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# The Political Rationality of State Capitalism in Tanzania: Territorial Transformation and the Entrepreneurial Individual

1. **Barnaby Dye**, Global Development Institute, University of Manchester; [Barnaby.dye@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Barnaby.dye@manchester.ac.uk)
2. **Seth Schindler**, Global Development Institute & Manchester Urban Institute, University of Manchester (corresponding Author); [seth.schindler@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:seth.schindler@manchester.ac.uk)
3. **Deusdedit Rwehumbiza**, Department of General Management, University of Dar es Salaam, [drwehumbiza@udsm.ac.tz](mailto:drwehumbiza@udsm.ac.tz)

## Abstract

States have become active participants in markets in the past decade, precipitating renewed scholarly interest in *state capitalism*. We contribute to the conceptualization of contemporary state capitalism by bridging it with scholarship on infrastructure-led development and analysing its political rationality. We highlight the origins of mid-20th century high modernism, which coupled spatial planning and social engineering for the purpose of transforming territory and ‘improving’ populations. Through a comparative historical, we demonstrate that a key characteristic of contemporary state capitalism is its tendency to decouple these objectives; while there is an emphasis on the transformation of territory, social engineering is virtually absent. Instead, individuals are meant to recognize economic opportunity afforded by infrastructure projects and self-actualize accordingly. Thus, the political rationality of contemporary state capitalism in Tanzania combines high-modernist spatial planning with orthodox neoliberal assumptions surrounding the inherent entrepreneurialism of individuals.

## Introduction

One impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is the return of the state. Governments worldwide face pressure to address the health risks posed by Covid-19 and also minimize its economic impacts (EBRD, 2020). The expansion of the regulatory role of the state was well underway in many countries prior to the onset of the global pandemic. Scholars from a range of disciplines noted the return of state capitalism in the past two decades (Alami & Dixon, 2020a; 2020b), and even the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have advocated an enhanced role for the state vis-à-vis markets (Schindler & Kanai, 2019; Alami et al., 2021). These and other powerful international institutions began endorsing national spatial planning policies designed to enhance transnational connectivity and foster integration with global value chains after the 2008 financial crisis. The World Bank (2017), for example, considers centralized spatial planning an antidote to state and market failure. Many countries now outline these objectives in national development plans (Chimhowu et al., 2019), a

practice that was seemingly consigned to the dustbin of history in the early 1990s along with the Soviet Union.

A defining feature of contemporary state capitalism has been the state-directed expansion of infrastructure. Policy makers have embraced a practice of infrastructure-led development whose objective is to ‘get the territory right’ and integrate distant hinterlands into ‘operational landscapes’ in ways that facilitate industrial upgrading (Schindler and Kanai, 2019; Pieterse et al., 2018; Brenner and Katsikis, 2020). The result is the opening of territory to agro-industrial exploitation and the expansion of frontiers of resource extraction (Zoomers et al., 2017). Thus, the enhancement of inter-city, regional and even transnational connectivity is a core component of spatialized industrial policy. Underpinning these trends in industrial policy, regulation and planning is a common-sense axiom that is so self-evident among policy makers it is rarely articulated explicitly: connectivity is an unalloyed virtue that promises to unlock the latent potential of isolated regions and foster export-oriented economic growth and structural transformation.

These trends are particularly evident in Sub-Saharan Africa. The African Development Bank (AfDB) has embraced infrastructure-led development in earnest since 2009 when it launched the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (see Pieterse et al., 2018). One of the AfDB’s most notable activities has been the financing of 12,700 km of roads in its ‘quest to integrate Africa’ and encourage transnational economic integration (AfDB, 2009; 2019). Roadways and energy infrastructure are shaping more than 30 development corridors that are in various stages of development across Africa (Enns, 2018). These corridors exemplify state-led spatial planning, that are financed with a mix of public finance and private loans, and their objective is to link frontiers of resource extraction and agribusiness with global markets. To this end they are anchored by urban nodes geared towards logistics, production (e.g. special economic zones) and services (Turok, 2016; AfDB 2018; Côté-Roy & Moser, 2019; Henderson, 2020). The result has been a proliferation of large-scale, transnational infrastructure projects that criss-cross Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Deloitte’s (2019) most recent *Africa Construction Trends Report*, East Africa was the leading region in Africa both in terms of the number of construction projects in excess of \$50 million and the absolute value of its construction projects. Kenya and Tanzania were tied for the top spot in Africa in terms of new infrastructure projects, with 51 projects initiated in each country in 2019.

This article enriches our understanding of emergent patterns of territorial restructuring and infrastructure-led development, by bridging it with scholarship on state capitalism. Alami and Dixon (2020a) argue that the field of state capitalism scholarship is not only fragmented, but the term ‘state capitalism’ is used with analytical imprecision. We contribute to the refinement of the concept by embracing Alami and Dixon’s (2020a, p. 82) call to ‘periodize’ state capitalism and to iteratively generate theory from its manifestation in specific instances. Thus, our purpose is not to offer a general definition or totalizing conceptualization of ‘state capitalism.’ Rather, we seek to enhance the term’s analytical purchase through a comparative historical analysis of the political rationality of development policy in Tanzania. This historical approach is crucial because the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century saw the zenith of a high modernist development model which placed infrastructure centre stage, as part of a wider state-directed effort to transform economy and society (Mold, 2012). Crucially, we must interrogate the presence of a new era of state capitalism and compare its contemporary manifestation with its mid-20<sup>th</sup> century avatar. To this end, we compare the political rationality deployed in the two periods in Tanzania.

The objective of colonial administrators in Tanganyika<sup>1</sup> was to produce territories and populations that would allow for the efficient extraction of resources and production of certain agro-industrial commodities (Coulson, 2013). After independence and under a socialist political project, officials were altruistic in their desire to catalyse transformative social and economic processes that would amount to a home-grown version of ‘modernization.’ While the objectives of the colonial and postcolonial governments differed, there was broad-based continuity in their political rationality; in both instances officialdom coupled objectives of (1) transforming territory through spatial planning and public investments in infrastructure, with (2) social engineering initiatives designed to produce and improve populations. These objectives were inseparable, because planners envisioned positive feedback loops between transformed territory and ‘improved’ populations.

The political rationality of Tanzania’s current development strategy decouples spatial planning from social engineering. Quite simply, contemporary state capitalism embraces infrastructure-led development in its bid to transform territory, but social engineering is absent. Rather than act on an undifferentiated mass to produce particular populations (e.g. patriotic peasants or industrious workers), Tanzania’s contemporary development strategy

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<sup>1</sup> Tanganyika became independent in 1961 and formed a union with Zanzibar in 1964, becoming Tanzania.

relies on individuals to recognize the economic opportunity afforded by operationalized landscapes of infrastructural connectivity and self-actualize accordingly. We conclude, therefore, that contemporary state capitalism in Tanzania blends elements of spatial Keynesianism (e.g. pursuit of balanced regional growth through large-scale infrastructure projects) with orthodox neoliberal assumptions surrounding the inherently entrepreneurial nature of individuals. Or to put it differently, it deploys a political rationality that blends mid-20<sup>th</sup> century spatial planning with aspects of late-20<sup>th</sup> century neoliberal ideology.

This article has four sections. In the following section we review scholarship on state capitalism and the proliferation of novel territories such as operational landscapes and extended urban spaces. We seek to bridge these fields by responding to Alami and Dixon's entreaty to focus on the periodization of state capitalism and thereby demonstrate its origins and contemporary instantiations. We do this by focusing on the political rationality of high modernism, which we ground in an analysis of postcolonial Tanzania's efforts to radically transform territory and populations in section three. We subsequently narrate the recent resurrection of national development planning in Tanzania, show how the state has positioned itself as an agent of economic transformation and analyse its concomitant political rationality. In the final section we conclude by exploring the implications of our analysis for conceptualizations of state capitalism and infrastructure-led development.

### **State capitalism and territorial transformation**

The 2008 financial crises brought to an end nearly two decades of institutional reform in development policy designed first to 'roll back' states and deregulate markets, and subsequently 'roll out' institutions supportive of liberalized markets (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Efforts to maintain liquidity and demand were led by the US and China, referred to by euphemistically by Yergin (2020) as the G2. The US pursued an expansive monetary and fiscal policy, while China expanded its ambitious public works projects, such as construction of high speed rail networks, first at home and then abroad (Tooze, 2018; Lampton et al., 2020). As the immediate threat of financial meltdown receded, many states continued to expand regulatory control over markets in ways that would have been unimaginable in the neoliberal heyday of the 1990s and early 2000s. Policy at multilateral development institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF was being reworked when the Covid-19 pandemic plunged the global economy into turmoil yet again (Alami et al., 2021), and many states responded to the economic shock by further expanding their direct involvement in markets (EBRD, 2020).

Academics from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and ideological persuasions have recently employed the notion of ‘state capitalism’ to capture the ‘emergent landscapes of state intervention’ that took shape after 2008 (Alami & Dixon, 2020b: 3). There is a scholarly consensus that the state has once again become a manager, coordinator or even owner of capital, yet the term ‘state capitalism’ remains ill-defined and, according to Alami and Dixon (2020a), amounts to a ‘banner’ that lacks analytical purchase. They note that it often serves as shorthand for a collection of activities and regulatory regimes, and that common sense conceptualizations of ‘state capitalism’ are mobilized by powerful stakeholders to justify foreign policy, international development initiatives, trade and technology policy (Alami & Dixon, 2020b). This framework tends to contrast an authoritarian and threatening Chinese version of state capitalism to a benevolent technocratic variety found in the North Atlantic and Japan. As such, these narratives ‘are saturated with notions of hostility, danger, competition, but also deviance and abnormality, which portray non-West political geographies of capital as a threat to Western and global security and liberal world order’ (Alami & Dixon, 2020b: 10). This framing aside, present-day development is marked by geographical hybridity and a range of place-specific combinations of state and private actors that allow a similar lens to be thrown across self-proclaimed, and importantly distinctive, capitalist and communist countries (Anguelov, 2020). Thus, moving beyond the usage of ‘state capitalism’ as a banner to frame and justify high-stakes geopolitical competition, we answer Alami and Dixon’s (2020a) call to periodize and locate state capitalism by interrogating the contemporary resurgence of the state.

We seek to demonstrate that the growing body of literature on infrastructure-led development and territorial transformation can enrich scholarship focused on the renewed role of the state, not least given the longstanding relationship among development objectives, spatial planning and infrastructure. This literature highlights the developmentalist imperative to organise space and create territories for capitalist extraction and production. Indeed, the transgression of commodity frontiers has long motivated states to expand capitalist relations of production (Moore, 2015), and in the 2000s this dynamic was a response to an unprecedented global commodity boom fuelled by China’s insatiable demand for resources (Jepson, 2020). According to Mezzadra and Neilson (2019, p. 65) these efforts have increased in the past two decades with the coordination and increased rationalization of a series of transnational operations geared towards the reorganization of ‘the whole social fabric according to the logics and imperative of [capital’s] valorization.’ The result has been

the proliferation of ‘operational landscapes’ (Brenner and Katsikis, 2020; Brenner, 2019) that integrate ‘planetary mines’ (Arboleda, 2020) and ‘mega-plantations’ (Kenney-Lazar & Ishikawa, 2019) with industrial agglomerations that constitute the ‘global factory’ (Buckley 2009).

These landscapes of extraction and production are stitched together with an ever-expanding network of securitized transportation corridors anchored by new towns and ‘logistical cities’ (Samaddar, 2019; Cowen 2014; Khalili, 2020; Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021). Policymakers hoping to boost export-oriented economic growth by ‘strategically coupling’ places with global networks of extraction, circulation, production and distribution (see Coe et al., 2004), must first build the standardized logistics networks that facilitate supposedly frictionless circulation (Chua et al., 2018; Cowen, 2014; Danyluk, 2019). Schindler and Kanai (2019) refer to this as ‘infrastructure-led development,’ and they show that states play a key role in expanding inter-city and transnational infrastructure networks in an attempt to plug hitherto isolated places into the global economy’s operational landscapes. This requires an active state that coordinates relations among public and private stakeholders that serve to distribute risk, responsibility and rewards (see Anguelov, 2020; Hildyard, 2016; Gabor, 2021), and in the following section we explore the political rationality deployed in support of these infrastructural ambitions.

### ***Political rationality: Coupling social engineering and spatial planning***

It is clear that a key feature of contemporary state capitalism is a focus on spatial planning and the production of ‘operational landscapes’ (Brenner and Katsikis, 2020), and we now turn to its ‘political rationalities and governmental techniques’ (Moisio & Paasi, 2013). This leads us to ask: upon what or whom does the state act, and what sorts of governmental techniques are applied? Our analysis draws heavily on the work of Michel Foucault (2007[2004]; 2008[2004]), who charted the emergence and genealogy of an ‘art of government’ in early-modern Europe that applied calculative rationality geared towards the classification of people and space into discrete populations and territories. Both populations and territories were then acted upon by a host of newly-established institutions in order to correct supposed abnormalities and deviance (ibid.). According to Foucault (2007[2004]) there was a ‘shift of emphasis’ from territory to populations as the main object of the state’s attention in early-modern Europe. In contrast, Elden (2007) argues that the development of calculative rationality and techniques geared towards the production and correction of

populations was in addition to – rather than instead of – a continued interest in the management of space and production of territory. In this view, the object upon which the state acts (i.e. populations or territories) is less significant than the calculative episteme and techne that became central to modern statecraft.

Indeed, this calculative political rationality was applied in European colonies in far more intimate and invasive domains than it ever was in Europe (Guha, 1997; Harper, 2020). However, colonial attempts to transform territory tended to be more successful than initiatives designed to produce populations. In the case of India, for example, the ‘colonial regime sought to transform the geographical space of colonial India into a commodified, “second-order” space embedded within rather than merely tied to the broader imperial economy’ through the ‘[t]he development of a massive network of communication and transportation structures – railways, bridges, irrigation projects, ports, canals, telegraph networks, [and] postal services’ (Goswami, 2004; see Rabinow, 2014 for examples from French colonies). While many colonial governments managed to construct infrastructure designed to extract and export resources, their attempts to transform colonial subjects into docile workers were repeatedly frustrated. Colonial subjects may have been framed as an undifferentiated primitive mass in European metropolises, but colonial administrators encountered a plethora of incomprehensible and durable social systems ‘with the result that solutions to the labour supply problem had to be tailored to the specific circumstances of each society’ (Munslow & Finch, 1984, p. 1). Colonial authorities systematically underestimated the resilience of indigenous belief and social systems and they struggled to commodify labour power in the colonies (Munslow & Finch, 1984; Taussig, 1980; Duncan, 2002). The imposition of *corvée* labour schemes was a widespread short-term solution that inevitably failed to give rise to a self-reproducing working class (Munslow & Finch, 1984).

Colonial administrators sought to develop more sophisticated modes of governmental techniques that could fundamentally transform colonial subjects into a ‘modern’ and disciplined working class. This explains ‘the emergence at a moment in colonialism’s history of a form of power...which was concerned above all with disabling old forms of life by systematically breaking down their conditions, and with constructing in their place new conditions so as to enable – indeed, so as to oblige – new forms of life to come into being’ (D. Scott, 1999, p. 26). This rationality is what Scott (*ibid.*, p. 40) terms ‘colonial governmentality – in which power comes to be directed at the destruction and reconstruction of colonial space so as to produce not so much extractive-effects on colonial bodies as



governing-effects on colonial conduct.’ Coercive power remained an important component of the colonial state’s repertoire, but it was increasingly complemented by social engineering. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century it was common sense that modernization necessitated the mass production of a socially engineered and ‘standardized creature made on the Western model’ (Lorenzini, 2020, p. 12). This assumption and its concomitant political rationality survived the collapse of colonial empires and ‘social engineering [was] common to modernization thinking’ on both sides of the Iron Curtain during the Cold War (Ekbladh, 2010, p. 202; Adas, 2006; Westad, 2007). James Scott (1998) argued that governance and ideology in this period was underpinned by confidence in the state’s unmatched ability to manage the transformation of territory and improvement of populations through spatial planning and social engineering. He refers to this as *high modernism*, and its proponents posited that feedback loops between transformed territory and ‘improved’ populations would hasten development and the structural transformation of society towards high mass consumption or a socialist utopia.

The leaders of newly independent countries were, for the most part, genuine in their desire to improve the well-being of citizens, typically under socialist projects, and they largely accepted the premises of high modernism and its political rationality. State-led infrastructure construction prevailed in most postcolonial societies in various forms until the 1980s, and it was complemented by import-substitution industrialization. This changed with the neoliberal turn in the North Atlantic in the 1980s. Interest rate hikes in the U.S. precipitated a worldwide debt crises that began in Mexico in 1982 and spread across the so-called ‘Third World.’ Countries turned to the Bretton Woods institutions for emergency support, but loans from the IMF and the World Bank were contingent on the agreement of recipient states to implement a series of radical and far-reaching reforms which significantly reduced the state’s scope of action (Corbridge, 1993; Leys, 1996; Rist, 2010). Social engineering initiatives were curtailed or abandoned altogether, and most structural adjustment programs rolled back state-led spatial planning and investment in infrastructure. In the absence of technocratic management, the spatial distribution of economic activity became determined by supply and demand curves and individuals were expected to respond to market signals. Thus, the art of government in the neoliberal period was informed by a novel political rationality in which states sought to establish conditions conducive to markets and private entrepreneurship rather than act directly on territory or populations.

The neoliberal model largely failed to foster growth and the early-2000s witnessed debates among policy makers surrounding the reasons for its disappointing results (Rodrik, 2006). Renewed attempts at state intervention were inspired by the rapid economic growth and development achieved by East Asian states and the need to manage market forces after the 2008 crisis. As noted in the introduction, these trends are likely to continue as states seek to manage the health and economic consequences of Covid-19. Furthermore, state capitalism has become a mode of geopolitical economic competition, as the US and China compete to integrate territory into respective spheres of political influence and economic orientation (Lee et al., 2018). If Joe Biden's plan to invest in domestic infrastructure and strategic sectors of the economy are any indication,<sup>2</sup> this competition may result in instances of convergence between American and Chinese capitalisms (DiCarlo & Schindler, 2020). What remains unclear, however, is whether the same political rationality animates mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary state capitalism. More specifically, does 21<sup>st</sup> century state capitalism seek to couple the transformation of territory with the improvement of populations, and integrate spatial planning with social engineering? In the following section we answer this question through a historical comparative analysis of high modernism in the colonial and socialist period with contemporary state capitalism in Tanzania.

### **Coupling and decoupling spatial planning and social engineering in Tanzania**

Tanganyikans inherited an active state apparatus upon their independence from Great Britain in 1961. The colonial government had become increasingly managerial after WWII, and this 'brought a new level of state penetration into society and a new style of political action' (Iliffe, 1979, p. 372). Its primary objectives were to stabilize the labour force and 'mould a respectable and responsible African urban class' (Burton, 2005, p. 33). A host of social-engineering measures designed to enhance control and civic responsibility were introduced, and they were complemented by territorial transformation initiatives consisting of visions of planned towns and districts reserved for a new class of civically engaged urban Africans (ibid.). These aspirations remained unfulfilled for the most part because colonial authorities were unable to keep pace with rapid population growth in cities. However, they served to shape the postcolonial state, because for many civil servants '[t]he colonial regime was the only governmental system which they had actually themselves experienced' (Pratt,

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/>

1976, p. 185). Thus, the postcolonial Tanzanian state was staffed with personnel for whom social engineering and spatial planning were the essence of statecraft.

Although there was continuity in the modes of statecraft after independence, the postcolonial government initially liberalized the political sphere and outlined new emancipatory objectives in the context of dynamic international relations. Indeed, self-proclaimed socialist President Julius Nyerere and other senior leaders were sincere in their pursuit of progressive development and structural transformation. Foreign investment in industry had been increasing in the years preceding independence (Coulson, 2013), but just two years into the first five-year plan '[f]oreign private investors had begun to discover that it was more profitable, as well as risk-free, to sell Tanzania the capital goods, raw materials, and other inputs' than establish subsidiaries or partner with local firms (Lofchie, 2019, p. 39). This meant that industrialization would have to be subsidized by proceeds from agriculture, and initial policies toward agriculture focused on improvement and transformation (Coulson, 2013). In both fields – industrial and agricultural policy – the state expanded its coordination and control after Nyerere committed the country to a socialist development path in the 1967 *Arusha Declaration*.

Nyerere espoused a particularly African mode of socialism called *Ujamaa* founded on '[a]n ethos of self-reliance, rooted in the countryside, would be the primary instrument in this effort' (Lal, 2015, p. 30). This was not a rejection of 'modernity' in favour of 'tradition' – Nyerere sought to 'preserve and enhance [society's] ostensibly original spirit' (Lal, 2015, p. 46) through a fusion of traditional knowledge and technocratic planning (Schneider, 2014). Thus, traditional power structures rooted in village life were disempowered in favour of a semi-authoritarian single-party state tasked with transforming society *tout court*. The cornerstone of *Ujamaa* and the national development strategy was the transformation of agricultural production. Peasants were coercively moved great distances to permanent, planned settlements, where they were supposed to practice communal farming. Villages epitomised calculative rationality, as sedentary residents were attached to permanent houses in mapped settlements, which enabled the state to organize production collectively (Scott, 1998, chap. 7). Lal (2015, p. 33) notes that '[n]othing could [have been] less traditional than this map of the ideal rural village.' The rejection of this social and spatial organisation by villagers themselves accounts in large part for the scheme's disappointing results.

It was hoped that a nationwide network of associated yet independent villages would fuel national transformation and support industrial growth in the name of self-sufficiency (Schneider, 2014). Indeed, industrialization became one of the state's primary objectives by the second 5-year plan, but after the Arusha Declaration it was geared towards meeting basic needs and increasingly undertaken directly by parastatal companies. The means of production and wholesale trade were nationalized and protected by import-substitution policies, a system of import licenses was established, foreign exchange controls were imposed and emphasis was placed on expanding production in strategic industrial sectors such as steel, machine tools, cement, fertilizer and textiles (Skarstein & Wangwe, 1986; de Valk, 1996). Industrial policy in this period included social engineering and spatial planning. Workers were organized into committees yet after a series of high-profile industrial actions '[s]hop floor initiative was crushed, and the control of factories remained firmly with management' (Coulson, 2013, p. 337). At the same time, there was an effort to locate industrial activity beyond Dar es Salaam to nine 'growth towns' across the country in an effort to catalyse industrial activity in less developed regions (de Valk, 1996).

Perhaps the zenith of high-modernism in Tanzania was the unrealized plan to develop the Rufiji River Basin. The plan had roots in the colonial period. In the first half of the twentieth century, German authorities were the first to plan a dam at Stiegler's Gorge, and British colonial surveyors expanded the plan to include agricultural infrastructure (Havnevik, 1993; Hoag, 2013). The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) embraced the plan and advocated total valley transformation in the 1950s, outlining interventions to tame the Rufiji River for large-scale industrial agriculture. The Rufiji Basin Development Authority (Rubada) was established in 1975 with assistance from international engineers, principally from the Tennessee Valley Authority and US Bureau of Reclamation (Hoag, 2013). It was hoped that an enlarged mega-dam at Stiegler's Gorge would generate electricity for planned industrial complexes and plantation agriculture on downstream floodplains. Kaiser, the firm involved in Ghana's Akosombo Dam and Volta Aluminium Company (VALCO), created an industrialisation strategy in 1970, involving aluminium and steel refineries (Kaiser Engineering International Inc., 1970). Both colonial and post-independence plans envisioned the Rufiji Basin as a rationalised landscape that encapsulated the primary components of high-modernism in Tanzania, namely the incorporation of territorial transformation and 'improvement' of populations. Labourers were to be organised into new concentrated *Ujamaa* settlements that would incubate a civic-minded citizenry, the creation of a growth

pole would reduce regional inequality and allow the consolidation of farmland for mechanized large-scale agriculture. Similarly, if not destined for rural agriculture, citizens would move to urban areas and supply labour-power to aluminium and steel refineries.

### ***The transition to neoliberalism***

From the mid-1970s, a series of exogenous and endogenous factors resulted in successive crises that led to the collapse of the Tanzanian economy (Killick, 1995; Tripp, 1997). A decline in commodity prices globally, drought and a war with Uganda stymied economic activity whilst ballooning government debt. Model *Ujamaa* villages had long ceased functioning as originally intended, as had the industrial parastatals, which became increasingly inefficient and mired in corruption (Bryceson, 2010; Coulson, 2013; Schneider, 2014). Tanzania experienced a prolonged period of deindustrialization and parastatal privatisation (Tripp, 1997; deValk, 1996). After contentious negotiations with the IMF and a series of false starts, Tanzania agreed to a structural adjustment package and implemented a sweeping range of neoliberal reforms advocated by the Washington Consensus in 1985 (Coulson, 2013; Killick, 1995). Many Tanzanian civil servants and politicians – including Benjamin Mkapa who served as President from 1995 to 2005 – embraced the free-market logic and policies were implemented in accordance with the conditions established by the IMF (Harrison, 2001). State-owned enterprises were privatized (Coulson, 2013), and the *Sustainable Industries Development Policy* enacted in 1996 recognized “the role of the private sector as the principle vehicle in carrying out direct investments in industry...[T]his recognition will be consolidated by making enabling amendments in all major policies, Acts of Law and Legislations whose provisions discriminate or tend to discriminate against private sector investors” (Ministry of Industry and Trade 1996, p. 14). Therefore, sweeping reforms drastically reduced the role of the state and it largely discontinued efforts at spatial planning and social engineering. Whilst the state never fully retreated from public and economic life, the rolling back of postcolonial state capitalism, and particularly its territorial and social ambitions, had disappointing outcomes in Tanzania (Gray, 2018). Indeed, many officials remain critical of the speed and scope of the privatization of parastatal firms to this day (Lofchie, 2019).

### ***The resurrection of state capitalism: Development corridors, industrial policy and dams***

After two decades of painful structural adjustment, the Tanzanian Government slowly began resurrecting spatial planning and exhibited renewed enthusiasm for large-scale

infrastructure. This was enabled by the commodity super-cycle which buoyed the Tanzanian economy and the state's budget, underpinning a wider 'Africa Rising' narrative (Mkandawire, 2014; Taylor, 2016). This increased expectations from Tanzanian citizens, particularly urban youth, who were frustrated that economic growth was not translating into jobs or improved living standards (Paget, 2018). Faced with pressure from an opposition party for the first time since independence, the ruling party embraced 'resource nationalism,' ostensibly to ensure a wider distribution of wealth (Pedersen et al., 2020). High-modernist infrastructure projects were seized upon by the ruling elite as a mechanism to both create jobs and foster structural transformation of the economy (Dye 2018; 2020), and their construction was consistent with development strategies of other countries in the region (e.g. Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia). Furthermore, inspired by the success of East Asian developmental states, Tanzanian policy makers drafted the *Mini-Tiger Plan 2020* in 2004, whose primary objective was to attract FDI in key export-oriented sectors identified as having growth potential (United Republic of Tanzania, 2004). This state-led plan sought to direct and utilise the private sector to diversify the economy beyond the mining sector, and it identified timber processing and agro-food processing as the sectors with the most potential after textile production. These activities tend to be located far from cities, and the plan cited poor-quality infrastructure and insufficient access to energy as barriers to their upgrading. Thus, the re-emergence of the state as an agent of change during the Kikwete era marked a break with the previous era, it was enabled by high commodity prices, driven by inter-party political competition and demands 'from below,' and consistent with trends in global development policy.

The infrastructure projects inaugurated by Kikwete's government (2005-2015) included thermal power plants, hydropower dams, an upgrade of the central corridor railway, the establishment of export processing zones and a \$10 billion port (Ministry of Energy and Minerals, 2009; Ministry of Industry, Trade and Marketing, 2010). Kikwete doubled down in these spatial plans in his second term when he launched the Big Results Now scheme. Furthermore, Tanzania's industrial policy became spatialized – the *Integrated Industrial Development Strategy* divides the country into four corridors that connect zones of extraction and agriculture to industrial process centres whilst also linking eastern coast ports to neighbouring nation-states.

The largest and most ambitious is the Central Corridor which runs from Dar es Salaam/Bagamoyo to Central Africa, specifically Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda. Key

elements of the corridor plan date back to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Enns and Bersaglio, 2020). International development agencies and consultants commissioned studies that led to the establishment of the Kagera Basin Organisation in 1977, which was modelled on the Tennessee Valley Authority (Dye, 2018; 2020). It pursued ambitious plans for regional transformation through the construction of a railway and dam (Tiharuhondi, 1988). Current government plans feature a new electric railway from Dar es Salaam that will extend to Rwanda in the first instance, with later additions to Burundi, Congo and Uganda (World Bank, 2008).<sup>3</sup> Phase 1 of the railway project is reportedly underway, coordinated by the intergovernmental Transit Transport Facilitation Agency and implemented by respective state agencies; a reported \$700m was allocated in Tanzania's 2018/19 budget and Tanzania's recently-deceased president, John Magufuli, signed two deals, one with Rwanda and another with the DRC and Burundi in December 2019 involving the construction of approximately 2,500km of railway to Kigali, Rwanda (Global Construction Review, 2018). Uganda augmented the scheme by announcing that an oil pipeline, originating at Lake Victoria, will pass through Tanzania (Enns & Bersaglio, 2020).

A second major corridor scheme is the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT) or *Uhuru* Corridor. It demonstrates the hybridity of state and market models in Tanzania's contemporary state capitalism. SAGCOT was originally conceptualised by Yara, a Norwegian fertiliser company, and furthered developed by two UK consultancies after the 2008 financial crisis.<sup>4</sup> It was then announced in 2010 by Kikwete at the World Economic Forum and became a key pillar of his development programme and the flagship component of the state's Kilimo Kwanza (Agriculture First) policy. The corridor works as a vehicle for foreign, domestic and state-owned agribusiness to invest in infrastructure and production processes in identified agricultural clusters. A government catalyst fund was used to finance out-grower programmes that integrate smallholder farmers into global or regional value chains, until suspended by President Magufuli given his desire for stronger state-leadership (Sulle, 2020). The initial plan for SAGCOT envisioned a network that linked small-scale farmers with one of six small-scale industrial clusters that were connected to Tanzanian cities and ports via upgraded transportation infrastructure.

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<sup>3</sup> Additional data gathered from government reports, news articles and the official project website: (<https://centralcorridor-ttfa.org/> - Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup>/3/2020)

<sup>4</sup> Prorustica and AgDevCo

SAGCOT's development-corridor model aims to facilitate the adoption of capital-intensive production. It focuses on bringing 'synergies across the agricultural value chain' (SAGCOT, 2010, p. 17) by linking international agribusiness with smallholder farmers (see Hartmann et al., 2021). It promises to provide the latter with 'the opportunity to become profitable producers linked to markets, with affordable access to irrigation and other agricultural support services' (SAGCOT, 2010, p. 19). Farmers are not coerced to enrol in these networks, rather they are expected to take advantage of opportunities. Thus, people are not absent from corridor development plans, but schemes lack an overt social engineering component. The objective is not to apply calculative rationality with the intent to fashion an undifferentiated mass into discrete populations, but rather it is to produce operational landscapes within which entrepreneurial individuals will respond to economic incentives by either supplying cash crops or selling their labour-power for a wage. For example, local pastoralists were encouraged to supply the Ihemi milk factory and the Kilombero Sugar Company selectively enrolled local farmers in an out-growing sugar cane scheme (Sulle, 2020). In these cases it is the responsibility of the individual to self-actualize in accordance with the opportunities supposedly afforded by enhanced connectivity.

These development corridors are intertwined with Tanzania's state-led industrial policies, which illustrate a similar logic. The *Integrated Industrial Development Strategy 2025* (IIDS) released in 2010 offers what amounts to a national spatial plan that promises to radically transform Tanzanian territory by building a large-scale port, formulating an 'Economic Zone development master plan,' establishing development corridors, industrial concentrations, 'industrial villages' and industrial extension services, and finally, to promote a 'philosophy of business linkage' (Ministry of Industry, Trade and Marketing 2010, p. ii, 4–5). Labour is portrayed as an input and benefits are supposed to trickle down to individuals, but they are not acted upon through social engineering schemes designed to foster their 'improvement.'

The return of state capitalism was expanded by the 2015/2016 five-year plan and accelerated under President Magufuli. The plan's fundamental aim is the structural transformation of Tanzania from an agricultural to industrialized society. It reviews the challenges that have dogged Tanzanian industry since independence, and notes that there are 'limited signs of strong development of backward and forward linkages across local manufacturing industries. Moreover, most manufacturing firms have lagged behind the required pace to increase value addition and to diversify their production towards more



advanced/high tech products' (Ministry of Finance and Planning & United Republic of Tanzania, 2016). The plan raises 'concern on the sector's capacity to integrate into and deepen participation in regional and global value chains' due to a number of factors (ibid., p. 10), one of which is an 'infrastructure gap' (ibid., p. 24).<sup>5</sup> Rather than outlining social engineering schemes, the plan discusses voluntary, non-systematic skill-development opportunities for labourers that could enhance their ability to sell their labour power for a wage or supply inputs to an enterprise. These efforts piecemeal programmes that align with the demands of particular industries. Thus, as in the neoliberal heyday, the state does not assert its role in organising labour or producing populations, rather, labourers are expected to respond to opportunities:

[Structural] transformation will have a sizeable and sustainable impact on the reduction of poverty and improvement in quality of life (trickle down) if small-scale farmers and [Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises] are well linked to large-scale enterprises in manufacturing, construction, tourism, and other priority areas of [the plan]. Small-scale farmers and [Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises] should be availed opportunities to supply inputs to industry as well as act as markets for industrial outputs (ibid., p. 38).

The five-year plan also emphasizes expanding electricity generation as the absence of reliable supply is identified as a barrier to industrialization. This builds on the Power System Master Plans (2008, 2012, 2016) aiming to increase Tanzania's capacity from roughly 500MW to over 6000MW in 20 years. Under Kikwete, a mixture of state and private-sector power projects were planned, although, apart from three exceptions, only state-owned projects funded through sovereign concessional finance were built. More recently, President Magufuli abandoned the pursuit of privately-finance electricity plants, seeking to bring the grid entirely under state control and even closing down two corporate power projects. As part of its electrification drive, the government reintroduced dams to Tanzania's development

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<sup>5</sup> The current five-year plan outlines a policy for financing infrastructure projects that significantly enhances the state's regulatory powers and control over capital (ch. 5). The operating principle is that 'commercially viable projects should be left to the private sector,' but non-commercially viable strategic projects will be funded through the mobilization of domestic resources, borrowing and through partnerships between the Tanzanian state and foreign firms and states. These include five 'flagship projects' including the Central Railway Line, the SEZ at Bagamoyo, and a liquefied natural gas plant at Mtwara. Financing of these projects will be undertaken by the Tanzania Investment Bank and the Infrastructure Development Fund. The TIB was recently empowered and capitalized, while the IDF was established with the mandate to pursue the spatial objectives outlined in the five-year plan.

strategy, including the resurrection of the Stiegler's Gorge project. Rubada maintained its existence after the dam at Stiegler's Gorge had been effectively shelved in the early 1990s, and it was instrumental in lobbying for the resurrection of the project, along with the Brazilian government and construction firm Odebrecht (Dye, 2018; 2021). Progress on the dam was made under Magufuli, who renamed it the Julius Nyerere Dam and made it a flagship project despite its tremendous cost and the absence of international funding (Hartmann, 2019).

As discussed above, in its original formulation, the Stiegler's Gorge dam was the turnkey component unlocking total valley transformation that was meant to foster agricultural intensification and industrialisation. While the Tanzanian Government's current plan begins with the same transformation of territory – i.e. a large hydroelectric dam – it is less totalizing. The generated hydropower is not planned for a specific factory or new economic investment but rather the national grid.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, unlike the colonial and post-independence industrialisation and river-valley schemes, the government's objective is limited to the transformation of territory for the purpose of producing hydroelectric power. Whether or not it will be utilized depends on demand in the industrial sector. Relatedly, residents of the valley feature in reports as consulted participants in impact assessments (which deny negative consequences of the project), or as potential casual labour during construction. Unlike its previous iteration, populations will not be produced or improved in transformative social engineering schemes.

## **Conclusion**

Recent years have witnessed a proliferation of large-scale infrastructure projects that link distant sites of resource extraction, agro-industrial frontiers and industrial agglomerations (Schindler & Kanai, 2019). Additionally, the previous decade has witnessed the reworking of the relationship between states and markets – many states have become active participants in markets in an attempt to replicate the success of certain East Asian countries, and also respond to the 2008 financial crisis and ongoing Covid-19 pandemic (EBRD, 2020). In this article, we bridged scholarship on these two phenomena, namely infrastructure-led development and state capitalism. The latter has proliferated but remains ill-defined, and our objective was to contribute to its analytical purchase by responding to

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<sup>6</sup> As evidenced by a report under Kikwete's administration (Odebrecht, 2013) and based on interviews conducted in Dar-es-Salaam with civil servants between 2015-2016.

Alami and Dixon's entreaty to periodize state capitalism and locate its particular instantiations. We did so by comparing the political rationality of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Tanzania with a contemporary manifestation of state capitalism, thereby demonstrating its origins and crucial distinctions.

In both periods, the Tanzanian state played a direct role in the economy. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century colonial officials and postcolonial planners embraced high modernism. The state sought to 'modernize' by undertaking large-scale spatial planning and social engineering schemes in an attempt to produce territory and 'improve' populations. These efforts were coupled - planners hoped that 'modern' territory would incubate an auto-reproducing population of efficient African socialists whose labour would fuel the growth of basic industries. However, as a result of the economic crisis in the late-1970s and neoliberal reforms in the 1980s, the Tanzanian state was forced to desist from both spatial planning and social engineering. These trends were reversed in the mid-2000s under President Jakaya Kikwete when Tanzania's resource-oriented economy was buoyed by the commodity super-cycle. Under the leadership of John Magufuli the Tanzanian state explicitly pursued an agenda of re-industrialization, and its strategy was thoroughly spatialized and included four development corridors, a dam, railway and port investments. Indeed, Tanzania and Kenya were tied for the most new large-scale infrastructure projects in Africa in 2019 (Deloitte, 2019), and many of these were reminiscent of high-modernist schemes from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. However, we demonstrated that contemporary infrastructure-led development is animated by a different political rationality, in which spatial planning and social engineering have been decoupled. Thus, the objective is to transform territory, but rather than 'improve' populations, individuals are expected to recognize the entrepreneurial opportunities afforded by infrastructure projects and self-actualize accordingly. In summary, the political rationality of contemporary state capitalism in Tanzania blends a logic of territorial transformation from the high-modernist period with orthodox neoliberal assumptions surrounding the entrepreneurial nature of individuals.

Tanzanian President John Magufuli passed away in March 2021. It is too early to know how his passing will influence Tanzania's development strategy. Nevertheless, we hasten to note that there is no reason to believe that Tanzanians will acquiesce to the political rationality of Tanzania's state capitalism and use the infrastructure that is being built in the way that planners intend. In fact, there is ample reason to believe that formal infrastructure will be used in a variety of unintended ways (see Jaglin, 2014; Goodfellow 2020), and this

leads us to ask two related questions. First, does state capitalism in Tanzania meet its own developmental objectives? Second, what are its unintended consequences? There are indications that it has already encountered limits. The Tanzanian Government recently blocked the IMF from releasing its annual review of the country's economic outlook. In a leaked copy of the report quoted by the *Financial Times*, the IMF stated that the Tanzanian Government's 'unpredictable and interventionist policies...worsen the investment climate and could lead to meagre growth' (Cotterill, 2019). In the political row that ensued, it became clear that one of the primary disagreements between the Tanzanian Government and the IMF was over government spending on infrastructure. According to Tanzania's Planning and Finance Minister Philip Mpango, the IMF's forecast failed to account for the positive impact that these infrastructure investments would have on the rate of economic growth in the long term (*The Citizen*, 2019). However, the extent to which infrastructure projects will foster conditions that attract investment or encourage domestic entrepreneurialism is largely beyond the control of the Tanzanian state, and attempts to forecast are highly speculative. Regarding unintended consequences, we find it unlikely that spatial planning will activate latent entrepreneurialism in Tanzania. Instead, we find it far more probable that infrastructure projects will result in people being dispossessed of their means of subsistence, while offering the vast majority little in return. These individuals are likely to remain unable to sell their labour-power for a wage (see Sanyal, 2007), and for many the only option available may be to work in the highly precarious construction sector as casual labourers – what Samaddar (2019) refers to as 'transit labour' – and build the very infrastructure that will foster further dispossession.

As we noted in the introduction, our comparative historical analysis was meant to inform – rather than propose – a general theory of state capitalism, and we would expect that in other cases it could exhibit very different political rationalities. However, this case demonstrates that varieties of state capitalism can rest upon a political rationality that is not incompatible with orthodox neoliberal ideology. We conclude by noting that the objectives of governance in Tanzania's neoliberal period have remained intact. Namely, they are to attract foreign direct investment, integrate with global value chains and foster export-oriented growth. Thus, state capitalism represents a change in development strategy, in which elements of the postcolonial period – namely spatial planning and territorial transformation – are resurrected and repurposed in pursuit of longstanding neoliberal objectives. As we have noted, social engineering is absent from Tanzania's contemporary development strategy, but

perhaps more important is the absence of the lofty goals that animated society in the postcolonial period. Indeed, upgrading the agro-food processing sector is a far cry from the fundamental transformation of society advocated by Julius Nyerere. Thus, it would be incorrect to say that the Tanzanian state is a handmaiden of global capital, but it is also difficult to imagine that its embrace of state capitalism will lead to an emancipatory future. Here we find parallels with Peck's (2010, p. 109) analysis of post-crisis reforms in 2010. He argued that neoliberalism's collapse was unlikely, and instead he identified a period of re-regulation whose 'most urgent responses were focused on patching up the system of trickle-up economics.' He noted that financial risk was being socialized, and he anticipated that: '[w]e may be spared, for a time, the hubris of free-market zealots, but the current turmoil may also strengthen the (supposedly "safe") hands of the pragmatists and technocrats—the true inheritors of roll-out neoliberalism' (Peck, 2010, p. 108). This captures recent events in Tanzania, in the sense that the free-market zealots who implemented structural adjustment and neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s have been sidelined by technocrats who are confident in their ability to guide market forces. Their agnosticism towards free-market economics is evident in their willingness to intervene in the fields of spatial planning and industrial policy. However, they have little interest in aligning with (neo-)socialists that would advocate a transformative social agenda. Indeed, Peck noted in 2010 (p. 109) that 'the rationalities of Wall Street and Washington have become sutured together as never before,' and future research should explore how high finance and global development policy are related to national development strategies. In particular, we propose that future research on state capitalism should identify the influence of the finance-development nexus on national development strategies – particularly their spatial objectives – and, as we have done in this article, explore how it manifests in the deployment of political rationalities in particular places.

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