

# Evidence, economics and exclusion: super actors, civil society and citizen debate in the post-MDG paradigm<sup>1</sup>

**Maia Green, May 2013<sup>2</sup>**

International development is being reconfigured. As the MDGs approach their end point, with debatable impact, it is not only the aspirations of development that are under review.<sup>3</sup> The organisational forms and international partnerships through which development is delivered are changing.

New actors and policy paradigms are coming to have greater influence. Philanthropic foundations, global agri-business and international corporations, including those providing specialist development services, are increasingly determining what development is and what the core priorities are for intervention.

This process is underway in a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It has important implications for the ways in which what counts as development comes to be reframed and for the ways in which other stakeholders, including researchers, civil society organisations (CSOs) and ordinary citizens, are able to influence emerging development agendas.

This paper examines the reconfiguration of what counts as development in Tanzania. It shows how the policy prioritisation of a private sector-led 'Green Revolution for Africa' is promoted by a configuration of policy elites, political interests and big business supported by scientific institutions. As 'evidence' and science come to play a key role in legitimating a particular version of social transformation, political debate and poverty focused policymaking risk being pushed to the periphery.

## A new aid paradigm?

Global economic crisis, the influence of new donors, and the rise of China are rapidly creating a context in which the temporary consensus of the MDGs appears to be long since outdated. In sub-Saharan Africa the contribution of Chinese capital and expertise, along with international investments in energy and minerals, are transforming national infrastructures

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on research in Tanzania carried out between February and August 2012 while the author was a senior fellow at a leading policy thinktank, Research on Poverty Alleviation. The views presented here are the author's and do not represent in any way the position of REPOA. Helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper were provided by Marjorie Mbilinyi of the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP), which has conducted wide ranging analyses of the social effects of current economic policy in Tanzania, and from participants in the panel on the Millennium Development Goals organised by Clive Gabay at the 2012 Development Studies Association Annual Meeting in London.

<sup>2</sup> Maia Green is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester. She can be contacted at [maia.green@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:maia.green@manchester.ac.uk). Details of her research interests and publications can be found at <http://manchester.academia.edu/MaiaGreen>

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Poku, N., and J. Whitman. 2011. "The Millennium Development Goals: Challenges and prospects." *Third World Quarterly* 32 (1): 3-8(6); Giffen, J., and B. Pratt. 2012. "Briefing Paper 28: After the MDGs – what then?" Oxford: INTRAC.

and economies as countries such as Tanzania and Uganda embark on their current policy determined paths to achieving middle income status.<sup>4</sup> Despite claims that commitments to core indicators continue to set the development agenda what is evident on the ground in aid recipient countries is the de facto prioritisation of economic growth and the deepening of private sector investment.

The tension between proponents of social investment and advocates of growth represents a longstanding division in the organisation of international development. It has been institutionalised within aid agencies, for example between the PREM division and social development streams inside the World Bank, and outside them, for example between Ministries of Finance and the civil society sector.<sup>5</sup>

The place of civil society in the organisation of development is changing. An emergent aid paradigm is moving away from the previous model in which government and civil society were viewed as primary actors in achieving development as a right of citizens, to one in which development is envisaged as the project of economically empowered individuals who can lift themselves out of poverty.<sup>6</sup>

As the institutional architectures of international development are reorganised around the growth agenda the institutional spaces where different claims about development can be made are getting smaller. The contribution of civil society in this model of development is primarily as a vehicle for monitoring the financial accountability of government agencies and implementing projects for funders,<sup>7</sup> rather than providing a forum for public debate about what kind of development policy is good for citizens, especially the most marginalised, in rural and urban areas.

In this narrowing of what accountability entails, civil society is no longer practically envisaged as the kind of 'public sphere'<sup>8</sup> imagined to be foundational to democratic effectiveness. It is a vehicle through which citizen engagement in monitoring public spending can be organised. This is certainly the case in Tanzania, where a number of high profile NGOs are involved in public accountability activities, including the promotion of special techniques such as Public Expenditure Tracking (PET), created specifically for this purpose.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, new alliances between commercial enterprise, sections of the scientific establishment dealing with technology of various kinds, and large philanthropic foundations are transforming development agendas.<sup>10</sup> These are not distinct institutions. The

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<sup>4</sup> Mohan, G., and M. Power. 2009. "Africa, China and the 'new' economic geography of development." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 30 (1): 1467-9493

<sup>5</sup> For an account of these divisions inside the World Bank see Sand Lie, J. 2011. "Developmentality. The New Aid Architecture and the Formation of Partnership between the World Bank and Uganda." PhD diss., University of Bergen.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Roy, A. 2010. *Poverty capital: Microfinance and the Making of Development*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>7</sup> Swidler, A., and S. Watkins. 2008. "Teach a Man to Fish: The Sustainability Doctrine and Its Social Consequences." *World Development* 37 (7): 1182-1196; Green, M., C. Mercer, and S. Mesaki. 2012. "Faith in Forms: Civil Society Evangelism and Development in Tanzania." *Development in Practice* 22 (5&6): 721-734.

<sup>8</sup> The idea of the 'public sphere' in relation to the creation of democracy derives from the writings of the German philosopher Jurgen Habermas. The idea of civil society as effecting a public sphere as interstitial between family and the state has been extremely influential in development informing much of the governance theory and related policy interventions centering on concepts of civil society which have dominated programming since the end of the Cold War. For an overview see Green 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Such as the NGO Policy Forum and Twaweza!

<sup>10</sup> Edwards, R. 2013. "The Philanthrocrats: Doing good at a price." *The Africa Report* No 47, Feb 13. Accessed 2 April 2013. [www.theafricareport.com/North-Africa/the-philanthrocrats-doing-good-at-a-price.html](http://www.theafricareport.com/North-Africa/the-philanthrocrats-doing-good-at-a-price.html)

philanthropic bodies active in development are funded and established by global businesses and committed to particular technologically informed visions of development legitimated through evidence and science.

The influence of the United States is prominent in such endeavours. Jeffrey Sachs' Millennium Village Project, an alliance of big science, elite universities and philanthropic funding, is a paradigmatic example of this new kind of super actor in development. These philanthropic super actors are not accountable to political constituencies in their countries of origin or internationally. They are politically important in changing the rules of the game in which development policy comes to be established as credible. They gain power through elite networking, investments in the production of development knowledge, and the dissemination of policy positions presented as rationally cost effective and self-evident.

These shifts in the organisation of development have far-reaching implications for the trajectory of social and economic development in many countries and for the role and reach of the civil society sector. In situating development in the domain of 'science' which represents itself as politically disinterested, they position development outside politics as the field of particular kinds of specialist expertise. In presenting development as an issue of individual economic empowerment it appears not as the outcome of political strategy determined through citizen debate but as a consequence of economic freedom.<sup>11</sup>

Such tendencies are not new.<sup>12</sup> The extent to which they are consolidated by the emerging architectures of development is, however, unprecedented. The changing organisation of development internationally entails the realignment of various stakeholders, including the private sector, research organisations and civil society while restructuring the spaces in which ideas about what constitutes development can be contested. The remainder of this paper considers how this process is being played out in Tanzania.

## The politics of growth in Tanzania

Tanzania was one of the first countries to embark on the PRSP process. It is now in the middle of its third phase of implementation of its National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty. The PRS, known by its Kiswahili acronym, MKUKUTA, prioritises original MDG indicators within a framework of sound macroeconomic management and good governance benchmarks. The current MKUKUTA retains a focus on social sector outcomes as in the original PRS but has a greater emphasis on growth. Creation of an enabling environment for foreign investment is a priority.

The push for growth in Tanzania, as in neighbouring Uganda, is partly the outcome of long-term disillusionment among policy elites with the domination of the social development agenda and low levels of investment in productive capabilities.<sup>13</sup> It is also a response to the continent's changed positioning as a zone of economic opportunity in terms of availability of raw materials and expanding consumer markets.

<sup>11</sup> For an account of how De Soto's ideas come to have prominence in development and in Peru, see Mitchell, T. 2005. "The work of economics, how a discipline makes its world." *European Journal of Sociology* 46 (2): 297

<sup>12</sup> See Ferguson's classic analysis of development (Ferguson, J. 1990. *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press) and, more recently, Murray Li, T. 2007. *The Will To Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press).

<sup>13</sup> Hickey, S. 2013. "Beyond the Poverty Agenda? Insights from the New Politics of Development in Uganda." *World Development* 43: 194-206.

Although development assistance continues to provide some thirty three per cent of government spending Tanzania,<sup>14</sup> the changed context of economic opportunity opens up a range of policy solutions which are perceived by leadership to be nationally relevant in enabling the country to accelerate economic development. In 2011 the Government of Tanzania revived the institution of the Five Year National Development Plan.<sup>15</sup> With clear priorities for moving the country into a middle income status<sup>16</sup> by 2025 the plan sets out Tanzania's claim to ownership and authorship of its national development agenda.

Although described by policy technocrats in Tanzania as the means through which to operationalize the poverty reduction strategy, the plan as a policy instrument, managed by a strengthened Planning Commission situated in the Office of the President, takes practical precedence over the PRS managed through the Poverty Eradication Division in the Ministry of Finance. The significance of the poverty reduction strategy is fast becoming a formality.

This move away from the Ministry of Finance associated with donor conditionalities accentuated through basket funding can be interpreted as a claim for enhanced sovereignty in policy making which also has the potential to lead to the design of contextually informed strategies.<sup>17</sup> This has yet to happen. The Tanzania Five Year Development Plan 2011-2016 reiterates standard policy prescriptions for accelerating economic growth in Africa. The path to growth has the highest levels of political support. President Jakaya Kikwete, elected in 2005, has taken a consistent lead in promoting the growth agenda.<sup>18</sup> This is legitimated by a number of reports produced by or in conjunction with agencies such as the World Bank. The orientation of these studies and the interventions they support is indicated by titles such as 'Waking the Sleeping Giant'<sup>19</sup> and 'Stairways to Heaven...'<sup>20</sup>

## Waking the sleeping giant

Proponents of the growth agenda present Tanzania as a land of opportunity with the potential for rapid economic development. Moreover, as the majority of farmers are poor and growth is slower in agriculture than in other sectors, agricultural transformation will lead to the reduction of poverty.<sup>21</sup> Achieving economic development through agricultural growth is presented as relatively straightforward. Land is underutilised and irrigation potential is untapped. If Tanzania could modernise its agricultural sector through intensive farming and extensive irrigation it could embark on an assured transition to prosperity. In order to generate agricultural productivity underutilised resources must be brought into production.

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<sup>14</sup> Figures for 2010-11 from the Development Partners Group, [www.tzpg.or.tz](http://www.tzpg.or.tz)

<sup>15</sup> United Republic of Tanzania 2011.

<sup>16</sup> On the aspiration for middle income, see Moyo, M., R. Simson, A. Jacob, and F. de Mevius. 2012. "Attaining Middle Income Status. Tanzania. Growth and Structural Transformation Required to Reach Middle Income Status by 2025." London: International Growth Centre.

<sup>17</sup> Harrison, G. 2002. "Post-Conditionality Politics and Administrative Reform: Reflections on the Cases of Uganda and Tanzania." *Development and Change* 32: 657–679.

<sup>18</sup> Therkilsden, O. 2011. "Policy Making and Implementation in Agriculture: Tanzania's Push for Irrigated Rice", DIIS Working Paper 26. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies

<sup>19</sup> Binswanger-Mkhize, H., and M. Gautam. 2010. "Towards an Internationally Competitive Tanzanian Agriculture, A World Bank Draft Report." Paper presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Research Conference of REPOA, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

<sup>20</sup> World Bank. 2012. "Stairways to Heaven: Tanzania Economic Update Issue 1." Washington DC: Africa Region Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit, World Bank.

<sup>21</sup> Mkenda, A., E. Luvanda, and R. Ruhinduka. 2010. "Growth and Distribution in Tanzania. Recent Experience and Lessons." Report for REPOA, Dar es Salaam.

Irrigation, access to credit, investments in infrastructure and technology will transform Tanzanian agriculture into modern farming.

Responsibility for growth does not rest solely with small farmers awaiting transformation from subsistence cultivators into agricultural entrepreneurs. The private sector has a lead role to play in agricultural transformation, including the promotion of international business investments in Tanzania. Given the kinds of coalitions now setting development agendas internationally, it is not surprising that a core component of the new approach to development in Tanzania involving the creation of regional growth corridors was announced by President Kikwete at a Global Economic Forum meeting held in Tanzania in 2010.

The symbolism of Davos in Africa sends a clear message that Africa is a destination for those seeking sure returns on capital while cloaking speculation in the garb of social responsibility. It is indicative of how big business is seeking to influence the direction of economic and social development across the continent. Significantly, alliances within the growth corridor initiative include new development coalitions of foundations, elite universities, donor organisations and the private sector.<sup>22</sup>

Development, not just in Tanzania, is effectively reframed from a problem of poverty caused by multiple factors, including social and political systems, to a problem of access to employment, unproductive farming techniques and constraints on enterprise which are represented as blockages on the road to middle income status. Consequently, addressing unemployment becomes a core area of the development plan and a new focus of activity for Tanzanian policy research centres.

The National Development Plan does not represent a totally new approach to development in Tanzania. Its primary significance is political in marking the move away from social sector constitutions of development which previously dominated donor, and hence national, agendas. The Plan aggregates existing programmes and approaches into a unified strategy. These include the various agriculture sector development programmes devised over the previous decade, the Tanzania Mini Tiger Plan 2005, the Development Vision Twenty Twenty-five (under revision) and the President's personal policy priority, Kilimo Kwanza, the Agriculture First initiative which calls for a Green Revolution in Tanzania.

The call for a Green Revolution is not simply about new agricultural methods and crop mixes. It is part of a far more ambitious project to resituate Tanzanian farming within global agribusiness.<sup>23</sup> This project is not confined to Tanzania.<sup>24</sup> Efforts to commercialise African agriculture through Green Revolution proprietary technologies, foreign direct investment in large scale farming, and the African Union's Abuja declaration on the uptake of fertiliser are all part of this endeavour.

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<sup>22</sup> According to the Southern Agricultural Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) investment blueprint document (2011), the Kilimo Kwanza Growth Corridors Initiative, of which SAGCOT is one, "is an international public-private partnership launched at the World Economic Forum on Africa in May 2010 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Its mandate is to mobilise private sector investments and partnership to help achieve the goals of Tanzania's Kilimo Kwanza strategy. By catalysing large volumes of responsible private investment, the initiative aims to deliver rapid and sustainable agricultural growth, with major benefits for food security, poverty reduction and reduced vulnerability to climate change. Members of the partnership represent government, global business, the Tanzanian private sector, farmers, foundations and donor institutions. It is led by an Executive Committee co-chaired by the Minister of Agriculture of Tanzania; and the Executive Vice President (North and Central Africa) of Unilever."

<sup>23</sup> For a critical overview of recent agricultural policy in Tanzania, see Mbilinyi, M. 2012. "Struggles over Land and Livelihoods in African Agriculture." *Development (London)* 55 (3): 390–392.

<sup>24</sup> Thompson, C. 2012. "Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA): Advancing the Theft of African Genetic Wealth." *Review of African Political Economy* 39 (132): 345–350.

# A Green Revolution in Tanzania

Kilimo Kwanza is not an agricultural development programme but a call to prioritise agricultural development across all sectors and government departments. Announced in 2009, four years into President Kikwete's first term, it comprises a number of priority actions rather than a detailed strategy. It is intended to commercialise agricultural production in Tanzania and to change incentives for farmers. As with the National Development Plan, the political aspirations of the initiative are more important than its individual components. These are to foster an assertive private sector approach to development and to politicise agricultural modernisation.

Kilimo Kwanza legitimates large scale interventions involving multinational corporations and development partners such as the Southern Tanzania Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT).<sup>25</sup> It gives a lead role to the private sector in accelerating agricultural development through commercially oriented farming and the distribution of technologies and inputs.

What are claimed as technological revolutions in agriculture are never solely about crops and farming practices. The success or otherwise of such interventions hinges on relations between farmers and technology, between farmers and farm labour, and between farmers and access to land on which to farm.<sup>26</sup> The implementation of Kilimo Kwanza envisages a wider set of revolutionary changes, not only in the relations between people and agricultural technologies, but in the relations between state and citizens, and between citizens as they reorient social organisation for profit.

As research by several Tanzanian CSOs, including Haki Ardhi, Action Aid, and TGNP, has shown, agriculture sector reform impacts on relations not only between neighbours but between members of the same households, as control over productive resources is contested. Gender relations are particularly affected by this transition.<sup>27</sup> Women producers in both cultivating and pastoralist communities represent a major barrier to neoliberal 'rural transformation' and the goals of agroindustry.<sup>28</sup>

## Marketing reform as personal responsibility

Tanzania's Green Revolution is situated within a portfolio of land tenure reforms, in the formalisation of economic relations, and in the literal construction of rural markets throughout the country intended to enable market liberalisation.<sup>29</sup> This mapping of the relations between

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<sup>25</sup> SAGCOT Investment Blueprint. 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Bray, F. 1983. "Patterns of Evolution in Rice Growing Societies." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 11 (1): 3-33.

<sup>27</sup> See the reports of participatory action research and other analyses carried out by the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP), one of the few organisations in Tanzania examining the social impacts of agricultural sector policies, including TGNP 2010, 2011 and 2012; along with the work of HakiArdhi, Action Aid Tanzania and Oxfam to expose land grabbing, biofuel production and its negative consequences for the livelihoods of rural communities in Tanzania.. For an overview of land grabbing in relation to biofuels, see Chachage, C., and Baha. 2011. "Accumulation by Land Dispossession and Labour Devaluation in Tanzania The case of biofuels and forestry investments in Kiliwa and Kilolo." Dar es Salaam: Land Rights Research and Resources Institute.

<sup>28</sup> Mbilinyi 2012; Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP). 2012. "Contextual Analysis on Land, Employment and Livelihoods." Report prepared by Ng'wanza Kamata. Dar es Salaam: TGNP.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Cooksey, B. 2003. "Marketing Reforms? The Rise and Fall of Agricultural Liberalisation in Tanzania." *Development Policy Review* 21 (1): 67-91; Lysons, M., and T. Msoka. 2010. "The World Bank and the Street: (How) Do 'Doing Business' Reforms Affect Tanzania's Micro Traders?" *Urban Studies* 47 (5): 1079-1097; and Skarstein, R. 2010. "Smallholder Agriculture in Tanzania: Can Economic Liberalisation Keep its Promises?" In

institutional reform, productivity and economic behaviour which informs Kilimo Kwanza and the five year plan is not derived from an analysis of actual agricultural practices and economic institutions in rural Africa; it is taken straight from the abstract texts of economics.<sup>30</sup>

Whether restructuring rural economic relations will have a major impact on the productivity of agriculture in Tanzania is open to question. For the majority of Tanzanians living in rural areas and who earn the bulk of their income from agriculture supplemented with the sale of labour and small-scale trade,<sup>31</sup> Kilimo Kwanza is experienced through engagement with district agricultural development programmes which have attempted to enhance the productivity of small farming through the distribution of tractors, power tillers and improved livestock; support to irrigation projects; the distribution of vouchers for Green Revolution packages of subsidised fertilizer and seeds; and the rehabilitation or construction of rural market buildings and feeder roads.<sup>32</sup>

The impacts of these investments are uncertain. The private sector of agro dealers has to be created through state incentives and training packages. Market buildings are underutilised. Power tillers prove unsuitable for heavy use and investments in 'improved' livestock are often unsustainable in practice. Irrigation schemes devised as technical projects soon run into the social obstacles of organising operation and maintenance and water rights which were inadequately addressed in the design.<sup>33</sup> Market relations are certainly restructuring access to land which can be bought and sold, often without a person with established use rights being aware of it. Land conflicts are reported daily in the national press. Disputes between agriculturalists and pastoralists are on the increase. Small farmers are not using the market in land to create bigger, more productive, holdings.

The massively popular savings and loan groups which have been so successfully promoted by the NGO sector<sup>34</sup> are taking off not so much because they enable integration into the financial inclusion which will precede market integration, but because they offer a means of controlling money – enabling safeguarding from kin and returns on saving.<sup>35</sup> Here, as in other countries, small loans are commonly sought to deal with family crises, pay for school costs and medical treatment, as well as subsidising rather than expanding micro-enterprise.<sup>36</sup>

The continued underperformance of the agricultural sector is likely to be blamed on the unwillingness to change of small farmers and their alleged resistance to modern agriculture. In the longer term this discourse about the traditional 'mindset' of the small farmer will legitimate the future involvement of agribusiness seeking to convert small farmers into farm

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*Tanzania in Transition: From Nyerere to Mkapa*, edited by K. Havnevik and A. Isinka, 99-130. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki Na Nyota.

<sup>30</sup> For accounts of economic strategies in rural Africa see Berry, S. 1993. *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press; and Guyer, J. 2004. *Marginal Gains. Monetary Transactions in Atlantic Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>31</sup> Bryceson, D. 2002. "Multiplex livelihoods in rural Africa: recasting the terms and conditions of gainful employment." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40 (1): 1-28.

<sup>32</sup> For an overview of the main interventions in the agriculture sector, see Cooksey, B. 2012. "Politics, Patrons and Projects: The Political Economy of Agricultural Policy in Tanzania", Future Agricultures Programme Working Paper 40. Brighton: Future Agricultures Consortium.

<sup>33</sup> See Therkilsden 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Hendricks, L., and S. Chidiac. 2011. "Village Savings and Loans: A Pathway to Financial Inclusion for Africa's Poorest Households." *Economic Development and Microfinance* 22 (2): 134-146.

<sup>35</sup> Ambec, S., and N. Treich. 2007. "Roscas as Financial Agreements to Cope With Self Control Problems." *Journal of Development Economics* 82 (1): 120-137.

<sup>36</sup> Anyango, E, Esipisu, E, Opoku, L, Johnson, S, Markuu M and Musoke, C. 2007. "Village Savings and Loan Associations: Experience from Zanzibar." *Small Enterprise Development* 18 (1): 11-24.

labour, the kind of transformation envisaged as positive in SACGOT documents and in the national strategies which call for greater opportunities for rural employment.

The idea of personal responsibility and the claimed need to 'sensitise' small farmers to entrepreneurial thinking shifts responsibility for poverty and lack of growth away from the planners and implementers of development interventions, to the supposed beneficiaries. These kinds of ideas about responsibility for development, heavily promoted through the World Bank, are increasingly taken for granted in development programming internationally.<sup>37</sup> They are enshrined in the third iteration of the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), which features conditional cash transfers and public works as instruments intended to generate value added from the personal transformation of its largely female beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are required to attend seminars to educate them about saving in groups and small enterprise as the means to 'graduate' from poverty.

Such interventions are optimistic, not because poor people do not think entrepreneurially, but because structural constraints limit the kinds of returns achievable from the investments they are likely to make. As Banerjee and Duflo have shown in their comparative analysis of the economics of micro-enterprise in poor communities, competition, low demand and limited stock on offer restrict the returns which are possible. Numerous small-scale traders sell the same few items in the same area to the same limited number of potential consumers.<sup>38</sup>

## Evidence and policy influence in the new development order

Despite the massive ongoing investments intended to bring Tanzania into institutional alignment with the theoretical architecture of a textbook 'modern' economy,<sup>39</sup> the cause and effect linkages predicted by textbook economics have yet to come into being. Analyses based on the careful study of economics in poor communities suggest that the interventions currently being promoted in sub-Saharan Africa are unlikely to have the kinds of outcomes claimed in the policy narratives which support them.

Ole Therkildsen has shown how failure to establish effective organisational basis for managing irrigation schemes and access to water rights threatens the viability of recent investments in irrigation (2011). Investments in stall-fed dairy cattle as part of district agriculture programmes prove unsustainable without adequate attention to establishing local demand for dairy products.<sup>40</sup> The transformative effects envisaged for productive investments and private sector development in the Tanzanian agriculture sector stand to fail in the absence of the far reaching institutional changes required for their success.

Many of these approaches – to agricultural modernisation, Green Revolution approaches, and access to credit – have been tried several times over the years with similar effects in

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<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Molyneux, M. 2006. "Mothers at the Service of the New Poverty Agenda." *Social Policy and Administration* 40 (4): 339-473; Molyneux, M. 2008. "The Neoliberal Turn and the New Social Policy in Latin America: How Neoliberal, How New?" *Development and Change* 39 (5): 775-797; and Green, M. 2012b. "Anticipatory Development. Mobilizing Civil Society in Tanzania." *Critique of Anthropology* 32 (3): 309-333.

<sup>38</sup> Banerjee, A and Duflo, E 2011 *Poor Economics. A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. New York: Public Affairs.

<sup>39</sup> For the template of agricultural development, see World Bank. 2008. "Agriculture for Development, World Development Report." Washington, DC, World Bank..

<sup>40</sup> Green, M. 2013. "Understanding the Process of Economic Change. Technology and Opportunity in Rural Tanzania." Paper presented at REPOA's 18th Annual Research Workshop Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 3-4 April 2013.



Africa and elsewhere.<sup>41</sup> Nothing in this unfolding scenario is particularly unexpected. What is unexpected is the extent to which the current version of market orthodoxy as magic bullet is becoming effectively unchallengeable within the new development order.

Policy research is central to the organisation of development. In Tanzania the research institutes tasked with providing the evidence base that justifies policy interventions are reorganising their work to support the dual demands of the policy lead of economics and the current donor push for the instrumental use of evidence modelled on the natural sciences.

As the poverty reduction strategy gives way to the national plan, work on poverty and poverty monitoring is superseded by studies on topics deemed relevant to the growth for middle income agenda, including employment, financial services and productivity. In 2012 the country's leading poverty research institute, Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), rebranded itself as an institute undertaking Policy Research For Development.

Economic policy in Tanzania is formulated by a close knit group of economists with strong links to government, the World Bank and to each other. The same small group of influential economists working across government, donor organisations and research institutes not only designs Tanzania's economic policies; it also presents the analyses which justify them.

The dominance of economics and economists is well established in development policy worlds, within and beyond Tanzania. As potentially alternative sources of development research come to pursue an increasingly narrowly economic agenda the possibilities for the critical appraisal of current paradigms is restricted. As recent studies of agriculture programmes in Tanzania have shown, inadequate attention to the social contexts in which policies are supposed to work and to the strength of political interests clamouring for implementation underlies the design of costly and ineffective interventions.<sup>42</sup>

Quantitative methodologies, randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews are now advocated by donors, including DFID, as optimal methods for assessing the effectiveness of specific interventions. Such approaches are claimed to have a scientific validity where value for money in relation to impact comes to be the critical factor in selecting policy options.

This move has a number of effects. It delegitimises other approaches to policy research which are deemed to be less rigorous and therefore not adequately 'scientific'. It perpetuates the idea that development outcomes are a matter of science in which politics is not important. And it justifies the classification of alternative views as 'political' and thus destabilising because they are not informed by 'science'.

CSOs such as the NGO Policy Forum and Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) which, like the policy research institutes, rely on donor funding not only find themselves constrained in what they can address through requirements to conform to new instruments for monitoring outcomes and impacts. In presenting visions of development informed by engagement in rural areas which do not conform to the dominant paradigm they can find themselves categorised as 'activist' purveyors of political positions, in contrast to supposedly scientifically disinterested development initiatives promoted by government and donors.

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<sup>41</sup> Fairhead, J., and M. Leach. 2005. "The Centrality of the Social in African Farming." *IDS Bulletin* 36 (2), 86-90.

<sup>42</sup> See Cooksey 2012; and Therikilsden 2011.

## Civil society and the changing development paradigm

These trends are not restricted to Tanzania. Current development paradigms which promote scientific approaches to development as a technical project and which aim to contract civil society as a vehicle for monitoring the financial accountability of development interventions demand critical reflection and the space in which their core assumptions can be tested.

The problematic constitution of what international development agencies recognise as civil society in much of the global South consolidates the new development architectures by default in consenting to the narrow role as watchdog of accountability. This positioning is partly determined by the need to secure funding in the absence of sustainable support from specific local and national constituencies. It is reinforced by the substantial institutional and financial incentives to present development as essentially the responsibility of specialist organisations which can sensitise individuals to live their lives better and make governments more accountable.

The extent to which CSOs financed by development organisations can provide a space in which development can be questioned is increasingly limited and has to be fought for. This role is fundamental where other opportunities for debate are shrinking and the terms of what is debatable are coming to be more narrowly defined.

As CSOs well know from their work with the poor and marginalised, bringing about positive social change which has benefits for the most poor is not an automatic consequence of technology or financial inclusion. It is a political endeavour. As what can be legitimately financed as development research prioritises instrumentality as the core criterion of relevance, and hence of value for money and impact, new alliances between development actors and researchers will need to be negotiated across institutional contexts which enable more open ended thinking about the politics of development practice.

Knowledge in development, including that represented as science, is a form of political action. We can choose to accept the truths proposed in the new paradigm or we can question them. As the space for research and debate within development gets smaller both researchers and civil society actors have to face up to our political responsibilities by ensuring that policy truths are always questioned and that good research informs rather than stifles vigorous debate.

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