transnational. A facility with the language of the global campaigns, and a familiarity with the routines of program/campaign management constitute an invaluable common denominator upon which a partnership can be built. Tellingly, building local NGO capacity in the realm of policy advocacy is a growing priority among TPAAAs in Tanzania. Bilateral donors are very supportive of this trend. From 1998/9, USAID and DFID, among others began to systematically subcontract with select TPAAAs (CARE, ActionAid, Save the Children, Oxfam, Concern International, etc.) to ‘build civil society capacity.’ Support to advocacy skills and activities was a central component of these programmes.

Given this agenda of building capacity for policy advocacy among domestic non-state organizations the weighty presence of TPAAAs in the PPA Implementation Consortium (see Chapter 5) may appear, enigmatically, as an instance of ‘crowding out’ discussed earlier. On the other hand, given the substantial costs of participation, and the intangibility of short-term returns, there are simply not enough Tanzanian organizations to carry out the kind of a PPA that donors were willing to support.⁵³ The question nevertheless emerges of how the TPAAAs used this opportunity and; what were the practical outcomes for the capacity and orientation of domestic ‘civil society’ in the realm of policy advocacy.

The identification of private ‘transborder’ actors as a new, important player driving the transnationalization of public policy resonates with a rich literature on the rising pre-eminence of private transnational agencies in global political arenas (Edwards and Hulme 1995, Fisher 1997,

⁵³ A less demanding policy monitoring exercised designed by Tanzanian NGOs TCDD and Hakikazi failed to receive donor support (see below).

Keck & Sikkink 1998, Pasha & Blaney 1998; also Madon 1999). Cerny (2000: 448) highlights the ability of transnational agents to straddle different levels and outmaneuver domestic players, and links these strategic advantages to changes in the 'transnational opportunity structures' related to globalization. He links changes in opportunity structures to technological developments (like the internet); to political changes on the national (splintering of state structures), regional (consolidation and expansion of the EU), and global (the liberal backlash against neo-liberal excess) levels; to economic trends (long-term growth in the tax base in major industrial countries); to social processes (the 'associational revolution'), and so on.

These factors cannot be traced to any single cause or intentionality, and the modes of interaction between factors will differ from site to site and from time to time. Yet there are strong grounds to suggest that in a great many places, and in roughly similar ways, conditions have emerged in recent years that privilege an organizational form that exhibits the characteristics of transnational private aid agencies. Such characteristics are a large margin of financial autonomy, a flexible management structure, a narrow, results-oriented incentive structure within the organization, and the 'moral halo' of charitable intent. It is with this background in mind that we turn to an examination of the emergence of TPAAAs as strategic political agents in Tanzania's public policy arena.

In examining this process, we attempt to look beyond the programmatic expressions of intent of the various transnational actors. This is because the expressed intentions of the transnationals do not explain their success in capturing political space and strategic initiatives; indeed, there is a disjuncture between the aims actors claim to pursue, and the empirical outcomes of their actions. We suggest that explanations for this disjuncture need to be sought in the structure of institutional incentives that regulate strategic corporate action. It is important to look beyond motives to resource bases, accountability mechanisms and incentive structures that characterize the activity context of non-state development agencies, and which determine, to a greater or lesser degree, the practices and procedures which are available (and attractive) to any actor attempting to intervene in this arena (cf. Brett 1993). As Jai Sen (2002) and others have recently argued, one also needs to take the narrow (middle) class nature of these organizations into account when assessing their strategic alliances. Rather than representing 'globalization from below', the growing influence of 'global civil society' on international debates and institutions (see UNDP 2002) expresses the perspective of a transnationally homogenous middle-class – a 'globalization from the middle.' Genuinely grassroots 'processes, identities and cultures' are subordinated to an exclusive dialogue among "those who fit' in terms of class, lifestyle and language" (Sen 2002: 13, 15).

TPAAs as political actors

The previous chapter outlined how TPAAs have come to exercise a more accentuated political agency under the auspices of the PRS process. Presumably, the efficacy of this agency would be evident in the TPAAs' increased leverage on national policies. While TPAA access to policy elite circles has improved and their visibility has grown, actual impact on policy substance is negligible. Quite the contrary, in their role of surrogate civil society, the TPAAs might rather be seen as contributing to the legitimization of the populist neoliberal hegemony.

A second dimension of the new political agency of the transnational agencies is visible via their impact on the constitution of domestic social movements, that is, on the organization and articulation of anti-hegemonic perspectives on post-developmental neo-liberalism. Despite (or perhaps due to) extensive efforts to 'empower' local CSOs and build up their 'capacity,' the role of the TPAAs in domestic social movement formation within the context of the PRS process has been problematic. Grassroots social movement formation has made advances, as in the work of HakiArdhi in promoting the rights of agrarian and pastoral populations to land, livelihood and food security, and in the related work on behalf of women's rights by TGNP and FemAct. Yet these processes are constrained by two distinct mechanisms, and we found TPAAs to be complicit in both: (a) that of 'crowding out' (discussed above); and (b) the exercise of 'disciplinary power' via instruments of 'capacity-building' and 'empowerment.' In the following, these mechanisms are explored through empirical examples.

CASE ONE: OXFAM/UNDP AND TCDD. The Tanzania Coalition on Debt and Development was established in November 1998 to better coordinate the work of organizations lobbying for debt cancellation. TCDD's formation was actively 'facilitated' by the transnational private donor Oxfam. According to Silas Likasi of Oxfam Tanzania, "a manager from Oxford told us, "The World Bank is saying that the PRSP has to be produced in consultation with Civil Society; are you prepared?"⁵⁴ The skills and knowledge to carry out a debt cancellation campaign were thin on the ground outside of Government and its primary think tanks (REPOA, ESRF). In late 1999 when PRSP formulation took off, civic expertise on the debt/poverty nexus was limited to a few individuals active in organizations like TASOET, TNGP and some others. Oxfam's initiative in bringing these actors together and in catalyzing the unification of efforts adhered to the logic of a global advocacy organization which is accustomed to proactively building up local capacity to further its campaigns. Tanzanian activists responded enthusiastically to the challenge. Especially those familiar with the

⁵⁴ Interview with Silas Likasi. Oxfam consolidated its role as a purveyor of civil society participation in PRS processes by preparing and distributing *Influencing Poverty Strategies: A Guide* in April 2002

issues at hand, and who saw a unique political opportunity in the consultative imperative were anxious to exploit the opening for engaging with the Government and donors on fundamental issues in Tanzania's development policy: poverty, debt, justice and democracy.

The first round of activities was relatively successful. As discussed earlier, TCDD coordinated the work of 28 local organizations during January/March 2000 in the preparation of a rapid response to the Government's Interim PRSP document. When the thrust of this 'civil society input' to the PRS process turned out to be a left-radical critique of the state-donor partnership, TCDD's status as a 'focal point' for Government-Civil Society consultations suddenly went wobbly.

A tentative agreement between Government and TCDD according to which TCDD would manage the PRSP Zonal Workshops in May 2000 (see above) evaporated without a clear explanation. The Regional authorities took over the selection of delegates to the meetings. TCDD 'withdrew' from the Zonal Workshops, and UNDP stepped in to provide logistical backup to ensure that the exercise succeeded. By the day of the National Consultative Workshop in August of 2000, TCDD was no longer an ex-officio player in the PRS process.

TCDD did not surrender, however. Together with another advocacy organization, Hakikazi, the network sought to regain the initiative in the implementation phase of the PRS by seeking funding from UNDP for a 'civil society poverty monitoring project' parallel to, and independent from, the Government's Poverty Monitoring System discussed in the previous chapter. TCDD and Hakikazi submitted a proposal aimed at monitoring poverty reduction measures in the health and education sectors in two districts. UNDP rejected the proposal. The reason given for UNDP's negative response was that the Districts proposed by TCDD were not of specific interest to UNDP.

Speaking retrospectively in early 2002, the Oxfam staff member responsible for civil society issues attributed TCDD's sidelining to problems of leadership and management in the network. TCDD is said to have bungled the task of coordinating a joint civil society report to the 2001 Consultative Group meeting, necessitating the intervention of ActionAid and Care to 'put together a Civil Society position for the meeting.' TCDD had also failed to complete a donor-funded policy dissemination project and was obliged to return unused funds. Despite all this, Oxfam expressed proprietary responsibility for TCDD and continued negotiations with the TCDD leadership, to whom Oxfam proposed a reorganization of the network's management. These negotiations were not leading anywhere, however, and in fact Oxfam and other transnational agencies were beginning to wonder whether there was any need for TCDD 'to exist in its present form... now that the PRS consultation process was completed.'

CASE TWO: CONCERN AND MANGONET. In a training module on ‘Policy Analysis’ for Tanzanian NGOs prepared in early 2002, UNDP’s Civil Society task manager outlines ‘current plans’ for ‘CSO involvement in influencing national policy planning.’ (Whose plans, was not specified.) This model (see figure) envisages a well-organized, hierarchical structure of ‘Civil Society Organizations.’ At the apex is a ‘National Umbrella CSO/CSO Network’ interacting in a subsidiary relationship with the Government’s Poverty Monitoring System. Below this is a matrix of ‘District CSO Networks’ (presumably one in each District) with bi-directional ‘synergy/backward and forward linkages’ with District administration, and ‘direct input’ into the upstream National CSO Network. The District CSO Network would also have a weaker linkage with the political organ of the District Council. The District-level Network embodies the dual role of gatekeeper/facilitator vis-à-vis ‘sectoral’ NGOs that deliver privatized services to Poor Communities. The District network is also expected to gather ‘policy input’ from the grassroots-level CBOs for national level advocacy work and coordinate contacts to donors on both local and national levels.

The UNDP model expresses elegantly the multilateral partnership perspective on Tanzanian social activism. ‘Civil society’ is to organize itself into a self-disciplined ‘civic bureaucracy’ that both mirrors and engages constructively with the depoliticised structures of the pro-poor policy partnership. Unfortunately, the main ‘civil society’ elements in this model are but convenient fictions. National level ‘Umbrella’ organizations exist,⁵⁵ but none have the resources or the capacity to ‘coordinate’ the CSOs with an interest in policy advocacy. TCDD was intended to fulfill this function, but as the previous section recounts, things didn’t quite work out that way. With one or two ambiguous exceptions, District level ‘umbrella’ organizations rarely exist independent of national or international level sponsors.

The main parties to the multilateral partnership (the state and the major public donor agencies) lack the means to conjure these organizations into existence. Instead this task has been subcontracted out to TPAAAs, which have undertaken the requisite ‘facilitation’ and ‘capacity-building’ activities in a number of districts across the country. The Masasi Non-Governmental Organization Network (Mangonet), operating in the southern Tanzanian district of Masasi (Mtwara Region), near the Mozambique border, is one such organization. Mangonet was established in 2000 under the facilitation of Concern Worldwide. The establishment of Mangonet was an outcome of Concern’s Civil Society Development Program through which Concern had estab-

⁵⁵ E.g., Tacosode, a government-sponsored umbrella organization established in 1965, and the independent Tango, set up in 1989 in the wake of associational liberalization.

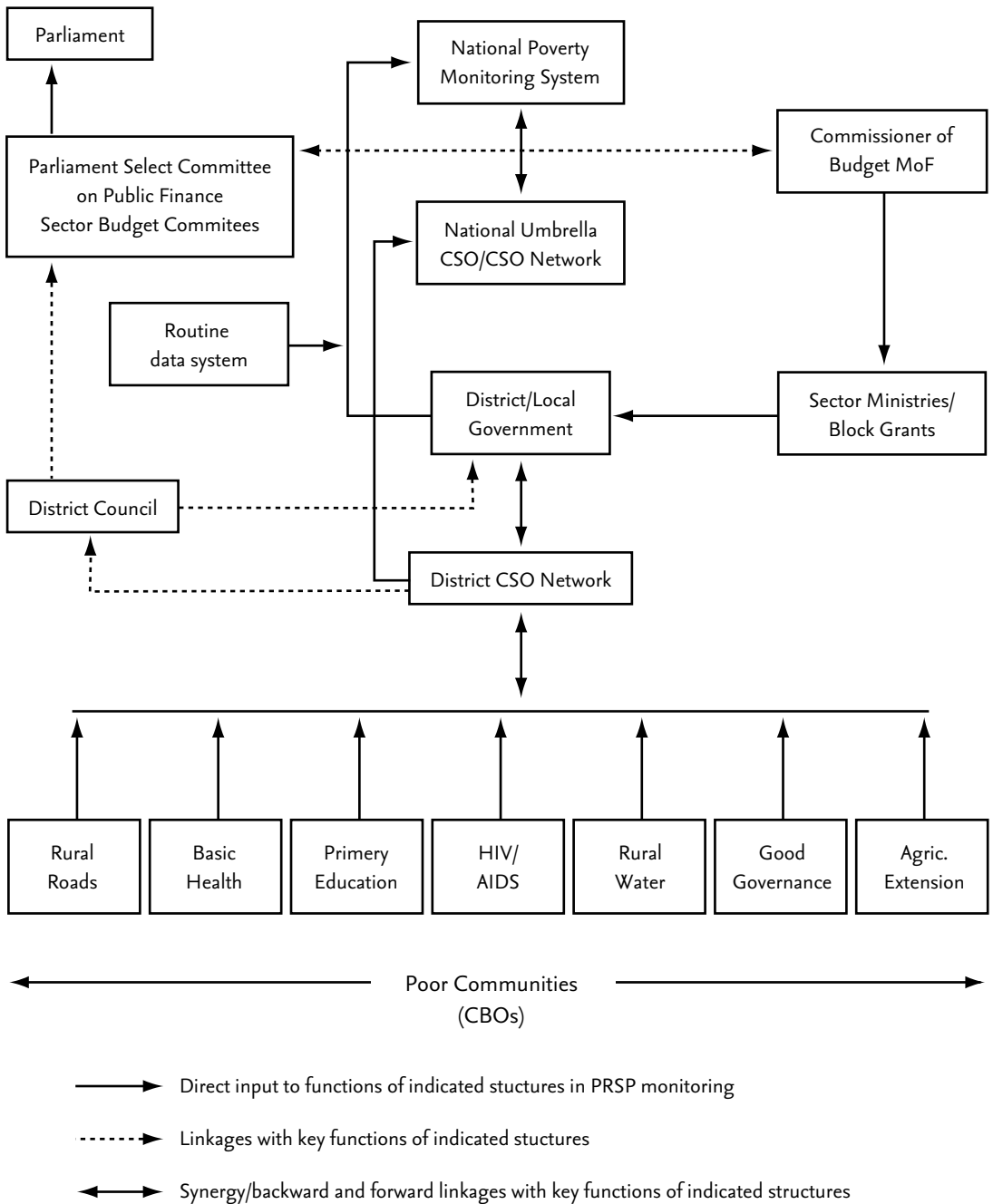


Figure 2: Model of CSO involvement in influencing national policy planning (from UNDP: "Training in Policy Analysis, Module 5: NGOs, CBOs, Trade Unions and Cooperatives" (mimeo, nd.))

lished 'partnerships' with 17 CSOs in Masasi District with the aim of 'enhancing their organizational development' (Concern Worldwide 2001a: 46).

Concern is a transnational private aid agency of Irish extraction with its HQ in Dublin, subsidiaries in Belfast, London, Glasgow and New York, a country office in Dar es Salaam (as well as in 26 other countries), and regional offices in the regional centres of Mtwara and Kigoma. Concern mobilises a little more than half of its resources (a total of ~€62 million in 2001) through public fundraising drives in Ireland, the UK and the US. Roughly 40% of its revenue comes from public donors (EU, Irish Aid, Dfid and UNHCR are the largest public contributors – Irish Aid provides a hefty block grant). The Masasi Civil Society Development Programme runs on funds from Irish Aid, Dfid and Concern's private contributions.

As a transnational organization, Concern has different modes and layers of activity, the scope of which varies in relationship to the level of the office managing the campaign. At the Dublin/HQ level, Concern launches global campaigns, often related to its fundraising efforts (in 2001, the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan was a major source of revenue). In addition to overseeing and coordinating up-country branches, the DSM Country Office has actively sought to engage in direct policy dialogue with the Government, for example via participation in the multi-agency Poverty Monitoring System. Consequently, around 25% of Concern's spending has been shifted internally from service delivery to policy advocacy (Levine interview). In 2002, Concern seconded one of its staff to participate, along with 14 other state and non-state agencies, in the Participatory Poverty Assessment exercise (see Chapter 5) under the auspices of the Vice-President's Office. Facilitation and support to Mangonet is managed by Concern's Mtwara office. Support has comprised a range of services from convening Mangonet's founding meeting to the provision of an office building in Masasi. Much capacity building has also taken place along the way, both to Mangonet and to the member organizations, many of which are Concern's partners. Staff from Mtwara have been invited to Dar es Salaam to receive training on policy advocacy and on the organisation's internal guidelines for 'building local partnerships' i.e. funding small CBOs.

In the past, Concern worked exclusively as a stand-alone non-state service provider, and Concern still has a strong focus on localized projects (village boreholes, etc) in the Mtwara region. The capacity-building partnership with Mangonet deviates from this main trend. These days, Concern prefers to work with and through local non-state organizations (Bakari interview). There are powerful interests at work influencing this shift of emphasis. As development aid loses its popular appeal, private transnational agencies are in intense competition for donations and support from both public agencies and private donors. Credibility is the pivotal asset

(alongside financial responsibility) in this struggle for survival. Direct links to the grassroots via viable partnerships and networking with 'local civil society' and 'community based organizations' contribute decisively toward consolidating valuable credibility. This legitimizes high-profile policy engagement in the capital which in turn enhances an organization's own visibility in the competition for resources. Local non-state organizations often have strong clientelist ties to the political elite (about which more below), and establishing these linkages may require creating the organizations one needs to 'partner' with from scratch.

Another important source of credibility is a demonstrated ability to influence national policy (promoting the pro-poor agenda). In Masasi, Concern is clearly working to establish credentials as a champion of grassroots policy advocacy. One of its first actions after 'facilitating' the foundation of Mangonet was to assign this new 'Learning Network' (op.cit.: 46) with the task of evoking feedback on the popularized (Swahili-language) version of the PRSP through small, rural member organizations. The intent may have been to provoke critical debate among 'the poor', but the practical outcome was that Concern subcontracted with Mangonet to disseminate the views of the policy elite through its grassroots networks – populist neo-liberalism at its most concrete. Be that as it may, engagement with a 'District-level CSO network' serves the function of legitimizing Concern's image as an 'NGO of choice' (Concern Worldwide 2001a: 6) in its particular market niche – thus helping to maximize its attractiveness for potential recruits and to public and private donors.

This has been a tricky endeavor. Local organizations have little or no experience in managing larger sums of money, and can find it difficult to adhere to strict reporting formats, sequences of procedures or timetables. Their own street credibility may also be questionable since, as Concern's Deputy Director in Mtwara put it, 'local NGOs don't reach the poor.' An understanding of policy advocacy and 'rights-based, bottom-up policy engagement' continues to be thin on the ground, despite the 'liberalized' political context. Concern has had to change its conception of voluntarism in local-level policy work in order to win over local organisations for the new activities. The CBOs are now receiving financial compensation from Concern for doing policy advocacy. Needless to say, much organizational development is needed.

It is certainly not true that Concern's activities only reflect self-interested considerations and pragmatic corporate strategy. All is not just about the political ecology of self-survival and resource mobilization.⁵⁶ Concern's professional staff is competent, committed and often highly

⁵⁶ One extremely valuable, and seemingly self-less endeavor was Concern's support to and dissemination of a scathing analysis of the calamity in the Mtwara cashewnut industry; see Chachage & Nyoni (2001).

sensitive to the political complexities of their role as a broker between a multiplicity of diverging interests. Yet the political effects of all this organizational engineering are not direct reflections of intentions and aspirations. Corporate strategic considerations will commonly act as over-riding imperatives when assessing alternative options. As in any development intervention, unintended consequences often surpass the desired objectives.

Concern's 'partnership' with Mangonet and its member bodies is portrayed in reports and verbal accounts in technical terms. The focus of capacity building is to promote 'self-sufficiency' and make civic associations more 'effective.' 'Future work,' promises Concern's Annual Report (2001: 46), will include 'the facilitation of strategic planning and constitutional development.' Yet behind this sterile rhetoric gloss political tensions are brewing.

A number of Mangonet Board members are District Councilors, as is the Treasurer. In Masasi, as elsewhere in Tanzania, District Councilors have intimate relations with one or more local private organizations – mainly CBOs, district foundations and trust funds – as well as with local businesses, especially in the construction and transport sectors, the main arenas of public tendering. These local organisations, including many Mangonet member organizations, survive through non-state rent extraction. They rarely access funding from transnationals. Instead, they mobilise their resources through development levies, fees from their members, private patronage from prominent individuals, the CCM (especially in areas where the Party's dominance is threatened by the opposition), bilateral donors and rents on public expenditure. This contrasts sharply with the vision of district level NGOs as advocates for the greater public good.

Subcontracting for the District Council is one way through which these local associations gain access to local government spending. This is a procedure via which Councilors award themselves and one another contracts through the District Tender Board, or by direct Council decision. In essence, then, the 'CSO sector' is not about advocacy, nor even service delivery. Civic organizations represent one of the many mechanisms through which a core circle of the local elite, working under the all-pervasive patronage of the local CCM party machinery, orchestrates intricate scams and stratagems involving MPs, Councilors, District Executive Directors, District Treasurers, etc, to extract maximum benefit from the thin stream of public resources that reaches a remote rural district like Masasi.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ In Masasi, these central government grants are often supplemented by substantial amounts of local revenue that accrue from the cashewnut trade – a major source of rent-seeking for local elites particularly through the collection of development levies from farmers (Lumbila interview; see also Chachage & Nyoni, op.cit.).

Understandably, local brokers were not enthusiastic about Concern's intervention in the NGO sector. Relations between the District Executive Director and Mangonet have been tense, and the District Council tried to bury Mangonet's application for a plot to build the office block Concern promised to sponsor (Malenga interview). Concern, like all donor agencies engaged in local political arenas, is also under constant pressure from politically influential partner-clients to provide support to these applicants' personal projects. An external actor like Concern is poorly equipped to address these political tensions directly. Instead it must resort to the technical tools at its disposal in its competition with local power brokers for the allegiance of its partners. These include meticulous audits and a complex array of formalized reporting procedures: stakeholder analysis, project documents based on logical framework analysis, monitoring and evaluation reports, financial summaries based on strictly prescribed formats. Indeed, the internalization of a rigorously formalized aesthetic for the production of such documents is considered a prime indicator of improved capacity. This capacity may, on the other hand, help a local NGO establish its position in relation to the local political structures. The Director of Concern's office in Dar es Salaam noted that the Masasi District Council had recently asked Mangonet's help in accessing donor funding by reviewing the Council's funding proposals (Levine interview).

Capacity building and disciplines of partnership

It is characteristic of post-developmental policy discourse that economic objectives are eclipsed by those related to state reform. 'Governance' and 'performance' have replaced 'development' in the populist neo-liberal rhetoric, while 'capacity building' has been substituted for 'growth' as the operational goal of external interventions. The lack of 'capacity' is, among other things, a generalized (and depoliticized) means of legitimizing external intervention at various sites in post-colonial polities. Within prevailing post-developmental discourses, weak capacity (to perform administrative routines according to established standards, to deliver mandated services to clients, to manage and account for assets, to anticipate risks and opportunities in one's field of activity) is a characteristic of, variously, Government ministries and public agencies like the judiciary and the police; Parliaments and political parties; local government institutions; as well as of 'civil society.' Capacity-building is thus exercised by external actors on state and non-state institutions, and by domestic (state and non-state) actors within both the public and the private spheres.

Capacity-building is portrayed as an act of empowerment – of providing a given institution or set of actors with the skills and resources to participate in a beneficial process. But from a Foucauldian perspective, capacity-enhancing interventions also constitute the exercise of disciplinary power (see Abrahamsen 2000) – of introducing (self-enforcing) standards of 'proper'

behavior. The cogent point here is that the disciplinary and empowering dimensions of capacity building are virtually inseparable. Yet the indivisibility of effects does not imply that discipline and empowerment accrue in equal amounts.

Following the suggestion of Barbara Cruikshank (1999), these efforts at capacity-building reflect a paradigmatic 'will to empower' – a means of 'constituting and regulating citizens.' That is to say, capacity building represents a 'technology of citizenship' through which governments and other authoritative agencies seek to empower subjects defined as poor, apathetic or marginalized. Capacity building is thus one of many 'strategies for governing the very subjects whose problems they seek to redress' (p. 2).

In the practices of (post-)development aid relations, the (recipient) state itself becomes the target of a neo-liberal will to empower – state reforms represent an attempt to build the capacity of 'weak' Southern states to attain more responsible 'citizenship' in the international community of liberal democracies. Fiscal discipline, macro-economic stability, rule of law and other basic features of a 'conducive investment environment' were already part and parcel of early SAPs. The populist trend in (neo-)liberal governance extends the reach of external regulation to the quality of state-society relations as transnational agencies fund and implement schemes for building the capacities of civil society to participate in consultation, policy advocacy and other political processes.

Technologies of citizenship, argues Cruikshank, are exercised 'both upon and through the citizen-subject at the level of small things, in the material, learned, and habitual ways we embody citizenship' (p. 124). The effects of these technologies, the constitution and regulation of citizenship, are not necessarily traceable to the explicit intentions of 'the state,' or of any other authority. The political power that (re-) produces citizenship cannot always be confronted 'face to face.'

State actors are not simple 'targets' of the will to empower – some are absorbed into the coalition of forces responsible for designing the means and ends of enhanced capacity. The ideal of capacity-building for good governance implies the internalization of 'democratic disciplines' – the goal is not simply good compliant behavior, but a self-governing subject, a democratic citizen. Thus, the trope of capacity building articulates the common basis of the post-developmental agendas of state reform and civil society support in a generalized will to empower, and invites us to look for commonalities in the empirical technologies put to work by specific manifestations of these agendas.

More funding has been made available by donors to build and regulate the relationship between the state and civil society. Whereas previously CSOs were mainly funded directly by

donors, reflecting the idea of 'democratization from below', now policy-oriented 'civil society participation' is also mandated at the top end of the political power spectrum, by the national government. The drafting of the government's NGO Policy has been supported by aid; the Vice-President's Office under which the NGO Unit operates has grown significantly and part of its staff costs are financed directly by aid; the World Bank funds studies on civil society for use by the Government. Donors also finance secondments of individuals from CSOs into the Ministry of Finance and other state institutions. This new approach reflects an attempt to mould the state-society relationship into a model that fits into the emerging consensual policy community.

The modes and relations of 'governance' promoted by state reform are seldom the direct outcomes of explicit 'program objectives' (as entailed in a project logframe). Since donors tend to deny their own political agency, such outcomes are largely unintentional, complex and contradictory. We suggest that one can better understand these political implications and the sort of capacity that is transferred by interrogating the discursive and stylistic conventions adhered to by the actors driving the reforms.

Aesthetic discipline

Legal anthropologist Annalise Riles (2000) takes the critical analysis of empowerment and capacity building into previously uncharted areas in her study of NGO networks. Riles carried out an ethnographic study of women's organizations from the Pacific region and especially Fiji as they prepared for Beijing Conference in 1995. The establishment of many of these organizations was heavily 'facilitated' by donor agencies, and they were also the target of much transnational 'capacity building'. Riles became interested in the way routines and formalities dominated the agency of Network members and in the way that these networks appear to be a self-referential mode of political action. Her observation was that participating in the Network was an end in itself. Members had little in common: nationality, values, background, even education. Despite the pervasive rhetoric of 'equality', 'participation' etc, most of the activity of the 'focal points' in the Network organizations was about inclusion and exclusion, about who could claim membership in the Network.

Networks were purportedly about 'sharing information,' yet key players in the Network worked hard at restricting the spread of certain kinds of information. Instead of sharing (or even networking), key participants in the Network were obsessed with what Riles refers to as the 'aesthetic' dimension of action: much of this had a textual referent: countless hours were spent debating and refining procedure as well as the style, semantics and graphics of documentation.

These aesthetic standards provide the Network with its transcendental logic – a concern with stylistic elements rather than policy substance – which ordered and patterned the behavior of those in the Network.

In Riles' view there was no secret or hidden logic behind evidentiary patterns of action: the routines, procedures, and aesthetic concerns. These women did not come to govern themselves and one another in order to achieve some higher, more valid goal (justice, equity, empowerment). Rather the aesthetic of the Network was its substance. If there was an ulterior motive underlying the obsession with style, it was to enhance access to funding, to aid-rents. Yet the two were inseparable: experience demonstrated that the 'proper' aesthetic was most successful in attracting funding.

Reflecting on Riles' observations, it is evident that a mastery of stylistic, aesthetic elements is a vocation. It implies a certain professional habitus, a certain mode of utilitarian calculus, one for which rhetoric is substance; presentation is output, quantity (of funding) is quality, etc. Thus, through the mechanisms of capacity-building and empowerment, self-organised, largely unregulated forms of socio-political action adhere to mechanisms of self-governance that are relatively uniform across multiple sites (and at multiple levels or layers). These mechanisms of self-regulation emerge without the coercion of a central authority. It is through them that indigenous social movements become (self-)disciplined clients of donor agencies. The incentive to perform according to pattern is largely linked to national and multinational public and private aid agencies, and to the recognition and funding. The mode of reward-delivery is in the form of a 'project.' Our anecdotal evidence from Tanzania corroborates this view and suggests that TPAAAs are becoming an instrumental link in these disciplinary/clientelistic structures.

As aid-rent extraction surpasses local resource mobilization as the main source of value, clientelism multiplies. Increasingly, these rents are extracted through NGOs created to access aid flows, many of which are patched into transnational networks. Resources flowing 'down' from transnational donors to CSOs are by far a more important asset than block grants from a central government to a local authority; often higher than, for example, the state's sectoral expenditures within a given constituency. At this level, it is indeed aesthetic considerations (mastery of the logical framework mode of presentation, for example) which determine success in securing a project and thus ensuring the availability of assets for elite accumulation. Because 'aesthetic' discipline is about form as against content, there is little overt conflict between the rhetoric of 'empowerment' and demands to conform to externally imposed criteria of 'style' (including, as the TCDD example suggests, standards of leadership and management structure). This form of

disciplinary power can comfortably co-exist in a patron organization with an empowering self-image and the rhetoric of partnership.

Depoliticizing civil society

Concern is certainly not unique in its strategic analysis and pursuits. In fact, the move to establish 'networks' and 'partnerships' with local non-state associations is the predominant trend among transnational private aid agencies in Tanzania. Similar narratives could no doubt be recounted for the far richer and more powerful ActionAid, Care, Oxfam, Save the Children and others. To a large degree, these transnational private aid agencies act in a subcontracting capacity for the major bilateral donors (Dfid, USAID) and multilateral agencies (such as UNDP). This subcontracting is no longer aimed only at traditional service delivery activities; it is increasingly shifting towards policy advocacy in the capital, and towards poverty monitoring, networking and capacity-building at the district level.

The transnationals sit together (in 'partnership') with their patron organizations and other international donors, including the World Bank, and representatives of the Tanzanian government (MoF, PO, VPO), on a plethora of multi-agency task forces, technical committees and working groups to which the formulation of public policy issues has been devolved. Some Tanzanian non-state organizations also participate in this 'policy triangle,' most notably the semi-private policy consultant companies (REPOA, ESRF) who do much of the intellectual subcontracting (one could say, policy indigenization) for the World Bank and other donors.

One can see, then, two consequences for the constitution of local political arenas. On the one hand, one can perceive a chain of relations via which a technocratic consensus around the World Bank/IMF 'poverty reduction agenda' – institutionalized in a 'partnership' of state actors, donors agencies and transnational private aid organizations – is being disseminated via grassroots 'partnerships' among an important segment of the local political elite (development brokers, local politicians and decentralized civil servants). At the same time, through the agency of their facilitation and capacity building, transnational private aid agencies are promoting the proliferation of a uniform organizational form, predicated on a depoliticised, bureaucratic aesthetic of 'good documentary hygiene.'

On the other hand, the engagement of the TPAAAs (as 'surrogate civil society') with the inner circles of the policy elite (e.g., by providing grassroots policy feedback via the PPA), legitimizes the populist neo-liberal partnership. Taken together, this is Ferguson's (1990) 'anti-politics machine' run amok. On a general level, policy discourse, and policy feedback mechanisms are debugged of any reference to the stuff of 'real economic development': terms of trade, employment,

industrialization, labor productivity, sectoral linkages, pricing mechanisms, even land reform – all such issues are swept under the sanitized euphemism of ‘pro-poor growth.’

These public resource allocation policies (both the substance and the modes of delivery agreed upon by the ‘transnational policy partnership’) naturally have economic and political effects in local political arenas (via sectoral programs; decentralization, civil service reform, pro-poor social funds, etc). Local social processes are deregulated from the managerial oversight of the state; this creates new opportunities for local political entrepreneurs, just as it does for transnational actors. One might term this localization (see Chapter 6), but it is also called ‘micro-ization’ – a ‘focus on the project and the micro world [that] is distracting or diverting attention from social-policy problems that require more aggregative solutions’ (Tendler 2000). With no aggregate economic momentum promoting the transformation of the economic infrastructure, accumulation cycles revolve in place, and the formation of productive classes is stunted. The political options of local elites are limited to devising innovative strategies of rent extraction, or the self-serving flamboyancy of micro-nationalist provocations.

Parallel to this, the potentially volatile political energies of the educated, professional stratum of elite actors – the potential ‘agents for change’ – are herded into standardized associations of self-regulating functionaries who are forced to balance their allegiances between a parasitic political elite and a transnational corps of delocalized, ‘voluntary sector’ technocrats. Another way of putting this is to speak of ‘ngoization’ (of social movements, of the not-for-profit associational sector, of municipalities). From the point of view of the converging transnational policy elite, this self-disciplined, self-managed non-state technocrat is a very convenient partner for carrying out an agenda of post-developmental poverty containment.

Transnational actors and local politics

The model of ‘fast-track democracy’ (discussed in Chapter 4) clearly coincides with the interests of transnational private aid organizations; its penetration into the instruments of public policy via the consultative imperatives of the PRS represents a tremendous empowerment of these agencies. This does not imply that the transnational aid agencies would be malevolent conspirators. Their inroads into the policy community is more a reflection of the evolutionary success of their organizational model in the current situation than of an intentional will to usurp public authority. Neither, however, are they passive recipients of this ‘empowerment.’ The current internal discourse of these organizations stresses their proactiveness in achieving leverage in domestic policy arenas.

Success in penetrating domestic policy arenas might be portrayed as a victory for 'global civil society.' Yet the mainstream concerns of global social movements (justice, greater equity in benefit from public goods, diversity, pluralism in global governance, fair trade, etc) do not seem to be affecting the core economic policy positions of the partnership. Participation of civil society legitimizes (and perhaps improves the quality of) expanded social spending, but at the cost of marginalizing structural concerns: continued accumulation of unsustainable new debt (and persistent aid dependency); the deterioration of domestic productive capacity (industrialization) and of economic integration (agro-manufacturing links).

The TPAA's success is problematic both directly and indirectly. Directly via a lack of accountability and indirectly by virtue of the fact that it strengthens the depoliticization of development policy ends and means, and legitimizes unsustainable lending to the bottomless budget lines of social spending, thus entrenching aid dependency. TPAA strategies also indirectly contribute to the consolidation of a 'parasitic' class alliance at the core of state power that has high symbiosis with quasi-feudal political configuration at the base.

Given their independent resource base, the transnationals have a relative autonomy vis-à-vis the domestic and international public agencies. The transnationals have a strong interest in joining the state/donor policy coalition (influence, visibility) but not in subsuming their identities under that of the public partnership. Elements of competition thus persist – among agencies (for credit and, ultimately for contributions), at the level of national policy arenas (a need to maintain a distinction between the 'non-governmental' and the governmental) and, significantly, at the site of policy implementation, where advocacy networks compete with the quasi-feudal local party-state apparatus for the allegiance of their natural class allies – the professionalized development experts. The emerging system of social relations of governance thus encompasses a dialectic of brewing political tensions.

One may thus find the beginnings of a tug-of-war between donor-sponsored TPAA's (perhaps working through domestic CBOS or 'umbrella organizations') and local political elites. Competition is accentuated when local elites have an independent revenue base of their own (as when there is an export crop to tax). This struggle is not about 'transparency' or 'accountability', although this political imagery may well play a role in the rhetoric by which the tug-of-war is carried out. Nor is it about 'deepening the public sphere.' Inasmuch as there is any genuine concern for 'empowerment' and 'capacity building' it seems that these are first and foremost practices of 'private government' by which the 'disciplines' of self-subjectification are being promoted in the interest of rerouting the networks of clientelism toward private (politically unaccountable) actors.

All in all, the increasingly assertive role that transnational private aid agencies are playing in policy processes and (possibly) in local political arenas is leading to a very specific kind of privatization of civil society – or should we say, to the emergence of new, unpredictable structures of ‘private government’ of very ambiguous accountability. These observations pave the way for an analysis of the political context of the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the focus of the next chapter.

6 Representative democracy and the politics of policy implementation

This chapter considers factors that can affect the implementation of Tanzania's Poverty Reduction Strategy. Discussions of this sort are commonly concerned with the 'capacity' and 'performance' of the institutions entrusted with policy implementation – Local (District) Administration and its subcontracting partners. This analysis takes a different tact. In this connection we are concerned with how political relations at the site of implementation – grounded in 'representation' but extending to the broader sphere of the 'social relations of governance' in total – affect the likely outcomes of the PRS.

Earlier chapters have argued that the process of formulating a Poverty Reduction Strategy has been dominated by a multilateral coalition of donors, driven by creditor interests and closely coordinated by senior technocrats in the Ministry of Finance. One feature of such depoliticized policy design is that conventional political actors like the Parliament have not been involved. This observation raises a number of questions. For one, has the Tanzanian ruling party, *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) lost political control of the state apparatus to an aid-financed technocracy? If so, why don't the politicians protest? Why, on the contrary, has CCM Chairman and national President Benjamin Mkapa thrown his weight so vigorously behind the PRSP?

The depoliticization of public policy and the marginalization of Parliament from participatory policy processes also call into question the model of representative democracy enshrined in the Tanzanian constitution. It is often argued that strengthening national Parliaments would resolve dilemmas of political unaccountability typical of elitist oligarchies like post-developmental Tanzania. Strong Parliamentary oversight of national policies, it is claimed, would be the best way to strengthen the national ownership of development programmes and to enforce democratic policy sovereignty. How realistic is this prescription in the context of the power relations prevailing in contemporary Tanzania? How fundamental a restructuring of the Tanzanian

political system would be required to achieve ‘strong parliamentary oversight’? Against this backdrop, this chapter advances four main arguments:

- a) For the purposes of this analysis, two conceptually separate spheres of politics can be distinguished in contemporary Tanzania: the politics of aid (governing policy-making within the iron triangle of state, donor and non-state actors), and the politics of representation (governing policy implementation as struggle over material and political resources among and between clients and patrons in national and local arenas). These two spheres are interdependent. The politics of aid presumes the ability of political institutions to deliver development resources, while the politics of representation presumes the availability of external assets for establishing and maintaining patrimonial bonds.
- b) These two sets of political opportunity structures comprise two opposite yet mutually enforcing trends. While the politics of aid is becoming increasingly transnational and multilaterally regulated, the politics of representation is becoming more local, informal and more openly based on patrimonial relationships. Lower-level politico-administrative units (District and sub-District structures) are emerging as key arenas of political and economic struggle.
- c) Despite the rhetoric of representative democracy, the prevailing depoliticized mode of aid-driven resource allocation marginalizes Parliament and other elected bodies in their constitutional roles. The transition to a multi-party system has not strengthened parliamentarism based on political pluralism. Instead, one finds an increasingly ‘marketised’ and ‘localized’ mode of politics within a de facto one-party system.
- d) The likely outcomes of the current Poverty Reduction Strategy will depend on the social relations of governance prevailing at the site of implementation. The faltering and abridged implementation of the Local Government Reform Programme, coupled with a decade of steep socio-economic stratification have created conditions for the appropriation of resources earmarked for poverty reduction by shifting alliances of local elites.

These arguments seek to describe the processes through which the PRSP as a policy paper is (not) likely to be transformed into tangible outcomes through local implementation. We argue that in contrast to the consensual policy-making practices of the technocratic iron triangle, implementation structures are highly contingent on increasingly competitive social relations of governance at the local level. This reflects a profound disjuncture between what is conceived as ‘policy’ and what takes place within the party-based sphere of ‘politics’. While formal representative democracy in Tanzania is weak – due both to the ‘non-political’ aid relationship and to de facto one-party rule – the informal aspects of political representation provide a basis of power for parliamentarians. The implementation of policies at the District level will be discussed in connection with the broader trends of decentralisation, localisation of political and economic opportunities, as well as socio-economic stratification. Finally, an anecdotal case of ‘HIPC class-

rooms' is used to highlight the ways in which opportunity structures for political rent-seeking may emerge.

The disjuncture between policy and politics

Populist neo-liberalism privileges 'civil society consultation' as a source of policy legitimacy. At the same time statutory political structures have been bypassed in most PRSP processes. While the discourse of democratisation, participation and accountability has gained ground, Parliaments have become marginalized. This raises fundamental questions pertaining to the democracy model informing the 'participatory' policy regime promoted by Tanzania's creditors. While donor rhetoric stresses the liberal democratic values of transparency, representation, pluralism and accountability, major political decisions are not legitimated in the traditional arenas of political contestation, but in contexts supported and conditioned by development aid.

This paradox has been raised by most assessments of the quality of participation in PRSP countries (cf. McGee et al 2000; Evans et al 2001). Observers advocate the closer involvement of Parliaments in PRSPs because these institutions 'constitute a society's democratic forum for the reconciliation of interests' (Eberlei 2001: 30). National Parliaments should formally approve the PRSP documents, or even better, parliamentary debates should be held on the issue. This, it is argued, would be an important symbol of the national ownership and transparency of the PRSP process, and the policies would have a truly participatory and democratic character. Implicit in these assessments is the idea that Parliamentary endorsement would also serve to further legitimise a policy community dominated by a closed circle of key donors, top civil servants and a few handpicked representatives of civil society.

Although the argument for strengthening the role of the Parliament in policy-making is widely accepted in principle, there is also much skepticism about the practical feasibility of this solution. Indeed, the same authors that argue for an increased Parliamentary mandate acknowledge that there are good reasons for its current lack of power. While in theory the Parliament is an important arena of representative democracy, in practice 'Parliaments lead a shadowy existence, are often powerless, and in not a few cases represent interests of patrons and clientele' (Eberlei 2001: 30). The World Bank also confesses to 'considerable uncertainty in terms of how to deal with the institution' (World Bank Institute and Parliamentary Centre 2000: 9).

The competence of the Parliament and individual MPs to make informed judgements on crucial policy matters is being strongly questioned. From the vantage point of the policy elite, parliamentarians as individuals lack a capacity for policy engagement; they do not 'speak the language' of the policy community. Many legislators are unable to read budgets, understand govern-

ment documents or draft legislation; nor are they conversant with the details of national policy debates (ibid.). In fact, most parliamentarians interviewed for this study had never heard of the PRSP. To members of the policy community, MPs represent parochial, short-term, localised or ethnically-based interests and use their public position for personal gain. Belonging to the least educated members of the political elite, they are not interested in arguments about the national good. Most of them resist structural adjustment and state reform in general. The ever-tougher nationalist rhetoric of opposition leaders in particular may be embarrassing to the official consensus of a development partnership between the government and the aid community, should it receive media attention.⁵⁸

There thus seems to be a curious disconnect between 'policy' and 'politics' in Tanzania. The former is the substance of a consensual and technical problem-solving exercise, the purview of a cosmopolitan professional elite, while the latter relates to informal, personalized competition between local interest groups, revolving around the patrimonial deployment of public resources. Aid-sponsored commissions, committees, working groups and task forces in the interstices of the Ministry of Finance, the Vice-President's Office and the World Bank represent the sphere of policy, while Parliament and the CCM dominate the shady realm of politics.

Donors underscore their apolitical role vis-à-vis policy processes, as do their allies in the government and the non-state sector. If poverty is to be reduced, they maintain, there is a need to insulate sober technocratic decision-making from populist political pressures and the possibly destructive logic of political games (cf. Callaghy 1990). Shielding central decision-makers and the state administration from distributive claims and from the burden of electoral cycles is seen to enhance the state's capacity to launch new reform initiatives and maintain political momentum for reform. This thinking reflects a strong belief in the rationality and commitment of the country's leadership to distribute available resources in the interest of the poor majority. Donors claim not to be involved in supporting one or another political group or individual; in practice the politics of aid consolidates the hegemony of a specific urban-based, professional class of transnational policy community.

Parliament and policy formulation

Parliamentarians had virtually no say in defining Tanzania's Poverty Reduction Strategy. Their participation was limited to a two-hour PRSP seminar held on a Saturday in June 2000. Some Members of Parliament were also involved in training seminars on particular aspects of the

⁵⁸ A number of MPs (from CCM and other parties) interviewed in Dodoma for this study accused the donors of 'blackmailing' Tanzanians, and blamed the President for having become a 'beggar' for international aid.

PRSP organized by local NGOs such as the Tanzania Gender Network Programme (Muna interview). As a result, few MPs (or District Councilors) are familiar with the PRSP, and even fewer can unpack the acronym.⁵⁹ The HIPC debt relief initiative is slightly better known, presumably because of the CCM election campaign in the fall 2000 where the HIPC card was played ostentatiously to the ruling party's advantage.⁶⁰

Donor attitudes towards the Parliament are contradictory: on one hand, the Parliament is an institution without which a modern political system cannot function, and on the other, the politics of representation in which it is embedded are seen as undemocratic, lacking both transparency and accountability. Formally, the political weakness of the Bunge (Parliament) can be attributed to the country's particular legal framework (a Westminster Parliamentary system with strong Presidential powers). Within this framework, the Parliament is in effect supposed to be at the receiving end of policy.⁶¹ Its main task is to enact government policy into legislation and give public approval to it. The Parliament has been successful in neither initiating new legislation nor in providing policy input whether in terms of amending legislation or budgets, or by contributing to an open policy debate in any significant way.

The budget process is an example of an aid-conditioned exercise where the structures of power created by the iron triangle between the donors, government and non-state actors leave the Parliament without a proactive role. As the budget cycle has become a multi-year and multi-actor circular flow, political decisions are now embedded in a more comprehensive system of 'rolling plans.' The Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), introduced in 1997 and managed by the Ministry of Finance in close cooperation with the World Bank, defines the limits of sector-specific expenditure in the medium term (three to four years). Moreover, overall budget spending is highly constrained under agreements with donors. As the development budget is mostly composed of aid, the only 'political' choices made in the Parliament concern recurrent expenditure and specifically, the locality where it is spent. The Parliament cannot become involved in the prioritization of different expenditure items in the budget; the Parliamentary Committees can only make recommendations within sectoral allocations.

As a result, the budget process has become primarily an aid coordination exercise, in which the World Bank coordinates the integration of donor payments into the budget via the

⁵⁹ Cf KK Consulting Associates 2001

⁶⁰ The government made political capital out of the HIPC debt relief ('Decision Point') granted in March 2000, which gave Tanzania the status of a 'fast-track' PRSP country (Evans et al 2001: 9).

⁶¹ Yet the Tanzanian Constitution maintains that the 'National Assembly may deliberate upon and authorise any long or short term plan which is intended to be implemented in the United Republic and enact a law to regulate the implementation of the plan' (United Republic of Tanzania 1998: art. 63, 3c; emphasis added).

MTEF, and monitors disbursement through the Public Expenditure Review (PER). The logic of the PER process, the MTEF, the Sectoral Working Groups (SWGs) and the PRSP integrate donors deeply into national planning and budgeting processes. This has consolidated the position of the World Bank as the lead agency in the sphere of financial administration, state reform and the related tasks of aid coordination and harmonisation in Tanzania.

Parliament has three major weaknesses in the budget process, in addition to its administrative lack of capacity.⁶² First, unlike in neighboring Uganda, Parliament cannot get involved in the prioritization of expenditure during the preparatory stages of the budget.⁶³ 'Technical' information such as expenditure and revenue estimates is not open to parliamentary scrutiny and amendment. The budget session itself is hurried and misses crucial levels of debate on macroeconomic planning, sectoral priority choices and the evaluation of currently running or past programs (World Bank Institute and Parliamentary Centre 2000: 29-30). Second, the Finance and Economic Affairs Committee is not allowed to increase expenditure beyond sectoral ceilings outlined in the MTEF. The third handicap is that Parliament is not Constitutionally empowered to initiate bills with financial implications (Msekwa 2000).

The cornerstone of government expenditure (and thus of policy) – agreements with the international financial institutions – are not scrutinized by the Tanzanian Parliament. Unlike Uganda, for example, the Parliament in Tanzania is not required to authorize new loans separately. It only approves the annual Finance Bill, which contains the current and forecasted extent of foreign borrowing in aggregate. Since loan agreements with the World Bank became public a few years ago, these issues have been investigated much more systematically by policy-oriented civil society organizations than by Parliamentary Committees. The lack of control over new loans is a serious shortcoming in the Parliament's capacity of exercising financial oversight, considering not only the high degree of aid dependency of Tanzania's state budget, but also given the controversial conditionalities attached to the loans. One MP complained: 'If we do raise these issues with the government, we are just told that they have already been agreed with the donors, and we have no say in this. The government just reminds us that as a poor country, we have no choice but to accept such policies.'

To fulfill its oversight role, the Parliament can expose random cases of corruption, but it lacks the capacity to scrutinize the executive systematically. Obviously CCM MPs have no in-

⁶² The publishing of the *Hansard* (verbatim report of parliamentary proceedings) seems sporadic: there were for instance no records available of the PRSP seminar held in the Parliament in June 2000.

⁶³ The Finance and Economic Affairs Committee does hold pre-budget meetings to scrutinize the budget proposals some two weeks in advance of the presentation of the budget to the Parliament, but is not systematically included in the budget cycle led by the Ministry of Finance.

centive to perform a 'watchdog' role towards the government and their own party. All types of accountability – political, administrative and financial – are filtered through the competition for power within the party, and across the line between the Parliament and the executive. Generally speaking, the oversight role of the Parliament consists of two tasks: holding individual Ministers to account, and scrutinizing public expenditure. The first task has been fulfilled to some extent by Parliament, although individual cases of Ministerial resignation might reflect intra-party rivalries more than a concern for accountability. The latter task is effectively an issue between the donors and the government, due to the country's heavy aid dependency. Oversight of the use of donor resources and discussion on spending priorities takes place through the 'technical' media of aid politics (MTEF /PER /PRSP and so on).

The Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament has not been effective in the financial scrutiny of the executive in Tanzania. The Auditor-General has complained vigorously that his reports – which are generally at least two years late – are left unscrutinized by the PAC. The task of budgetary oversight is effectively performed through the Public Expenditure Review (PER) exercise. This tool was introduced in 1998, coordinated by the World Bank, and is now the main annual instrument for monitoring public expenditures (it incorporates the report of the Auditor-General submitted to the Parliament).⁶⁴ The PER is integrated within the budget cycle and it seeks to cover all budgeting and accounting of donor-financed expenditures. Most importantly, the PER aims to ensure the consistency of donor expenditure with the MTEF (Mjema 2000: 20). But the Review does not always reach the lowest levels of administration where the monies are actually spent and relies on documentation that may not be reliable.

A serious shortcoming in parliamentary oversight is that public funds are simply not always spent the way they have been spelled out in the budget. Forecasts on the availability of funds ('the resource envelope') tend to be overoptimistic, as regards both revenues and development aid. According to a recent study, Tanzania's aggregate budget outturn as a percentage of the required sum for 1999/00 was only 54% overall and as low as 37% in education (Evans et al 2001: 18).

The cash budget system, newly introduced in Tanzania as a device to curb inflationary spending, contributes to a situation where the Ministry of Finance is able to more or less unilaterally decide which of the allocations approved by Parliament will actually be disbursed. Adjustments to lower-than-anticipated revenue yields are made administratively by cash rationing rather than through formal budget revisions. Since the criteria for cash rationing are neither

⁶⁴ Originally, the PER was a World Bank document, and the participation of the Tanzanian government was limited to providing documents, data and budget information to missions from Washington. Follow-up action and commitment to its implementation were weak (Mjema 2000: 20).

published nor approved by Parliament, the resulting budget outturns can diverge greatly from the allocations approved in the budget (*ibid.*). This also means that public expenditure may be diverted from the priority areas spelled out in the PRSP. According to the main opposition leader, up to 40% of public spending is used on politically preferred items. He further added that 'although the cash budget system has been useful in reducing deficits, it has been disastrous in terms of allocations to the development budget' (Lipumba interview).

These observations raise fundamental and alarming concerns about accountability and political oversight over the executive in Tanzania. One might ask, what is the value of a potentially open and participatory policy process at the national level, even if Parliament was part of it, if the actual politics of public spending takes place behind the scenes through 'technical' cash rationing? Moreover, what scrutiny role could the Parliament possibly exercise over the executive if the government undermines the rule of law by diverting expenditure from the budget?

As the government is accountable to the donors for the bulk of its resources, it is not surprising that the primary task of financial oversight is also performed by a coalition of donors rather than by Parliament. The attitude among politicians (both MPs and Ministers) seems to be that 'the aid that is included in the development budget is not questioned by Parliament since it's just donors' money' (Tarimo interview). This reflects the informal division of labor in the system of administering political processes in Tanzania: Parliament has responsibility for the enactment of government policies into legislation, while all its other functions, namely oversight, budgeting, policy debate and to some extent even representation, are performed more effectively elsewhere.

Transition to a multi-party system

Aid-induced reforms such as the introduction of a multi-party political system in 1992 in Tanzania have also served to marginalize the Parliament as an institution, while enforcing the norm of patrimonial political relationships. The past ten years of 'noise' (as many Tanzanians refer to the multi-party era) have not brought any major shifts in the political scene.⁶⁵ The political and administrative elites have remained largely the same, with their vested interests and aim of maintaining the status quo of power structures. In fact it seems that the CCM has strengthened its hold over the informal political space. The party improved its position in the 2000 elections, where the CCM won 91% of seats in the Parliament (although receiving only 72% of the popular vote). The transition to a multi-party system has mainly been 'a way to restore the legitimacy and

⁶⁵ The first multi-party elections were held in 1995, and the second ones in 2000. Both times, the CCM had a landslide victory.

popular support to the CCM – and to re-establish the party’s effective dominance of politics at both the national and the local level’ (Evans et al 2001: 6).

Reforms have been much faster and more profound on the economic front. While economic liberalization took place almost overnight, political liberalization has been limited and rather slow. Donors particularly complain that in terms of democratization, there has been ‘a transition but no transformation.’⁶⁶ Very sophisticated systems are now in place for the management of public expenditure and economic policies, but political change has not followed apace with these. The transition to a multi-party system has actually undermined the strength of the Parliament and enforced party discipline (cf. Ewald 2001). Most of the CCM MPs we interviewed – many of whom have extensive political experience – shared the view that the political transition has brought with it less, not more, free expression by MPs in the National Assembly. A senior MP argued that politicians have become more defensive towards each other:

MPs were stronger under the one-party system because they were free to criticize the government without being suspected of supporting the opposition. Now there is more defensiveness along party lines and between individuals, and criticism of the executive may only arise in the Party Caucus. As a result of the multi-party system, the executive has been empowered in relation to the legislature: the MPs cannot afford to oppose their own party because they need to secure the party ticket in the next elections. (anonymous MP interview)

Another complaint common to many MPs was that competition for elected office has become ever more fierce and, therefore, running for a seat in Parliament is very costly and exhausting. ‘The most significant component of an electoral campaign is money, not policy,’ an MP remarked. For most candidates, running for a seat in Parliament requires an investment of some ten million shillings (US\$10,000). As a consequence, gaining access to politics and the spoils of an electoral office becomes an entrepreneurial activity. After their campaigns, many MPs are saddled with unserviceable loans and indebted to many people for favors of various kinds. As an MP noted, this ‘marketization’ or ‘privatization’ of politics also has an impact on the policy agenda which does not serve the poor:

At the moment, it is mainly rich businessmen and millionaires who can afford to run in the elections. And when they get into power they just make laws that defend the interests of the urban professional elite. Meanwhile, agriculture and the poor are dying! In the previous system, at least, moderately poor people could become MPs, but today the party benefits are the property of the rich. (anonymous MP interview)

⁶⁶ President Mkapa has often been aptly described as an economic reformist but a political traditionalist.

The 'party benefits' that the MP refers to range from logistical support to material rewards. The CCM MPs are dependent on the patronage of the executive to help them provide their constituency services, i.e. to maintain their own structures of patronage. To the rural people, the multiparty elections have increased events where politicians engage in 'entertaining' or 'greeting' their voters, through distributing small gifts or handing out money. Specific measures by the government have strengthened this trend of the 'marketization' of politics. In 2000 an amendment was made to the election law which gave official recognition to the practise of entertaining voters, by permitting the provision of 'hospitality' by candidates during campaigns (Kelsall 2001: 21). In addition, the government granted the MPs their entire pension when they left the parliament before the 2000 elections; funds that were obviously spent on election campaigns (Ewald 2001: 158).

Instead of activating statutory structures of contestation to build popular political support for the new resource allocation policies, alternative structures of participation are being introduced, involving non-state actors. In addition to the 'participatory' structures of policy formulation, informal arrangements are emerging for major governance functions, from budget-making and expenditure tracking to policy feedback. This has not been lost on the politicians. MPs have called attention to the fact that advocacy organizations have become new players in the policy discussion arenas. 'The voice of NGOs is stronger than that of the CUF,'⁶⁷ one remarked. 'NGOs initiate policy issues, they bring them out in the open, so it is important for us to stay close to them', argued another. Those MPs who have spoken in the fora of aid politics, like the annual Consultative Group meeting, have expressed dissatisfaction over the fact that the civil society is taking the role of representation away from the Parliament. 'Where is your constituency and mandate?' they ask, 'do we as MPs need to form CSOs in order to be consulted for policy input?' Within the PRSP policy community, such sentiments tend to be dismissed as an expression of patrimonial envy: politicians are seen to be jealous of NGOs that succeed in capturing aid rents that should have been theirs (E. Mushi interview).⁶⁸

Apart from a few exceptions, parliamentarians have not seemed particularly concerned about their marginal position in the PRS policy process. As decision-making power is concentrated in the transnational technocracy, elected representatives could reasonably protest. This has not happened. MPs stand behind Party leaders, who in turn claim ownership of the PRS and other aid-financed reforms. This dilemma is a reflection of the divide between the two distinct

⁶⁷ The CUF (Civic United Front) is the main opposition party.

⁶⁸ MPs are in frequent contact with the Vice-President's Office to find out which NGOs work in their constituencies and how much donor funding they receive (ibid.).

spheres of politics: that of aid, and that of representation. Parliamentarians apparently have no difficulty accepting that a depoliticised policy community manages the allocation of public expenditure as long as their capacity to extract rents at the site of spending is not threatened. Only a few MPs have both the knowledge and the motivation to engage directly with the donors and their technocratic allies. MPs seem rather more preoccupied with exercising informal political power through their networks of social relationships at local and central levels.

The main political prizes that MPs are pursuing in the Parliamentary arena relate to securing projects for their constituencies, or to promoting themselves or their allies into senior political posts. As long as the aid funds continue to flow, and assuming that the social relations of local governance facilitate fungibility and rent extraction at the site of implementation, policy leverage is a very secondary consideration.

The politics of policy implementation

The ensuing analysis takes political representation, epitomized by the relationship between Members of Parliament (MPs) and their constituencies, as an entry point into the informal sphere of politics located outside the circles of development aid. The 'real' politics that take place in the shadows of formal parliamentary proceedings provide an insight into how political power is exercised outside the remit of the development partnership between donors and the government. Contrary to the assumptions of liberal democratic theory, the function of political representation in Tanzania, as epitomized by the agency of the MPs, is not to channel popular demands to the attention of the executive; nor is it to ensure that the policies and laws initiated by the executive reflect the interests of the people. Instead, MPs appear to serve other political ends related primarily to the maintenance of CCM control over actors and resources at the grassroots level. At the same time, the intensification of political competition at the constituency level accentuates the economic contingencies of political representation. MPs are not only brokers entrusted with overseeing Party interests in local political arenas; the high cost of maintaining patrimonial bonds with their constituencies ensures that they are also entrepreneurs with one eye on the look-out for an opportunity for personal benefit.

The value of any policy package, including the PRSP, can only be measured in terms of its actual outcomes. The PRSP policy community has only recently begun to show an interest in the complexities of the implementation process (as evidenced by the Public Expenditure Tracking reviews of the World Bank, and more systematically by the installation of the Poverty Monitoring System discussed above). Even then, the attention to implementation is largely an ex post exercise. In practical terms, the striking disjuncture between a policy and its implementa-

tion is particularly clear in the consistently indecisive outcomes of an endless melange of local level reforms. This reflects a common pitfall of development aid: 'the prescribed diagnosis and medicines are deemed correct, but the patient does not respond as predicted' (Therkildsen 1998: 1). Is the problem simply a lack of administrative capacity that can be resolved with more aid, or are there other, specifically political factors that occlude policy implementation?

Administrative reforms are not always the solution to development failures, and when they are driven by a logic external to the system of governance – say, by creditor interests – they may in fact become part of the problem. As aid coordination and policy dialogue have increased, the number of state reform programs has also multiplied. Currently more than twenty major reform programmes are being implemented in the Tanzanian state sector and economy. This is another central feature of the aid relationship: there is much more pressure to initiate reforms than to implement them. Aid disbursement is contingent upon the initiation of policy changes, not their successful completion. A bilateral donor agency's accountability to domestic taxpayers, reflected in the allocation of funds to the agency's budget, is measured primarily by meeting disbursement targets and only secondarily by the assessment of programme success.

Aid managers currently approach the issue of policy implementation as a function of two basic properties: government 'ownership' of a reform, and its technical capacity to 'perform' effectively. From this perspective the clients of aid – state bureaucrats at various administrative levels and, increasingly, non-state parties to the 'pro-poor partnership' – appear as a unified stakeholder group. Such thinking pays little attention to the context-specific variations of vested interests and contradicting aspirations within the state administration and outside of it. The dynamics of power relations, reciprocity and political incentives at the District and Regional levels are hardly considered. The donors' self-proclaimed non-involvement in the internal politics of the country positions them outside the power struggles and rent-seeking that permeates the implementation processes. Meanwhile, the politics of public spending at the point of policy implementation is dominated by the CCM through its intimate control of District level politico-administrative structures.

Even when reforms are initiated by committed technocrats and are publicly endorsed by the political leadership, they are subject to appropriation by private interests at the local level. Reforms entail shifts in power relations and are driven by political conflicts and opportunities. A recent study of agricultural liberalization measures in Tanzania, for example, concludes that a policy reform 'cannot be characterized simply by a hegemonic position by the central government over local governments but rather by a mixture of sudden changes, creative interpretation,

partial reversals, shifting alliances, and local-level resistance' (Ponte 2002: 110). Such complexities are also a crucial element in the implementation of the PRSP; the configuration of conflicts and alliances within and between different administrative levels of government define the social relations of governance through which the PRSP is implemented.

Analyzing this disjuncture between the politics of aid and the politics of public spending can help pinpoint how and why the implementation of many aid projects produces unintended results and consequences. Once the politics of aid has produced a particular policy, another intense round of politics largely determined by a different, patrimonial logic begins, defining the pattern of public spending in Districts. Direct donor involvement in this phase of policy implementation is on the wane, but both local and national level politicians continue to have high stakes in both process and outcome.⁶⁹ The transnational policy technocracy, with its aversion to political institutions and processes, oversees the production of policy guidelines. Politicians broker the instantiation of these intentions at the site of implementation.

This, perhaps, explains why the Parliament and related structures of statutory representation have such a contradictory role in the social relations of governance. Far from being the monolithic institution of legislation, oversight and representation assumed by liberal political theory, Parliament is, on the one hand, subordinated to the strategic interests of the ruling party, while on the other hand marginalized from the debate about fundamental aims and means commanded by the technocracy. Nevertheless, MPs act as the main link between the party's strategic leadership and its power base in the rural periphery, and thus act as the lynchpin of 'national' political aspirations in a political system wrought by deepening localization. The 'informal' aspects of political power as they work through personal relationships and social networks are thus crucial for understanding the logic of policy implementation in Tanzania.

The localization of political and economic opportunity

Under the one-party system that governed Tanzania until 1995, state administration was a system of 'diffuse politics' conducive to the creation of unofficial political relationships (Seppälä 2000). Each local political entity had its own strong links to the headquarters. Political loyalty and power was hierarchical and regulated by the pervasive party machinery. Despite recent political reforms, the structure of ruling party governance still adheres to this basic pattern. Nonetheless, the proc-

⁶⁹ Compared with the heyday of donor-run projects in the 1980s, direct donor implementation has decreased dramatically in recent years. Increasingly, donors channel resources into 'basket funds' and direct budget support, or sub-contract project management to a private development agency. While donor involvement is still not negligible, the radical reduction of technical aid at the point of implementation seriously limits donor engagement in the complex patrimonial politics of the grassroots.

esses of localization represent a challenge to this pattern, and consequently to the ability of the CCM Government to coordinate the implementation of its policies.

The post-developmental policy regime in Tanzania has demonstrated a passion for multi-layered governance reforms. An under-analyzed dilemma inherent in this phenomenon is the interaction of parallel and sequential reform processes – how the trajectory of one reform process affects the conditions and possibilities for success of another. We argue in this section that the specific way in which decentralization, via the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) launched in 1999, has (not) been implemented at the site of policy implementation has important implications for the outcomes of the PRS. This thesis will be advanced in general outline with illustrations from Southern Tanzania (and Masasi District in particular) where we carried out a short stint of fieldwork in March 2002. Obviously, the generic significance of these findings should not be taken for granted. Rather than advance a general model of local political processes, the objective is to flag a number of factors related to structural tensions in the political system that may (or may not) have more general significance. Further study of these issues is clearly needed.

The implications of the LGRP for PRS implementation are mediated by the impact of the stalled decentralization process on the social relations of local governance. The main impact of decentralization on these relationships has been via the specific sites and mechanisms of deregulation associated with the LGRP. We further argue that the interaction of decentralization and poverty reduction must be contextualized in an over-all longer-term process of socio-economic stratification in Southern Tanzania. Both deregulation and stratification can be linked to the neo-liberal reforms of the 80s and 90s SAP, but for the purpose of this analysis they must be taken as relatively autonomous factors which interact in complex ways.

The implementation of the ambitious Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) was started in January 2000 with tremendous pressure and support from the donor community. The LGRP is a tool for financial and administrative decentralization under the Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRSP).⁷⁰ The overall aim of the programme is to devolve fiscal authority and powers of policy implementation to the District (Voipio 2001). Aid discourse portrays the LGRP as a mechanism for strengthening local accountability and empowerment. When public funds are managed closer to the grassroots level, the argument goes, people will be better able to scrutinize the outputs of public expenditure. In one sense, the LGRP represented an attempt to effect greater political control over a semi-spontaneous process of 'districtization' catalyzed by

⁷⁰ CSRSP was initiated in 1994 and later termed the Public Sector Reform Programme; PSRP.

neo-liberal Structural Adjustment policies. Peter Gibbon (2001: 842) characterises districtization as follows:

...districts have emerged as key centres for political competition (following the introduction of multi-party elections with district-level constituencies) and there has been a process of district-level middle class formation. This has occurred through the consolidation of the business (and often political) roles of (former) district administrative officers, and the growing number of retired or retrenched national- and regional-level administration resettling in their home districts.

These trends stand in clear contrast to the previously dominant form of middle-class economic accumulation via the parastatal industries, which were almost all located in Dar es Salaam or regional capitals. As a result, Gibbon argues (1998: 49), medium- and larger-scale capital has undergone a geographical localization process, which also creates resources and incentives for social and political districtization.

The political and administrative empowerment of districts has implied the virtual dismantling of the once-powerful Regional level of public administration. In the past, an elaborate Regional bureaucracy acted as the promoter and overseer of the implementation of Central Government policies and dictates. The structure of Central Government was replicated at the Regional level where powerful Regional Directorates were responsible for programme implementation. Districts had a modest role in this set-up, largely as conduits for information passing between Regional administrators and front-line sectoral functionaries (Seppälä 2000).

The LGRP was to transfer the powers of policy implementation and oversight to the District level. The reform is intended to increase the autonomy of District level directorates from Central Government sectoral ministries, and make them politically accountable to the District Council and administratively accountable to Regional Administration and Local Government in the President's Office (Voipio 2001: 26).⁷¹ Crucially, the authority of the Regional administration has been reduced to the aristocratic presence of the Regional Commissioner, a senior Party trustee.⁷² The Controller and Auditor General retains an inspector in the offices of the Regional Administrative Secretary, but his capacity to carry out effective audits of District books is negligible (Lumbila interview).

Officially, the expansion in local autonomy is to be accompanied by strict mechanisms of financial accountability. Under the decentralized scheme, local professional staff will become

⁷¹ After the general elections in 2000, President Mkapa decided to move the overall supervision of the decentralisation process from a particular Ministry into President's Office under his immediate supervision (Voipio 2001: 24).

⁷² The Regional Commissioner for Mtwara portrays himself as part of a "bureaucratic aristocracy" that has closer links to the World Bank than to the *wananchi* (citizens) or to 'civil society'" (Nsa-Kaisi interview).

employees of the politically elected local District Councils, enhancing the capacity of elected representatives to exercise democratic control over the civil service. Local government reform is intended as a step toward greater flexibility and responsiveness to grass-roots needs. Vitaly, a country-wide system of computerized public accounting is to be installed, allowing for real-time oversight of the disbursement of public assets. For various reasons, however, the LGRP faltered in its first cycle of implementation. The restructuring and rationalization of personnel relations has stalled, and new instruments of financial oversight have yet to be put in place (interviews Fuko, Kasege). In brief, the administrative powers increasing local autonomy and discretion were devolved, but without the concomitant tightening of controls and oversight.⁷³ Indeed, some observers note ironically that there has been a 'decentralization of corruption,' but not of political power.

The half-baked implementation of the LGRP has facilitated the rent-seeking ploys of the local political class. Civil servants at the District level – above all the District Executive Director (DED) and the District Treasurer – are entrusted with managing public resources on a day-to-day basis. But glitches in the decentralization process have left them cut off from the central government apparatus that enforces bureaucratic accountability. Instead of shouldering thankless control functions, local civil servants will generally find it more convenient to forge mutually beneficial alliances with the politicians and their accomplices among contractors and NGOs. These alliances ensure that local government officials exploit their bureaucratic powers to ensure that decisions of the District Council and its Tender Board award projects and contracts to the political elite and other allies. DEDs who fail to play along are exposed to ruthless attacks by the Councilors and the local Party machinery.⁷⁴

⁷³ In its report to DANIDA, the Economic and Social Research Foundation points out that Tanzania's decentralisation process is likely to fall victim to corruption and clientelism on the local level, particularly because 'the level of staffing in terms of qualifications and experience of handling big sums of money is low' (ESRF 1999: 31).

⁷⁴ This was apparently the case in Masasi District Council in March 2002 where Councillors initiated a campaign for the removal of the District Executive Officer on grounds of corruption. Conflicting accounts of the case make it impossible to determine the facts of the matter with any degree of confidence, but two related incidents provide revealing insights into the social relations of governance at the District level. One, President Mkapa was evidently obliged to personally intervene through one of his Ministers in the feud between the DED and the local Party apparatus, both to restore order and to contain the damage that a public scandal over corruption in his own home District could have for the release of 'HIPC funds' and for other programmes scheduled for District implementation. The second incident concerns the unelicited eagerness of the local Party Chairperson to provide a member of our research team with the Party's version of the DED's transgressions. One can only speculate why a local Party official would feed sensitive information about the internal workings of the District Council to researchers with obvious links to the donor community. Motivations aside, this incident underscores the role of rumour, informal networks, and of highly instrumental, shifting alliances in the social relations of local governance.

It appears then that the truncated implementation of the LGRP is having a major impact on the social relations of local governance, thus affecting the struggles, networks and shifting alliances among constellations of individuals from the political elite. To put it another way, the way that the decentralization process has increased the discretionary powers of the local elite has changed the structure of opportunity in local political arenas and reconfigured relations among the major players in the political elite: local Party officials, MPs, Councilors, Council staff, Central Government functionaries, prominent businessfolk, civic leaders and NGO managers.

Socio-economic stratification and political competition⁷⁵

The fundamental trend affecting the social relations of governance has been a steep process of socio-economic stratification in the 1990s, driven by privatisation and market liberalization. In Southern Tanzania, which provides the empirical backdrop for this discussion, the primary force fuelling stratification has been the deregulation of cashew nut marketing. From the early 1990s, the Southern Tanzanian cashew nut market has been aggressively co-opted into the Southern Indian cashew industry as a source of cheap raw materials. Agents of Indian trading houses flock to Mtwara annually at harvest time to buy up unprocessed nuts for export to the extensive processing zone in Southern India.

Throughout the nineties, local farmers benefited incrementally from a steady rise in producer prices, from about Tsh 270 in 1995 to about Tsh 800 per kilo in 1999.⁷⁶ A few large growers and rural brokers benefited immensely from this development. District Councils also benefited from the levies on the cashew trade, absorbing the increased revenues in 'allowances and conspicuous consumption such as the purchase of luxury vehicles' (Chachage & Nyoni 2001: iv). Members of the local elite benefited in their personal capacity as well, exploiting political positions and access to credit in order to insert themselves between the primary producers and the traders. Some of this brokerage was the legitimate business of linking producers to a market.

Less honorable opportunities also availed themselves. A multifarious and complicated array of taxes affecting sales, transportation, and export provide lucrative opportunities for District officials and their political allies to extract rents from the nut trade. Some of this money is naturally channeled into public coffers. Yet according to the Regional Auditor-General (Lumbila interview), excise corruption is rampant, and the bulk of the funds collected are never deposited with the cashier. Symptomatic of the scale of corruption is the fact that the majority of receipts accruing from the excise of taxes and levies are either missing or incomplete. And in any event,

⁷⁵ This section relies heavily on Chachage & Nyoni 2001.

⁷⁶ In the 2000/2001 marketing season the producer price plummeted to as low as Tsh 130/kg.

as Chachage & Nyoni note (*ibid.*: 5), ‘most of the primary [marketing] societies that exist are organizations of some influential individuals within village, ward and division authorities which act as middlemen for the private buyers, and are more interested in the cut accruing from such a role’ than in producer interests.

The entrepreneurial agency of the political elite in the cashew sector echoes a general trend in an economy marked by stratification and the transformation of opportunity structures. These opportunity structures also affect national level politicians: there is now a growing tendency for competition over political office to degenerate into a competition over the spoils of the liberalized economy (Kelsall 2001). MPs are also more dependent than before on party nomination due to increased political competition within CCM. Altogether, the impacts of decentralization, political liberalization, donor involvement in service delivery, the outsourcing of public works and services as well as privatization have together created an added incentive for politicians to build strong local support bases. As Evans et al. (2001: v) note, ‘the liberalization of the economy has provided a crucial boost but it has also opened the way for a more overtly patrimonial style of politics.’

At the constituency level, a large part of an MP’s time and resources is spent on attending to the personal problems of her or his voters. Visiting the home of an MP in a Masasi ward, we encountered a throng of villagers queuing at the gate of his compound. The people were there to petition for many kinds of assistance: school fees, assistance for funerals or help in finding employment. It came as no surprise when another MP complained that he had to avoid going to his constituency ‘because it gets too expensive.’ Aid is an important resource in the maintenance of clientelistic bonds. Politicians are quick to take credit for bringing public services or donor projects to their local area and portray these services as personal favors to their political clients. Such ‘ownership’ of development projects also extends to the work of independent NGOs.

Small-scale business projects and micro-finance institutions established or supported by the MPs are becoming increasingly common in Tanzania. A locally based NGO or trust fund can also be a convenient vehicle for the purpose of ‘mobilizing’ and ‘sensitizing’ the voters. In his study of the politics of local development in Tanzania, Kiondo (1994: 58) argues that the role of hometown/home district organizations in social development activities has grown strongly since the mid-80s, when political and economic reforms were begun and donors increased their funding to civil society.⁷⁷ He notes that the patron’s motive is largely political, either in terms of gaining votes or in the broad sense of enhancing status and influence.

⁷⁷ Roughly 40% of the District Development Trusts have been established since 1986 (Kiondo 1994: 38).

Here the role of individual politicians – MPs as patrons and local politicians as brokers – is central. The key political figures, including also the District Commissioner, the District CCM chair, the Secretary General of the CCM Youth and Women's wings, as well as other politically well-connected 'home-town figures,' form a clique of patrons that 'mobilizes' the local communities. Kiondo points out that the rise of a variety of community development associations has by and large been initiated by the state and by CCM – the tactic of the party has been to shower resources and money on areas where popular support for the opposition is strong (Kiondo 1994: 61). According to a number of estimates made by the MPs and observers we interviewed, as many as 70-80% of MPs have their 'own' NGO/trust fund or act as the major patron of a local association. The organization, sometimes involving external staff as its nominal leader, serves to maintain constituency relations while accessing lucrative donor funding. These projects help MPs establish local presence in the constituency and lay foundations for their next electoral campaign.

This brief sketch affirms a rapid process of elite accumulation in District centers as well as in villages. In order to exploit the new opportunity structures availed by the price boom the urban-based elite was obliged to cooperate with an emerging stratum of rural brokers. This suggests a significant shift in the relation of District elites to village communities. Where under the centrally regulated economy urban elites extracted rents via the parastatal structures they controlled, market liberalization has promoted alliances among urban and emerging village elites based on complicity in rent-seeking. If nothing else, this development casts grave doubts on the likelihood that ad hoc village-level political structures will be motivated to carry out policies to the benefit of the poorer and marginalized sectors of the population.

Village institutions nevertheless appear to play a central role in the emerging strategy for implementing the PRS. The PRS policy community appears enamoured of a mode of implementation which involves the direct transfer of development resources to village institutions – largely bypassing the District bureaucracy – and the direct deployment of these resources by local committees. In the first instance, village-based School Committees have been selected to test this implementation model. The use of School Committees to construct 'HIPC classrooms' in the Masasi area of Southern Tanzania in early 2002 provides anecdotal evidence of how the prevailing social relations of governance are likely to affect policy implementation.

THE BAFFLING CASE OF THE 'HIPC CLASSROOMS' Education sector programmes have been at the forefront of the decentralization reforms, if only because two-thirds of all local government employees are teachers and over half of the local government funds are spent in the sector (Therkildsen, 1998: 2). Masasi is one of the 35 districts piloting the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) and implementing administrative decentralization. The

aim of the LGRP is not only to strengthen the powers of districts in relation to the centre; the decentralization programme is also intended to empower Village Councils vis-à-vis the District administration, in terms of discretionary spending and the retention of local levies. Measures for sub-District empowerment have not yet been put in place under the LGRP, but the World Bank and the Government of Tanzania thought it a good idea to channel the funds for classroom construction directly to the village level. Funds are managed directly by a village School Committee, and the District Education Officer has only a coordinating role in the programme.⁷⁸ The funds for 'HIPC classrooms' have been earmarked for that particular purpose and cannot be reallocated by the council for some other item in the district budget.

The term 'HIPC classrooms' requires some clarification. In 2001, the World Bank provided a \$150 million project loan for the Government's Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) (World Bank Institute 2002: 7). The PEDP sets out a plan for the construction of hundreds of new primary school classrooms to cater for the increased enrolment created by the President's abolishment of primary school fees. The granting of the loan from World Bank coincided with the Completion Point for HIPC debt relief in November 2001 – hence the term 'HIPC classrooms,' which is commonly used by district officials and villagers to refer to the structures erected under the World Bank loan (Ndulu interview). The term is actually misleading because savings from debt relief amount only to a small part of programme finances, and it is mainly financed by donor support.⁷⁹

With the transfer of resources directly to the village level, there are new incentives for a District councillor or an MP to stay in touch with the village elites of his or her local constituency. Councillors in particular are now more active in village affairs and exert both ex officio and informal influence over local decisions; they became members of the Ward Development Committee in 1999. In the specific communities we visited, the Committee made a recommendation on the number of classrooms to be built in each village. The Councillors had an opportunity to influence the decision on which schools were to receive funds for a HIPC classroom. In Masasi, Councillors and an MP had successfully pressured the District Educational Officer to select their preferred villages for the programme.⁸⁰ Moreover, as funds are transferred directly to school committees, the elected representatives may also use their position to secure contracts or other economic benefits in the implementation phase.

⁷⁸ The school committee consists of the head teacher, one other teacher, six parents and the ward education officer, village chairman, village executive officer, and the district councillor for the particular ward. It should be noted that the District Education Officer authorises the release of funds from the bank account of the school committee.

⁷⁹ The HIPC relief savings are about \$120 million in 2002, while Official Development Aid amounts to approximately \$1 billion (Ndulu interview).

⁸⁰ For example, one school that the MP had lobbied for had been granted seven classrooms while others were receiving a maximum of three rooms. After some tug of war between the MP, the district council and the education office, this number was reduced to four.

There was much confusion over the financial accountability mechanisms on the village level and between the village and the District. There are no accountants in the School Committee or Village Government and little experience with the management of a sizable cash budget. To remedy this bottleneck, a three-hour training session on financial management had been given to the four signatories of the School Committee accounts, and the School Committee should in principle report to the village administration. In terms of accountability, the situation is not made any easier by the fact that nationwide there are hundreds of similar, uncoordinated donor projects in overlapping areas taking place simultaneously. In the Mtwara region, at least Save the Children and the Finnish-funded Rural Integrated Programme Support (RIPS) sponsor parallel classroom construction and it is not always possible to distinguish between the source of funds. Stories circulated widely about how the same classroom had been presented to several different donors as 'their' investment.

Regardless of whether such incidents actually exist, it is evident that in these circumstances, opportunities are rife for School Committee members to ally themselves with village leaders, District administrators and elected representatives for rent extraction purposes. This is not, perhaps, a surprising outcome in a situation where small groups of people living in remote villages are entrusted with 3-12 million Tsh (USD 3000 – 12 000) in cash, for the first time and without sufficient guidance and supervision, to construct classrooms. Such scams would also be very difficult to expose. There was no clear division of labor among government officers, nor had additional resources been made available for the supervision and audit of the construction projects. Quality control of the buildings was weak. The Masasi District Council had provided materials (cement and corrugated iron sheets) for the schools but later demanded payment for this. It was unclear whether the School Committees had requested the Council to provide materials at the price demanded, or whether the villages should be entitled to the service free of charge as had previously been the case. Some teachers expressed concern that as a result of these disputes over the funding of classroom construction, the Council might cut its funding to recurrent expenditures – funds which were earlier used for indispensable provisions such as books, desks, lavatories and so on.

One might argue that ours is an unwarrantedly cynical view of a simple experiment in development management. After all, classrooms have been built and village committees have gained invaluable management experience. One has to start somewhere, and it would be naïve to demand perfection on the first go. That said, such processes beg critical scrutiny for their structural implications. The case of the 'HIPC classrooms' is just one instance of a policy implementation process where the local social relations of governance produce outcomes quite different from those originally intended by policy-makers. This raises questions pertaining not only to the immediate intricacies of policy implementation itself; it also highlights the fact that multilaterally regulated, technocratic governance practices have not 'captured' local political arenas. Despite

the prolific reform programmes of the state and the economy – decentralization, liberalization and the introduction of a multi-party system – a profound disjuncture between policy and politics in Tanzania remains intact.

The politics of policy implementation is mediated by political agents who operate through party structures and patrimonial relationships in an environment rife with opportunities for rent-seeking and personal enrichment. These trends are accentuated by growing political competition within the main party and in relation to the political opposition, as well as by an emerging socio-economic stratification at the District level. The marginalisation of the Party and the Parliament from the PRSP policy process is best understood against the background of political and economic localisation and the deregulation of local government. On the other hand, the vagaries of Tanzania's aid relationship would appear to pre-empt opportunities for re-enforcing popular structures of political accountability through the politics of representation.

7 Implications of the PRS partnership for democratic politics

Our interpretation of the politics of the PRS process may strike some readers as somewhat severe. We suggest that the prevailing ethos of the pro-poor policy partnership – thoroughly consensual, triumphalist and self-congratulatory – should be viewed with skepticism. The terms of the partnership — above all, the way that key elements of prevailing neo-liberal economic policies are left unchallenged — undermines political accountability and the democratization of public oversight. From this core premise it follows that the complicity of previously independently-minded actors in the pro-poor partnership – we have in mind certain bilateral donors and the transnational private aid agencies – erodes the democratic potential of policy ‘consultation’ and occludes significant room for maneuver among critical domestic actors and grassroots social movements. At worst, anti-hegemonic views are crowded out of the public dialogue, or their interlocutors are domesticated into depoliticised pawns of populist legitimisation via the disciplines of ‘capacity building’ and ‘empowerment.’

Another reading of these materials is also possible. The consensual view, propagated most avidly by the World Bank, DFID and their think-tanks, highlights positive elements in the ongoing process. Unfolding events in world politics render multilateralism an attractive alternative to non-negotiable unilateralism. Compared with much of Africa, Tanzania’s peaceable partnership is certainly preferable to unmanageable conflict. Many would argue that a system of financial management controlled by a transnational technocracy is far better than the ‘kleptocratic’ regime that has come to light in neighboring Zambia. Even rhetorical attention to the ‘voice of the poor’ is better than the arrogant disregard of non-expert views, and consultation, however curt, is an advance over self-referential oligarchy. And many would agree that the accumulation of performative capacity and the empowerment of civic associations are vital preconditions for both democracy and efficiency.

This upbeat reading presents the PRS process, and the partnership that has managed it with a particular 'spin.' Our assessment spins the data a different way. Are both spins equally true (and thus equally false)? What might the spinless truth about Tanzania's public policy arena look like?

This simple question cuts to the core of the dilemma facing all social and political analysis. How to portray configurations of interests and power in a neutral, disinterested way? In truth, the Tanzanian public policy arena will never stop spinning, at least not as long as it attracts approximately one billion dollars of foreign aid per annum. It will never even slow down enough to allow for a clearly focused snapshot that might be scrutinized at leisure. There are, alas, no technical or methodological tools to eliminate the spin – to neutralize the interests, strategies and asymmetries of power in which all actors – including researchers – are enmeshed. All observations must be made on the run, chasing a rapidly moving object which appears differently depending on where you are standing (or running, as the case may be). Most confounding, all sources of information – down to the most innocuous statistics – express the point of view of one player or another. There is, in fact, no genuinely authoritative knowledge about such political arenas. Underlying all the rhetoric, fancy titles and impressive aesthetics there are only 'battlefields of knowledge' (Long & Long 1992), struggles over whose truth will be most widely accepted.

Does this mean there are no 'facts,' that empirical study and careful argumentation are a waste of time? We certainly wouldn't have spent eight months writing this report were that the case. But we must also acknowledge that the systematic search for information, its careful analysis and informed interpretation do not necessarily produce 'authoritative knowledge,' especially when the findings run against the grain of established narratives and, most decisively, prevailing interests.

The claims put forth in the name of the pro-poor policy partnership appear reasonable, and a great many actors in Tanzania – domestic, foreign, transnational – take them at their face value and allow them to guide their actions. We have argued that the consensual narrative is a self-referential construct through which a cosmopolitan elite of middle-class professionals, firmly under the sway of neo-liberal ideology, justifies its hegemonic grip on the policy and budgetary processes. Perhaps this is not such a bad thing. As a Danish team of consultants pronounced in their assessment of the Tanzanian PRSP,

Questions might be raised about placing too much influence in the hands of a small group of technocrats, but it is a virtually universal aspect of all successful policymaking that at a critical stage responsibility for drafting coherent policy document [sic] has to be clearly located with a small team capable of effective drafting.⁸¹

⁸¹ <<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/review/danish4.pdf>>

Our concern is neither with the coherence of the document (coherence is merely a formal property), nor with the capabilities of the people who wrote it. Our misgivings revolve around the procedures of policy formulation, and the political character of the process. Was the PRSP formulated in a manner that promoted the routinization of democratic procedures in the Tanzanian political system? Did the actors in control of the process exercise a democratic mandate? Are the actual procedures, and the coalitions of actors that established them, likely to encourage inclusiveness and transparency in future cycles of policy-making? Did the policy process encompass a wide range of views, and carefully consider the implications of different positions before the document was finalized?

It is hard to respond positively to any of these queries. Instead of merely waiting to see whether the current path does indeed lead to poverty reduction and improved governance, it is worth reflecting on the following cautionary elements in our findings:

- (1) The prevailing domination of creditor interests (streamlined disbursement, guarantees of repayment) without increased controls on lending policies;
- (2) The empowerment of cosmopolitan middle-class positions in the policy elite (and their populist legitimization) at the expense of deepening popular democratic influence and oversight;
- (3) The abuse of 'consultation' to legitimize predetermined policies (and duplicity in the portrayal of the process as participatory);
- (4) The one-dimensional focus of public policy on social investments without parallel attention to productivity;
- (5) The affinity between the productive social forces excluded from the policy process (the domestic middle-class, small-holder producers) and the absence of corresponding economic elements in the policy framework (agriculture, manufacturing); and
- (6) The reinforcement of quasi-feudal political relations at the grass-roots as a result, in part, of the depoliticization of public policy-making.

Of greatest long-term concern are perhaps the negative implications of the consensual hegemony for the resurgence of a genuinely pluralist debate on Tanzania's development options, one rooted in the broad range of social and environmental conditions that characterize this vast country. The rampant and increasingly systematic exercise of disciplinary power over actors and associations with social movement potential is especially worrisome. But the most immediate problem undoubtedly is that of 'crowding out' and its impact on the structure of political opportunity for effecting democratic policy formulation and implementation.

'Crowding out' depends on operative standards of inclusion. The criteria by which an actor is deemed competent, responsible or representative enough to be included in a political

process are not arrived at by divine decree, they are politically constructed, defined and negotiated by self-interested parties to the same process. The above narrative recounts a number of incidents by which domestic organizations were excluded from various aspects of the PRS process. In all cases, their exclusion was the result of ‘insufficient capacity.’ But how has the measure of sufficient capacity been defined?

Our evidence suggests that these standards – professional, ethical, and aesthetic – emanate from practices established within the donor industry. As coordination and harmonization within the industry deepens, the most powerful members of the aid ‘cartel’ – the large multilateral agencies, set these standards. In this sense, the multilateralization discussed in Chapter 3 looks increasingly like a process of unilateralization as collective donor aspirations converge on the interests of the main creditor institutions. For semi-commercialized institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, standards of performance echo both the formal requirements of a massive bureaucracy and – however circuitously – the demands of hysterically competitive global markets. As Tanzanian organizations struggle to conform with these standards – a goal which only the thinnest elite precariously achieves – alternative ways of thinking about time and process, respect and reciprocity, power and efficiency – are peeled away, leaving a uniform and unchallenged sense of normality and acceptability. Only those who can adhere to these stringent standards of civility are considered legitimate members of ‘civil’ society.

What might be done? Given the brevity of our engagement with these complex issues we are more comfortable posing issues for further reflection rather than assigning guidelines for action. Different actors may need to reflect on different aspects of their strategies:

In the **non-state** sector, more attention is needed to ensuring that emerging social movements can speak with an independent voice. Mechanisms of accountability need to be deepened and radically reformed, not merely co-opted under a hierarchical model of civic bureaucracy. The private aid agencies have much cause to rethink their role in this respect.

In the **state sector**, the national leadership may need to consider how it could recapture policy autonomy by forging alliances with the productive middle-class. The local technocracy may also need to reflect on their political strategies. Some lessons could be culled from Uganda where the senior civil servants allied themselves with critical advocacy groups to leverage greater leeway from the creditors.

For the **donors**, it may be worthwhile to reconsider the importance of pluralism in the policy arena. Harmonization is positive when it lessens the transaction costs of aid management, but less so when it sharply reduces the policy options open for debate and experimentation. Be less obsessed with form and procedure, and give more attention to policy substance. Genuine

autonomy is also an important criterion of ownership. Politics and interest representation are messy, but there is no democracy without them.

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