

After Ujamaa: Ethnicity, Land and Conflict in Tanzania

**Report of the Methodology workshop,
Southern Sun Hotel, Dar-es-Salaam,
Tanzania,
17 July 2009**

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THE AFRICA POLICY INSTITUTE (API) IS AN INDEPENDENT, NOT-FOR-PROFIT pan-African think-tank designed as a center of excellence on peace, governance and strategic issues in Africa. The Institute is devoted to policy relevant research to stimulate and inform policy dialogue and sharing of innovative policy perspectives with research and policy communities. API would like to express its gratitude to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) for support of its research under which this working paper series is published.

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Executive Summary

On 17th July 2009 the Africa Policy Institute (API) organised a one day workshop held in Southern Sun Hotel in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania on ethnicity, land and conflict in the country. The meeting, designed as small but powerful, was organised around the issues of ethnicity, land and conflict, was attended by academics, activists, researchers and experts on identity, resources and conflict. The workshop was part of the API major research on *Ethnicity, Land, and Conflict in Africa* which covers four countries namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda, with Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa and Zimbabwe serving as additional comparative case studies.

The Methodology Workshop in Tanzania was a follow-up to the broader Nairobi Conference on Ethnicity, Land and Conflict in Africa project. The following were the objectives of the workshop:

- Firstly, to clarify theoretical and conceptual issues which would help those who are going to carry out the study in Tanzania;
- Secondly, to suggest the methodological approach to the study;
- Thirdly, to identify issues which are research specific for the country, which researchers would have to pay special attention to.
- Fourthly, to identify areas where the research has to be carried out; and
- Fifthly, to introduce and launch the Tanzania case study.

What follows is the analytic report of the meeting. It defines the background to the study; explores the pertinent conceptual issues; examines the nexus between ethnicity, resources (land) conflict in Tanzania and, finally, identifies emerging issues and areas of research focus.

1. Background and Introduction

Unlike the rest of the East African region, Tanzania stands out as relatively stable and united country as far as land and ethnic conflict is concerned.. However, emerging concerns over tensions relating to land in some areas of Tanzania continue to pose major challenges to the country's socio-economic fabric. Therefore Tanzanian case study is vital to the conclusions of the Africa Policy Institute's wider ethnicity, land and conflict project. To this end, discussions during the country's methodology workshop were organised around the issues of identity/ethnicity, land and conflict. Participants paid attention to conceptual and empirical aspects of these issues as they emerge in the Tanzanian discourses. It was recalled that in the launching conference held in Nairobi on 5-6 December 2008 on the same theme of Ethnicity, land and Conflict in Africa, the Tanzania case was treated differently from those of Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Conference participants noted that although Tanzania has had a National Land Policy since August 1995, land based disputes and conflicts have been part of the administrative challenges. The policy partly came at the wake of the need for a new land policy and new land laws to regulate relations as Tanzania shifted from its traditional socialist orientation to a market economy, which has witnessed emerging and increasing land disputes. Despite the new land policy, Tanzania has experienced perhaps more conflicts around land than before.

The causes of these conflicts as some participants observed, was the land law itself. The Report of the Conference held in Nairobi noted, in this regard, that: "The major source of conflict with regard to Tanzania is thus the land law itself. It is thought to protect the rights of small-scale users but at the same time facilitating evictions and other abuses of smallholders' land rights."¹ The report further noted that the real beneficiaries of the land laws are the political elite and businessmen (ibid: 18). Participants in the Nairobi Conference expressed the view that tensions over land were brewing in Tanzania and there is need 'for quick remedial measures to avert the threat of land related conflicts and increasing ethnicisation of politics, especially in the affected areas.'²

¹ API, Ethnicity, Land and Conflict in Africa: The cases of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda, Report of the December 2008 Conference, API Working Paper Series, Nairobi, Kenya, 1/2009, p.18.

²ibid.

2. Conceptual Overview

Participants at the high-level methodology workshop pointed out that there was urgent need for a clear conceptual and empirical study of the simmering resource conflict in Tanzania and their causes.

In this regard, the Dar es Salaam workshop echoed the concerns expressed in Nairobi, underscoring the fact that conflicts over land were emerging at an alarming rate in Tanzania. It was noted that both the print and electronic media reports at least one conflict over land on a daily basis. These reports point to the fact that the conflicts are occurring not in one region of the country, but in different parts of the country. The explanation as to why this was happening varied on a case by case basis.

The workshop noted that the legal and policy framework regulating land in Tanzania was not fundamentally different from what obtains in other East African countries because like Kenya and Uganda, Tanzania was part of the British colonial empire. The only difference between Tanzania and Kenya, for example, is that Kenya was a settler economy which resulted in alienation of the best land in the country for settler use, whereas Tanzania did not experience a similar problem because it was a dominantly 'peasant colony'. After independence Tanzania embraced socialism which resulted to the suppression of land conflict. But with the onset of liberalism and the demand for land by corporate and other interests after, participants cautioned, Tanzania is descending towards the Kenyan situation characterized by conflict and instability over resources.

Commoditization or introduction of market logic in regard to land and other natural resources, it was noted, informs how one can understand old and emerging land conflicts in Tanzania. This commoditization of land and other natural resources has widened social cleavages among Tanzanian communities and citizens. For instance, the oldest form of commoditization is conservation which entails the creation of game and forest parks. This form of merchandisation of land and resources accounts for displacement and eviction of people from their land particularly pastoral communities. However, land set aside for conservation has not benefited the majority of Tanzanians but an exclusive group of people with money and influence in the tourist and hospitality industries.

The onset of neoliberalism and market driven economy saw commoditization take a new turn in Tanzania. This required that reforms be made to create the conditions for a market economy to emerge. This therefore led to the creation of a land market, which in turn dictated the transformation of land laws in the country. It was in the *Land (Amendment Act) 2004* where this liberal ideal was accomplished by declaring land a commodity in the market place. Concomitant to this is the whole notion of *privatisation*. The Tanzanian government has been under constant pressure to privatise land (this is because according to the law all land in Tanzania is public). This was seen as a way of facilitating land market, access to credit schemes from banks by small-scale land holders, and securitization of land (as per protagonists of land privatisation). It appears that the government cannot withstand the pressure and has embarked on land privatisation schemes in the form of *formalisation programme* of 'dead' capital (properties deemed to be owned extra-legally), and survey and certification of customary land holdings under village authorities. Both commoditization and privatisation paved the way for a legally rationalised land alienation and dispossession of the rural population, which has no land titles. These processes have led to the conflicts widely reported in the media.

Participants to the methodology workshop were also of the view that the form of accumulation was at the centre of understanding conflict over land in Tanzania even though these forms have been changing over time. Although accumulation has been from above (after the Arusha Declaration the state was the site of accumulation), the move from *Ujamaa* (socialism) to neoliberalism has modified this arrangement. Accumulation has been divided between the state and the emerging *private sector* and external corporate investors, with the latter having the lion's share of the land. Whereas under *Ujamaa* the state accumulated and redistributed land in an egalitarian way, under the neoliberal accretion regime the private sector has taken sway with little of the resources trickling down to the poor. This has been complicated by the collapse of basic social services such as the provision of health, education and housing.

With the most attractive investments areas in mining and tourism targeting lands in the rural areas, neoliberal accumulation through direct foreign investment (DFI) has deepened the plight of the poor rural land holders. It is in these areas where new forms of conflicts have emerged pitting the investors and the state against

rural communities of peasant farmers and pastoralists. The imperatives of investment in tourism have led to the alienation of large tracks of land for building hotels or for hunting blocks. As a result, many people along the coast from Mtwara to Tanga and Zanzibar have been evicted from their land possessions, leading to disputes over coastal lands.

Pressure on land has also increased following the emergence of the need for alternative source of bio-fuel and the current global food crisis. Tanzania is the new frontier of foreign investors seeking thousands of hectares to grow crops for bio-fuel and food destined for international markets. While these investments will open new employment opportunities for Tanzania's poor, they have compounded the pressure on and competition for land in Tanzania. Apparently, these new pressures for land coincide with the government's desire to attract investors in agriculture in its bid to transform agriculture through large scale commercial farming. This has result in conflicts between these interests and the rural small land holders. All these in essence put the state in Tanzania at the centre of the land conflict. Therefore the study should help to unravel the identity and character of the state as well as its evolving identity and character.

Related to this, governance and ethical issues were raised as factors which contribute to land conflicts. Emerging corruption facilitate land grabbing in favour of business and political elites versus the impoverished communities of farmers and pastoralists.

3. Ethnicity and Conflict in Tanzania

The issue of identity politics in Tanzania comes to the surface only in the recent past. But the serious analysis of classes and class struggle in Tanzania perhaps came to be in the immediate post-colonial classification of the people as the *Wabenzi* and *Naizesheni* versus the *Makabwela*.³ This class struggle was analyzed by Tanzania scholars like of Shivji in *The Silent Class Struggle in Tanzania*. Officially, the ruling party and government declared that there were only two classes in Tanzania, the class of workers and peasants. This was part of the national building project, and to a certain extent it helped to unify a country with more than 120 ethnic groups. Ethnic identities did not matter very much in the pre-

³Wabenzi (those who drove Mercedes Benz) and Naizesheni (those who had big positions because of the Africanisation of the civil service) both enjoyed the fruits of independence, and the Makabwela, the majority who did not benefit much from independence, the downtrodden.

neoliberal setting, and deliberate efforts were made to address any potential of fuelling ethnicity. This was also supported by the fact that there is no one ethnic group in Tanzania which is numerically powerful as to exert domination over the rest.

It was further noted that most existing ethnic groups in Tanzania were a creation of the colonial regime. This was done for administrative convenience and suppressing resistance. For instance, the amalgamation of the *wasukuma* people, which were traditionally independent clans loosely dependent on each other, did not manage to bring a sense of powerful dominant group among them. Likewise the Chagga, who may be viewed by other communities as one ethnic group are actually several smaller groups of *Wamarangu*, *Warombo*, *Wakibosho* and *Wamachame*. Perhaps it was easier in Tanzania to curve a sense of collective national consciousness because of these factors as opposed to countries such as Kenya and Uganda.

However, participants observed that in a neoliberal Tanzania ethnic identities and tensions are likely to occur. Neoliberalism has increased social and regional differentiation. Politics has become more competitive as access to the state translates into personal accumulation of wealth. In such situation ethnic and other identities become important. Political elites have manipulated these identities to their advantage in order to gain access to state power. Some of the emerging ethnic identities cluster around the discourse of *Uzawa* (indigenous) versus the *non-wazawa* (usually Tanzanians of Asian origin), Makaburu (whites or Boers *foreigners*) and Moslems versus Christians. This has led to the construction of political zones for elite to win block votes in multiparty elections.

Furthermore, and especially in the rural areas, ethnic tensions revolve around the production identities such as *farmers* versus *pastoralists*, *wananchi* (*villagers*) versus *wawekezaji* (investors). There is also a generational tension between young people and old people, and a gendered tension where women are pitted against men in land ownership. From the foregoing, there is need for a close examination of these processes of identity formation in the light of intensifying tensions over resources/land. There is also a need of interrogating the state as an arbiter in identity contestations over land as aforementioned.

4. Land and Conflict

The nexus between land and conflict was identified as a largely unexplored area. Participants registered concerns on the rising conflicts over land and other resources such as minerals. However, they noted that the discourse on land in Tanzania has so far not unearthed the social base, identity and character of those engaged in the grabbing of land and resources. It has also not analyzed the identity of those resisting encroachment on the basis of claims to customary rights.

For example, the conflicts in Kilosa district have always, and erroneously, been presented as one between pastoralists and farmers, with some singling out the pastoralists 'Maasai' versus farmers. However, the ethnic composition of the pastoralists and that of the farmers remains unexamined. This is notwithstanding that the 'hot spots' of Kilosa district do not constitute an ethnic but multiple ethnic groups, with many residents of the district being migrants, including those who moved into the area to work in the sisal plantations.

Another area, Tarime, has emerged as another complex conflict ridden area. For years now a conflict, which at times turns violent, has been going on reportedly between two clans. However, there are possible multiple causes and explanation to the causes of this conflict. It could be a conflict over resources (land and livestock) or a conflict over the control of (illicit but lucrative trade. Equally important is the involvement of state functionaries and the interests they harbour over the conflict. Tarime remains an intriguing a complex site of conflicts.

Zanzibar represents another case of escalating tensions between and within ethnic identities over land in Tanzania. Participants noted that those grabbing land are politically connected. Yet both the grabbers and those losing land have similar political inclinations. How does the identity question factor in here?

It is therefore true that conflicts and the form of identity or expression they take pose a lot of challenges in understanding identity issues in relation to land and conflict. The workshop therefore noted that serious attention be paid to conflicts bearing in mind that some are easy to recognise as they come out prominently into the surface while others are difficult to discern. This issue was raised in

relation to conflicts between men and women on land, which are often concealed by the more overarching conflicts between ethnic or racial groups. The other important point raised was the need to investigate the organisational forms of the conflicts occurring in various parts of Tanzania. It was noted that some conflicts occur in an organised manner and others occur spontaneously. A recent case cited is that of peasants who recently invaded and occupied land belonging to an investor in the Arumeru district in Northern Tanzania.

5. Emerging Research Issues and Areas of Focus

The meeting identified four key areas as the epicentres of land-related conflicts in Tanzania. Participants noted that these areas present different dynamics in the interplay between conflict, ethnicity and land. The selected cases are:

Zanzibar: The Island of Zanzibar (and to some extent Pemba) has witnessed the most recent cases of land grabbing in Tanzania. Despite widespread reports on the land-related disputes in Zanzibar, little or no serious analysis has been undertaken on the issue. Zanzibar is also a place where political competition is high and conflicts and violent displacements have occurred during 2000 and 2005 elections. A focused analysis of the dynamics of identity and land-related conflict in Zanzibar was recommended by the meeting (Salma Maulidi from Sahiba Sisters, Zanzibar, was requested to prepare a working paper on the land question in Zanzibar).

Kilosa: Another area of conflict is Kilosa, located in a fertile region of the country where large scale commercial sisal plantations emerged alongside peasant farming. Many people from different parts of colonial Tanganyika and outside (such as Congo, Rwanda and Burundi), the *colonial labour reservoir*, migrated to Kilosa to work as *indentured* labourers (*Manamba*). After independence some of these people settled here and now constitute the population of Kilosa. Different groups of pastoralists also migrated to Kilosa as early as 1960s.

These were either victims of commoditization or commercialisation of farming which required huge tracts of lands. Many of the *Maasai* and *Barbaig* residents of Kilosa district fall under this category. But there are other migrants from North

East, who have settled in Kilosa in search of pastures. Some reports also show that a large part of the land is either under companies or under some national elite (absentee landlords) who hold the land making it inaccessible to those who need it.

Dar-es Salaam: Tanzania's coastal strip has become a prime focus of investors in hotels, apartments, and other lucrative investments along the coast. Encroachment on the coastal lands has encountered some resistance and serious public outcry.

Tarime: The area hyperbolically described as “the Darfur of Tanzania” is located in the Northern fringes of the country. It represents a difficult but an important case study in resource-based conflict. It is an active conflict that has attracted the attention of the government and some measures have been taken to address them but to no avail.

6. Conclusion

As the meeting came to a close, the question of how to approach the case study of Tanzania was raised. Some participants stressed that conflict involving identity, land and conflicts represents a governance crisis in Tanzania, especially with the absence of institutions that are accountable and responsive to the needs of the ordinary people. Other contributors to the debate underscored the escalation of conflicts as signifying the crisis of accumulation under the neo-liberal regime. In this regard, many participants emphasised the need to place the problems of accumulation at the centre of the analysis, arguing that neoliberalism has intensified the exploitation and marginalisation of the poor majority.

ANNEX 1: AGENDA

TIME	EVENT	Facilitator
08:00-09:00	Guest Arrival and Registration	
09.00-09:15	Welcome and Opening	Dr. Peter Kagwanja
	Introduction	
09:15-09:45	Background & Context: The Ethnicity, Land and Conflict Project	Peter Kagwanja –API Dr Ng'wanza Kamata-University of Dar-es-Salaam
	Plenary Discussions	
PANEL 1: ETHNICITY, LAND AND CONFLICT IN TANZANIA: ISSUES CONCEPTS AND METHODS		
09:45-10:40	Facilitation	Peter Kagwanja
	General Remarks	Ng'wanza Kamata
	Plenary Discussion	Participants
10:40-11:00	Tea/Coffee Break	Participants
PANEL II: DYNAMICS OF CONFLICTS IN TANZANIA		
11:00-11:40	Facilitator	Ng'wanza Kamata
	General Remarks	Joachim A. Mwami
	Plenary Discussion	Participants
PANEL III: ETHNICITY/IDENTITY IN TANZANIA		
11:40-12:20	Facilitator	Ng'wanza Kamata
	General Remarks	Chambi Chachage
	Plenary Discussion	Participants
PANEL IV: RESORCES/LAND & CONFLICT IN TANZANIA		
12:20-13:00	Facilitator	Ng'wanza Kamata
	General Remarks	Bashiru Ally
	Plenary Discussion	Participants
13:00-14:00	LUNCH BREAK	
14:00-15:00	Tying it all together: Research Areas	Peter Kagwanja & Ng'waza Kamata
	Way Forward	

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THE AFRICA POLICY INSTITUTE (API) IS AN INDEPENDENT, NOT-FOR-PROFIT pan-African think-tank designed as a centre of excellence on peace, governance and strategic issues in Africa. The Institute is devoted to policy relevant research to underpin policy dialogue and sharing of innovative policy perspectives among with African institutions, states, civil society and the private sector. The institute carries out its work from regional offices in Nairobi Kenya (Headquarters) and Pretoria South Africa, and a liaison office in Kampala, Uganda.

Africa Policy Institute, September 2009