From the global to the local? Governance and development at the local level: reflections from Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Governance reform practice has mostly focused on building up and transforming central state institutions. Furthermore, the politics of aid has often constructed a very 'introverted' politics based in large cities. This article explores the means through which governance ideas are implemented outside this 'governance realm', by looking at the ways in which the Lushoto District government in Tanzania has mediated a range of policy changes that have emanated from the state/donor centre. Identifying three distinct but inter-related repertoires of political practice, it argues that governance at the local level has been largely about financial management, and that this aspect of reform is in tension with local developmentalism and is more starkly opposed to local veranda politics.

UNDERSTANDING GOVERNANCE

Central aspects of governance policy suffer from a contradiction. Governance reform expresses a bold project of social engineering, based on a holistic vision in which all aspects of social life (within the state, the market, cultural relations and the family) are rendered akin to the free-market model (Harrison 2004b, 2005). But this project is constituted in a highly centralised and statist fashion, with little consideration as to how reforms might be realised within the complex and diverse societies that collectively make up most post-colonial African nations. This article

is interested in the fortunes of the governance agenda in Africa, in terms of its realisation in policies that potentially have an impact throughout a country, encompassing a diversity of localities within a national space.

Governance reform requires us to look not solely at abstractions regarding the meaning of governance, but also at its practice. One of the main programmes to realise governance reform has been the Public Sector Reform (PSR). In Uganda and Tanzania, PSR has attracted considerable amounts of external credit, grants and technical assistance (Harrison 2004a). These external resources have gone a long way to producing programmes that have as their overall aim a complete reconstruction of the state, based on a range of assumed complementarities between the state and society. And yet, the policy documents for the programmes in both countries give no clue as to how they might be 'rolled out' or 'embedded' within society. This is highly significant, bearing in mind the problematic relations that post-colonial states have maintained with their citizenries.[1]

Furthermore, when interviewing government and donor personnel, it became clear that governance reform was in essence a conversation produced by a restricted group of people who had attained a significant degree of 'enclosure' – a 'pocket' of ownership (cf. Evans & Ngalewa 2003): perhaps a governance realm underpinned by resource inputs and new intellectual fashions. This 'realm' does not sit well with the broader normative thrust of the governance agenda, which has become increasingly 'inclusive' and expansive (Craig & Porter 2003), relying on terms such as ownership, participation and accountability. The implication of governance is that a *sine qua non* of its effective realisation is a broad civic constituency of support (Williams 1999). If elites matter, it is only inasmuch as they either engage with, mobilise or create broader liberal bases of support for reform. Within its own terms, it is an oxymoron to speak of top-down governance reform.

It is this context that makes the recent donor commitment to local government reform (LGR) interesting. Unlike the other main axes of governance reform – financial management, civil service reform, parliamentary reform/capacity building, data management, etc. – LGR brings the governance agenda closer to more substantive issues of implementation in the locality. It requires reform-makers and implementers to imagine how the state will act and interact with societies at the 'local' level. In this context, 'local' simply refers to interactions outside the governance realm, and as such is a political construct that betrays the centralised nature of much reform practice.

And so it is within the emerging literature on LGR and governance that we begin to see more explicit formulations of the state–citizen interface and local state politics, beginning to construct clearer expectations of governance reform as a widespread and socially embedded phenomenon. The key premise behind LGR is that by localising governance reforms, citizens will identify with their purposes and consequently contribute to the progressive transformation of the local state. In a phrase: 'sub-national governments are said to be closer to the people, have good access to local information and understand the local context well' (Smoke 2003: 9).

Let us break this down a little further with reference to Tanzania – our case study and a country that has taken on and to some extent integrated governance and local government reform. The governance/LGR matrix encapsulates four processes.[2]

1. By making local government more open and transparent, local authorities and their decisions will become more legitimate (PORALG 2000).
2. As a result of the above, local groups will be more likely to support local government (PORALG 2000).
3. By devolving power to the local level, local societies will feel more disposed to engage positively with the state (Ngwilizi 2002: 6, 15).
4. As a result of the above, local government will be subjected to checks and balances emanating from local interest groups and organisations, making it more accountable (Mushi & Melyoki n.d.: 1; Ngwilizi 2002: 21; World Bank 2004b: 2).

It is largely through LGR that we can tease out the kinds of expectations that advocates of governance reform have with regard to the latter's prospects outside the governance realm of donors, workshops and air-conditioners. In other words, it enables us to focus centrally on the ways in which governance reform relates to social relations beyond the realm of donor and high state officials.

A GOVERNANCE REALM IN TANZANIA

Tanzania presents a country case study in which a range of governance reforms have been pursued with strong donor backing and a relatively high degree of central government (GoT) support (Harrison & Mulley 2008). This is especially the case from 1995 onwards, when donors and key parts of the government elite recognised that a disposition had been attained within which donors and the GoT had constructed a common reform agenda (Helleiner et al. 1995; Helleiner 1999). From the mid-1990s,

the GoT has implemented new systems of transparency (financial management, data management, expenditure tracking), public sector management (Public Sector Reform Programme), participation by the private sector (privatisation and contracting out) and new codes and procedures related to good governance (Ethics Secretariat, Codes of Ethics, Prevention of Corruption Bureau). Additionally, as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process, Tanzania has undertaken two rounds of consultation with Tanzanian 'stakeholders' regarding general policy development. All of these reforms have contributed to the prosecution of the governance agenda at the central level, implemented against a backdrop of (relative) political stability[3] with prominent high-level support, making Tanzania a 'good reformer' in most international perceptions.[4]

Tanzania has indeed made a remarkable political journey over the last decade. It is now on its second PRSP (created in 2005 and known by its kiSwahili acronym MKUKUTA). As a result, Tanzania is intensively researched, and the downtown areas of Dar es Salaam are busy with consultants, researchers and donors. It is easy to be seduced by the profusion of programmes, infusion of donor money and the hubris of meetings, workshops and social networks. Interviews in 2000 and 2001 revealed that the perceived success of Tanzania's governance reforms was intimately intertwined with the construction of a quite closed and integrated governance realm, in which a certain kind of discourse – underpinned by substantial flows of resources – allowed for a high degree of 'self-referentiality' within what Gould (2005: 63; Gould & Ojanen 2003) aptly describes as a 'transnational aid domain'. By this, Gould means that programmes each employed similar terms as objectives and justifications, and that specific policies were articulated through similar procedures, especially logical frameworks and SWOTs.[5]

Within this governance realm, it is often unclear to what extent specific reforms impact on their target populations, or the Tanzanian people in general; and importantly for this article, how reforms affect governance outside the central state. This point needs some conceptual elaboration.

Perhaps one of the most fruitful approaches emerges from a fairly new collection of writings within development ethnography and critical anthropology. A good example of this is Maia Green's (2003) study of project management in Tanzania, in which the workshop constitutes the cradle for a 'manageable' development practice, which relies not on profound considerations of success or failure, but rather on the *facility* of ongoing practices and especially their conformity to global standardised

models. Interestingly, she refers specifically to the LGRP: 'Financed largely by multilateral and bilateral donors and designed by international audit consultancy, [it] essentially comprises a series of workshops through which local authorities are expected not merely to reform themselves, but to attain appropriate levels of competency for programme implementation' (*ibid.*: 134). More generally, in the work on David Mosse (2005; Mosse & Lewis 2005) and others, ethnographies of professional development communities reveal how strongly issues of management and process influence the construction of acceptable understandings of development practice. Uma Kothari (2005) describes how the profession of development practitioners has constructed a way of seeing and processing knowledge, and generally 'ordering' development, in ways which leave little space for 'outsiders' to influence development reform. This approach highlights how orthodox issues of policy success, learning and implementation constitute a governance realm in which procedures and languages are maintained within an integrated and introspective (transnational) development community.[6] These writers suggest that – as with any development policy or programme – governance reform has, in a sense, become its own *raison d'être*. Its impacts outside its own social and cognitive horizons may not be entirely disregarded, but they are not pivotal. In fact, perceived project failure might smoothly trigger commonly accepted procedures of review, which integrate very easily into the existing discourse and practice.

This approach is attractive because it engages with a remarkable social development that has taken place in states like Tanzania, in which government elites who are highly dependent on external sources of revenue develop close relationships with a range of donors and creditors, in the process ostensibly internalising a very powerful global ideology of development policy.[7] By highlighting the self-referential nature of this construction, our attention is drawn to the issue of what governance means for Tanzanian citizens in their specific localities in their encounters with the state, and how the state is changing at the local level as governance reform is 'rolled out' through decentralisation (cf. Peck & Tickell 2002).

It is important to understand the dynamics that shape bureaucracies that interact directly with citizens in specific locales, often under severe resource constraints.[8] These are precisely the conditions within which LGR is being carried out in Tanzania. This line of enquiry also fits well with the kind of critical anthropology just considered, because it gives us a heuristic distinction between abstract or centralised reform agendas, and the negotiations within public institutions that take place at the local level

in order for them to 'make sense' in specific places. Consider the following passage (Mosse 2005: 79):

[This approach] explores the participatory planning work that took this project from a 'design fiction' to a set of plans and actions … My first focus is on Community Organisers in 'the field'. These are the project's 'street level bureaucrats' left to negotiate the relationship between the project and its villager-beneficiaries.

This excerpt highlights the issue well: how do policy initiatives produced within a centralised 'governance realm' (design fictions) then become mediated and in some sense implemented by officials and politicians at the local or 'street level'?

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM IN LUSHOTO

Lushoto is located in Tanga region, a day's travel from Dar es Salaam. Although not an especially remote District compared with those in the centre and south of the country, it raises issues that are common to the districts more generally: concerns about (perceived) remoteness, a desire by some to tap in to resources that are retained at the Centre, a desire by the young to migrate out to the regional capital or to Dar, and a fluid sense of Lushoto's intrinsic identity within a broader nation.[9] Any generic policy innovation which aims at 'the local' must necessarily negotiate this set of relationships between the central state and the districts, or as I have formulated it, between the realm of governance and the street level.

The importance of this was directly apparent at the start of fieldwork. Speaking to people in kiSwahili, largely with a research assistant,[10] one of the preliminary tasks to negotiate was how to define 'good governance' in a vernacular suitable for Lushoto.[11] A few of the people we interviewed used the term 'governance' as part of their kiSwahili, and some preferred to speak in English, but the majority of interviews involved a period of conversation in which we explained what we were interested in before coming to a workable understanding of governance reforms, which were commonly denoted as *maboresho* (cf. Mushi & Melyoki n.d.: 19). This kiSwahili word loosely means 'improvement' (stemming from *bora*, meaning good). The phrase emerged during interviews as the nearest synonym that we could establish for the profoundly Anglo-American term 'good government'. *Maboresho* might connote a general improvement or progressive reform in local government; it attached itself to a variety of instances of reform, for example the Local Government Reform Programme, Universal Primary Education, the Tanzania Social Action

Fund or various capacity building programmes. The term represented a generally held sensibility amongst the District elite[12] that the local political milieu had changed as a result of a series of recent and interconnected central initiatives, and that this change had generally led to a period of intense reform activity and a perceived improvement in the District's politics.

But the generally positive views that the District elite held of the period from 2000 did not straightforwardly lead to a sketch of successful reform implementation. Nor did it imply that the kinds of state–citizen interaction projected within the text of reform documentation were being realised. Rather, *maboresho* – rather like the articulation of the word itself – encapsulated a localised negotiation of external initiatives.

The rest of this section outlines a characterisation of *maboresho* in Lushoto. This form of politics is crucially underpinned by an infusion of resources from external sources: the Ministry of Finance, line ministries and international donors. These resources take the form of financial transfers, investment in infrastructure and a range of training packages which often involve workshops in the regional capital city, or in Dar es Salaam.

Local governance

The politics of good governance in Lushoto is principally concerned with the development of new resource management mechanisms to allow the District government to allocate resources more transparently. Large amounts of resources need to be managed by the local administration (for example the primary and secondary education projects). New planning and financial protocols which integrate with previously established national reforms need to be embedded (for example, District Development Plans integrated into Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks via the Integrated Financial Management System, the introduction of Planrep, a new planning and reporting tool) and new infrastructures in information generation and management need to be created (for example, preparations for Platinum/Epicor software system, and small projects of Rapid Rural Appraisal). An Annual Performance Assessment System is being rolled out in the districts during 2006 (World Bank 2004a).

It is not possible to estimate the extent to which the governance agenda has led to an increase in resource allocation to the District, because the flows to the District level are extremely complex, working through a variety of channels which are not integrated. There is a range of direct transfers from the Ministry of Finance (capital development, recurrent

expenditure, and various discretionary/incentivised transfers), as well as transfers from line ministries directly to District departments (for example, in health and education) (World Bank 2004a: 55). The latter may involve high levels of donor financing through basket funds. There are also a range of INGO transfers which may or may not go through the district government offices. District accounts do show, however, that there has been an overall increase in revenue – largely from Central subventions – from 2000 to 2002, and there is every reason to expect that this increase has persisted to the present day, as 2002 was the year in which Lushoto was formally integrated into the LGRP (Lushoto DC n.d.: 7).[13] The Local Government Restructuring Manual projects that reforming Councils will require temporary infusions of extra finance of up to TSH 40 million (PORALG 2000: 0–5). What one can say is that the opportunities for external resource inputs have expanded and because of the legislation that has enabled the LGRP, Districts are now more responsible for the management and allocation of these resources in a way that is unprecedented.[14] This is likely to continue with the creation of a donor basket fund and a Local Government Support Credit, approved by the World Bank in 2005 (World Bank 2004a).

The increasing focus on resource allocation to the District has been accompanied by concern with District level 'capacity building'. One result of this has been an infusion of new graduate public administrators entering Lushoto's local civil service. Additionally, Lushoto district government has received a small number of computers equipped with new planning and management software, and district administrators at the higher levels are now tapped in to a series of national and regional training sessions and workshops. There has been a profusion of workshops, seminars and training sessions, rolled out to key administrative personnel, and then to administrators and councillors generally (Lushoto DC n.d.: 1).

Capacity building of this kind has been motivated by concern that financial decentralisation, accompanied by a widening range of possibilities of access to external resources, will cause Districts to work as 'sinks' in which public resources drain away from the Centre, as local officials devise ways of skimming money for their own private purposes. In this light, it makes sense that capacity building has been accompanied by the introduction of new planning processes at the District level. The effect of capacity building has been to introduce new processes of resource management within the District Administration,[15] namely procurement, evaluation, audit, records and outcome orientation. During fieldwork, I was presented with an array of recently created documentation setting

out District plans or District-level accounts. Lushoto has a District Development Plan, a Gender Strategic Plan, a series of quarterly account reports that are presented to the District Council, and other planning and account documents. Tendering notices are posted in the District government buildings, the DG reports to the District Council and reports its allocation of expenditure.[16]

Reading this documentation, one is struck by how sharply focused it is on integrating with the central language and procedures of the Ministry of Finance and the PRSP. This is partly a result of the fact that good District-level documentation serves the pivotal purpose of assuring, or expanding, resource transfers from the GoT. It is also the result of the narrow epistemology of the planning process in Tanzania, which is the product of the confluence of neoliberalism and new public management.

However one evaluates the extent to which new ways of planning and documenting are embedded in the District, these inter-related processes (financial decentralisation, an expanding range of external resource channels, new personnel, training, computerisation, and new planning procedures) have certainly produced a discernable 'governance politics' in Lushoto. It has led to (some) revived District government offices, which is a result of the increased importance of the District government (as opposed to regional government). Furthermore, 'transparency' is in practice a financial criterion, primarily concerned with the auditing and control of expanding central subventions.

Interviewing those involved in these processes, it became apparent that local governance was a recent creation, generally understood as starting around 2000.[17] The recent provenance of local governance raises questions about how it relates to longer-established forms of local district politics. The next section sketches out a well-established set of political practices and considers how *maboresho* has affected it.

DEVELOPMENT POLITICS

One of the cornerstone phrases of Tanzania's post-colonial politics is *maendeleo* (development) which, along with *ujamaa* and *kujitegemea*, constituted Tanzania's brand of nationalist developmentalism.[18] The meaning of *maendeleo* has been differently interpreted (Mercer 2002; Nyerere 1974), but one key political practice that it has encapsulated is the political advocacy of local representatives who aim to capture resources from higher levels of government for their constituency. The ability to 'bring development' to one's home area provided a way of shoring up legitimacy both during the single party period and into the present day.

In present-day Lushoto, there are 32 constituencies, each with a coun-
cillor who represents his or her ward in the District Council (DC), which is
located in Lushoto town. Councillors are elected every four years through
universal franchise which runs along with the national elections. Since
1994, candidates can be supported by any party.[19] Additionally, as a result
of national legislation, there are also eight 'special seats' in the DC re-
served for women. In Lushoto, all elected councillor seats were retained by
men, and all special seats were held by women.

Throughout Tanzania's post-colonial history, councillors have needed
to maintain legitimacy by being 'development advocates' on behalf of
their constituency, even if the control and location of any development
resource *within* the ward might be a moot point. Since political and
economic liberalisation, competition to be elected as councillor has in-
tensified (Kelsall 2000; Kiondo 1995). Furthermore, one of the first suc-
cessful measures taken as part of Tanzania's LGR was to reduce the power
of the regional commissioner to allocate resources, and to devolve re-
source allocation down to the District level and to the District Council in
particular. As a result, the District Council has become a key focus for
those in pursuit of developmental legitimacy. So, although not an entirely
new political habitus, developmental politics in Lushoto has been both
modified and reinvigorated by *maboresho*. In the words of one councillor,
there has been a 'development wave since 2000; all councillors want a
larger portion of the development budget going to their ward' (Tito int.).
Let us see how this has happened.

As already noted, decentralisation in Tanzania has been based on
the Districts, which are expected to play a pivotal role in terms both of
resource management and of participation. This is not only to say that
councillors represent the *wananchi*[20] in their ward, but also that the DC
should work as a more active influence on the District administration.
One can see this formalised in the changes made to the routines of
full DC meetings. The minutes from full Council meetings in Lushoto
demonstrate how the DCs have developed detailed agendas, have at-
tempted to compel various departments of the District Administration
to make reports to Council,[21] have created sets of focused minutes and
have integrated reports in the full Council from various Standing
Committees (which are legislated for nationally). The reinvigorated
Council meetings contrast with a general view of meetings before
maboresho in which an entire day – and perhaps even part of the night –
would be spent discussing issues endlessly and without structure or
agreement. Formally, now, the District Administration and the
Executive (embodied in the district executive director or DED) should

report to the full Council, which acts as the paramount decision-making body.

The revival of the DC has produced a routinised opportunity for councillors to lobby and advocate for their own wards. All of the councillors interviewed spent some time explaining that one of their key tasks as local politicians was to argue their case in full Council meetings for support to schools, health care, road improvement, irrigation and the improvement/construction of wells.

A second centrally legislated process has reinforced Lushoto's developmentalism, which relates closely to the new planning procedures mentioned in the previous section. The District Development Plan (DDP), which constitutes the key document to request resources from the GoT, has a process conditionality built in to it: it must be the product of 'participation' throughout the District. This is carried out through a hierarchy of meetings, from the Village Executive Committees, to the Ward Executive Committees (which are chaired by councillors as a result of the Local Government Act 1999), and then aggregated, through a process of prioritisation, by the Planning Department of the District Administration. The DED then presents the District Development Plan to a Full Council meeting. In effect, what is happening here is that Councillars and local representatives of the state (village executive officers and ward executive officers) draw up lists of developmental demands (almost always health and education), which they hope will make it through the opaque reworking carried out at the District level by the Planning Department. If these demands are not carried through into the DDP, councillors have the opportunity to pressure the District Administration during the reporting back to Full Council. Failure to do this effectively has a direct impact on the political cachet of the councillor: the VEOs and WEOs 'just shoplist their problems, and expect us to deliver …' (local government officer, in Braathen 2003: 6).

The importance of this Ward–District connection for councillors' attempts to represent themselves as successful development advocates was revealed in interviews with 'special seats' councillors, because their claims to represent a constituency are relatively weak. One of the main themes that emerged when women were speaking of their marginality as special seat councillors, instead of fully elected councillors, derived from the disconnected nature of their mandate. Special seats councillors did not represent a ward; rather, they were selected from a list according to what percentage a party had won in the District elections. Because CCM has always won all Council seats in Lushoto, the local CCM Secretariat selects the women to take up special seats after an intra-party election. The

councillors then represent 'women' in general which, as an abstraction and as a category still subjected to the marginalisations produced by patriarchy, does not allow them to work nearly as well as development advocates. One group of women councillors complained that whenever a special seats councillor argues for developmental support for women in a certain location, other (male) councillors will rhetorically ask: 'And who do you represent? What district do you represent?' This suggests both that special seats have less claim to developmental resources, as it is unclear what geographical representation would underpin this claim, and also that there is an understanding that 'women's needs' are best represented by each district's own councillor. The disempowerment of women councillors is reinforced by the regulation that only 'ward' councillors can chair Standing Committees. As a result, women councillors have only chaired these committees as caretakers when the existing chair is ill or out of the district. As one woman councillor put it: 'you need a ward to have a voice' (Chamdoma int.).

'United behind development':[22] local developmentalism and NGOs

More enterprising councillors adopted a further strategy to enhance their developmental credentials. This was to create a 'personal NGO'. By this phrase, I mean an NGO which is essentially the creation of a Councillor, and inasmuch as it has any operational presence at all, is entirely dependent on the activities of a single individual. One Councillor headed two NGOs, both of which he admitted were 'not working well' (Twakyondo int.) largely because he hadn't any time to devote to them. Their names signified two of the most prominent cross-sectoral development issues in Tanzania: the Lushoto AIDS Education Association and the Usambara Environmental Conservation Organisation.[23] Whatever the impact of these organisations, they serve to enhance this Councillor's developmental credentials, especially if they capture INGO funds. Another Councillor had a teacher-training NGO, and yet another a water conservation NGO which had received donor money in the past.

Part of the significance of the incorporation of NGOs into the development politics of Lushoto's councillors derives from the fact that the District Administration has also developed a similar strategy. The main NGOs in Lushoto were not the personal NGOs of the councillors, but organisations based in Lushoto town with permanent staff and some donor money. Interviewing staff in these organisations, it readily became apparent that they maintained very close links to the District Administration (DA), and especially the District executive director. These

links included some small-scale credit from the DA, requirements of reporting activities to the DA, and an integration of NGO activities into the plans of the DA. These links were described in ways that revealed a strong patriarchal character, in which local NGOs were overseen and 'cared for' by the DA. This was most apparent in regard to perhaps the most active NGO – the Ubiri Women's Group. Founded in 1996, this has experienced a fairly rapid expansion (from a room in a shop to an office and a new Centre), largely as a result of the ways in which the DA had supported it. There was certainly a positive aspect to this relationship, in which the NGO had expanded its ability to market crops grown by women, and process local fruits and vegetables into relishes and jams. But, as the former chair of the NGO (int.) stated openly, the DA had maintained a 'parental role' throughout. The DA had 'showcased' this NGO to donors and in trade fairs, as a example of successful NGO development in the District, enhancing its own legitimacy and apparently winning itself some funds in the process. When the Group had wanted to attend a trade fair in Morogoro, they told me that they couldn't go because no officials from the District Administration were attending. Another significant NGO (TIP – Tanzanian Irrigation Project),[24] which promotes new irrigation methods, stated that TIP was 'under the DED. He is the one partner of TIP', and stated that the DED selected the TIP manager in Lushoto District (director int.). The emergence of personal NGOs and the corporatist aspects of the relationship between the DA and larger NGOs in the District demonstrate how NGOs have become part of the development politics of Lushoto – signifiers of developmental importance and showcases for the District government in its representations to the rest of Tanzania and beyond.[25]

Taken together with the developmental logic of the practices of councillors as representatives of their wards, one can identify an intense developmental politics in Lushoto, which is too powerful for the governance agenda to ignore. In fact, much of the governance agenda is infused with local developmental concerns. The revival of the Council has led to invigorated competition to capture resources from new plans and projects. The technocrats in the District Planning and Finance Departments are regularly pressured and harassed to relinquish resources for a range of ward-level projects, and councillors are not impressed by explanations relating to 'resource envelopes' or the District Development Plan. In fact, a number of PORALG and consultancy documents refer to the need to 'educate' councillors, which express a concern with the persuasiveness of development politics at the District level, and the ability of the Full Council to undermine medium-term financially regulated expenditure

protocols (Steffensen *et al.* 2004: 35). In Lushoto, a recently arrived university economics graduate working as a planning officer characterised the Council as follows (Mwakabana int.):

Each councillor wants to increase expenditure for their own ward. The Planning Office needs to educate councillors on government guidelines. For example, the government allocated TSH 15 million for Manoro [ward] and TSH 3 million for Shume [ward]. The District [planning office] gave detailed expenditure plans back [to the Council] but some councillors were angry that Shume got less. Proposals from the District [administration] are usually returned [by the Council] … This is "politics" … Councillors refuse to take the money [that is, approve expenditure plans] if it is very low.

VERANDA POLITICS

The developmental politics of Lushoto spills over into another area of District politics. This can be introduced through an observation. During the six weeks of fieldwork in Lushoto, we tried repeatedly to arrange an interview with the DED. This involved an almost-daily period sitting in the waiting room outside his office. It was readily apparent that the DED's office was busier than any other in the DA complex. The DED received a constant flow of Councillors who, according to the receptionist, were largely seeking an audience with the DED in order to request some form of District support for their ward. Officially, the DED has no discretion to act in this fashion, but the traffic of councillors suggests that, *de facto*, he did, and that this was a key way in which the DED assured himself of a substantial political presence in the District.[26] His position as chief executive, chair of the Council Management Team, District accounting officer (which means that all Central funds are officially submitted through him), and chair of the District Tender Board, located him right at the centre of the governance/capacity building reforms. Because the District government is highly dependent on Central subventions (Steffensen *et al.* 2004: xi), the DED position is structurally highly significant, even if, formally, he is charged merely with ensuring the implementation of Council decisions.

What is striking here is the contrast with the open developmental politics of the NGOs and the Full Council meetings. The DED's office was a literal and metaphorical illustration of a more opaque and personalised local politics – a 'behind closed doors' set of negotiations and discretionary decisions. Although this form of District politics is the most difficult to research, it constitutes an important sphere of political activity, and raises questions about the ways in which governance reforms realise themselves at the local level.

There are no statistics and very little written information about corruption in Lushoto.[27] Some Council minutes note a few specific cases of the embezzlement of public funds in order to report the disciplinary procedures that have been taken. In the District Commission, one commissioner remarked that small-scale bribes by those visiting District offices are commonplace (Stephen int.). The Prevention of Corruption Bureau had a District office and occasionally requested information from administrative offices. The DA had a 'corruption officer', but he was away from the District when we visited, and his office had no paperwork or computer; his office was open and unoccupied on the occasions when we passed by, which did not suggest that a great deal of significant activity was happening therein. Tenders and a code of ethics[28] were advertised on the District noticeboard, and councillors have (as a result of national legislation) been banned from participating in any tenders. Overall, it appeared that anti-corruption measures were being followed procedurally, and that small-scale bribes were part of people's negotiations with local state institutions.

A distinction needs to be made here between 'petty' and 'grand' corruption. Three members of the Tanzania Women's Association told us that high-level corruption is part of Lushoto's mainstream politics. Tenders remain opaque in how they are awarded and costed, and some considered that the DED gave evasive answers to queries from the Council regarding tenders (Shemndolwa int.). It was an open secret that the election season in Lushoto produced a vigorous circuit of electoral largesse, in which electoral patronage would be generated and favours from the local government assured. This activity took place both within the CCM selection process and during the elections proper. Rumours abounded that it was during this period that the DED had assured himself of a new four-by-four. Interestingly, after my return from Tanzania (unsuccessful in my attempts to interview the DED), the minister for regional administration and local government publicly named the DED of Lushoto as responsible for the rampant misuse of funds, overexpenditure, opaque expenditure reports and illegal expenditure (*The Citizen* 3.3.2006).

However much of the *radio trottoir* (Ellis 1989) regarding corruption is sensationalised, we can rely on another observation to illustrate one aspect of the secretive and clientelist aspects of Lushoto politics. Lushoto's hardwoods are being illegally felled and evacuated from the District. I was shown two places where forest had been cleared, and the tyre-tracks of large lorries that led away from these sites. The sites were located in conservation areas. Simply in terms of its scale, this kind of illegal operation is too prominent to be invisible to the District

Administration: logging is noisy, takes time and requires very large ve-
hicles. A number of people in Lushoto, speaking in general conversation
and without being asked for the information, referred to a specific local
businessman as the entrepreneur carrying out the logging. Occasionally,
people would hear the motors of large trucks passing through the district
during the early hours of the morning. This was a secretive and illegal
form of primitive accumulation that could only be carried out with the
complicity of individuals who could ensure the indifference of the police or
other law-enforcing officials.

   Those who spoke about the logging all suggested political complicity,
and it is difficult to imagine how it could occur without high-level support.
It is simply not possible to bring large trucks into Lushoto District[29] with-
out being noticed, far less to drive these through forest tracks, chainsaw
trees down, load up the trucks and drive out of the District. I heard of
accounts from reliable sources – including a development worker who
was born and lived in Lushoto for most of his life – of villagers trying to
arrest those felling the trees, only to be faced with police harassment
themselves and the quick release of the culprits. We did not pursue
how this entrepreneur had established influence within the local state
structures, because of the sensitivity of the topic.[30]

   The sporadic but frequent mention of corruption during interviews led
us to conclude that 'veranda' politics was thriving in Lushoto (see Kelsall
2002). It is not possible to define how Lushoto's veranda politics interacts
with the other two forms of political practice. Whereas the governance
and development politics are reasonably transparent and have some clear
points of interaction, veranda politics is both more profoundly opposed to
both of the other political forms, but must rely secretively on political
support at the highest levels.

   Governance reforms are ostensibly very concerned with corruption, but
only through a specific problematisation of corrupt practice. Corruption
is seen as a result of inadequate training, poorly designed incentive/
discipline structures and a lack of transparency in decision-making. As a
result, Tanzania has implemented a series of anti-corruption reforms,
some of which address themselves to local government: improved salaries,
new forms of invigilation, training and incentives, and declarations of
wealth. These reforms have their merits, but it is worth reflecting on
what they might mean in a situation in which local government is not
homogenous but parcellised. Anti-corruption measures have rested on the
assumption that corruption constitutes a deviant practice within a single
(no matter how intricate) bureaucratic complex.[31] The sketch given above
suggests that Lushoto's District government has an internal flexibility

that allows it to negotiate these three repertoires of political practice. Interviewees were all aware of the 'liveliness' and complexity of district politics, embodied in the District Administration, the District Council and the District Executive Director.

CONCLUSION: STREET LEVEL GOVERNANCE OR LOCAL REALM?

It is striking how much of the reform activity taking place in Lushoto is *governmental* in its focus. That is, reforms have been oriented towards the modifications of the internal practices of the District, with a view to achieving the requirements of the GoT. Reforms in resource management have been internally oriented, rather than concerned with modifying the ways in which Tanzanian citizens might engage with the way the District government uses its resources; Councillors use their constituencies as a resource to be mobilised in order to capture resources from the District, but there is little evidence that this has led to a change in the way people in the villages and wards relate to the District Council; participatory research has been carried out, but the reports emanating from this reveal that people's participation has been entirely procedural – a more effective way to generate statistics rather than to empower or 'conscientise'. This concern was expressed in detail by Lushoto's politically savvy district commissioner (Goroi int.).

Thus, what has happened so far as a result of local government reform is not clearly a rethinking of the ways in which Tanzanians relate to the state, but a drive to strengthen the political and administrative procedures of the District government. The semi-transparent clientelism of Lushoto's development politics, and the more secretive networks of twilight politics, can coexist with efforts at local administrative strengthening. Whether a revived role for the next administrative tier – the ward – will emerge as the LGRP progresses remains to be seen. An important facet of the answer will derive from how we understand the prospect for more profound change at the local level.

Veranda politics constitutes a political practice which is entirely ignored in the governance reform literature. Whereas it is recognised that councillors need 'education', district administrators need training and civil society will become more disposed to exercise pressures on local government, the ability of some local 'big men' to give or receive bribes and subvert the legal infrastructures of the District is not in any way amenable to the kinds of processes that are encapsulated by governance reform.

Thus, the reality of local-level governance reform is defined by a two-fold set of interactions. In the first place, a tension – but not an

irredeemable tension – between Lushoto's capacity-building/resource management focused governance reforms, and its reinvigorated and electorally competitive ward-focused developmental politics. Because these two forms of politics are fairly transparent and rely on some shared discursive and normative aspects (notably over universal primary education, which everyone saw as a great success), this interaction does not augur that all governance reform will founder at the local level. Rather, its prospects depend on how these two realms interrelate in the future. The second set of interactions is between governance reform and veranda politics. Herein lies a more profound opposition. Veranda politics is extremely difficult to quantify and even describe in a comprehensive fashion; it may involve a small number of people in a bounded set of accumulation activities, which may come to an end with the depletion of certain opportunities for enrichment. Be that as it may, the governance reform agenda has no intellectual tools either to understand twilight activities or to engage with them.

In this respect, it is worth returning to the earlier characterisation of the governance realm. Here, a key motivation for agents within this realm was to maintain a set of practices and discourses that served to maintain an integrated form of politics; issues of policy success/failure were necessarily articulated within this motivation. In essence, the practice of governance reform is more important than any ostensible criterion of objective success. We may borrow from this approach to understand Lushoto's governance. Rather than search for a single coherent reform agenda that might negotiate Lushoto's internally differentiated local governance, we might consider how externally conceived reform agendas affect the facility of local government – that is, the latter's ability to maintain a workable set of inter-relations between its three distinct repertoires of political practice.

These comments are provisional, in the sense that local government reform has a long way to go. But, they do suggest that the success of the reforms depends mainly on the ways in which the institutions of the state at the District level reconstitute themselves to manage a national programme. The extent to which citizens, or local people, engage with this process seems to be limited to their ability to participate in ward development meetings. There are good reasons to assume that this form of participation is very limited (Shivji & Peter 2000).

NOTES

1. From a large and diverse literature, see Bayart 1993, Boone 2003, Herbst 2000, Mamdani 1996.
2. References are made to supporting passages in Tanzania's local government reform documentation.

3. Political violence in Zanzibar is a signal exception to Tanzania's peaceful image. Violence during the 1995 elections led some donors to freeze programmes. But it was also evident to many that Tanzania compared very favourably with its neighbours to the north and west: Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya.

4. With the exception of Transparency International (2007), which continues to rank Tanzania very low in its corruption rankings. This has caused no little consternation in elite circles in Dar.

5. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats. A similar schema is used in World Bank Project Implementation Documents.

6. Perhaps the key text which has shaped these developments is Ferguson 1994.

7. On development policy as ideology, see Cooper & Packard 1997.

8. Relatedly, this reflects the mission statement of the PSRP – 'improving services under severe resource constraints'.

9. These themes can be drawn from a range of local studies: Kelsall 2000, 2004; Maddox & Giblin 2005; Semboja &Therkildsen 1995; Snyder 2005. On these transitions in Lushoto's local politics, see the brilliant work of Steven Feierman, especially Feierman 1990, but also 1974 and 2005.

10. Deus Kibamba's consummate interview skills and political savvy proved crucial to the field-work.

11. The vast majority of people in Lushoto have a Sambaa ethnicity, but kiSambaa is spoken far less commonly now than in the late colonial period. People put this down to *ujamaa* and the introduction of widespread primary and secondary education in kiSwahili.

12. Councillors and District administrative staff.

13. District fiscal dependence on central transfers has been nationwide since the abolition of the Development Levy, which was a flat local tax raised and spent by the District.

14. Local government in Tanzania has undergone a series of moments of decentralisation and centralisation. For a rather dry overview, see Max 1991.

15. District Administration means the Department of Local Government and the DED's office.

16. Although a perusal of these minutes reveals that this reporting is as opaque as it is transparent.

17. A Zonal Reform Team visited Lushoto in 2000, but it was only integrated into the LGRP in 2002 because it was not a 'Phase One' council. Now, all Tanzania's councils are integrated into the LGRP and phasing has been abandoned.

18. Respectively: development, familyhood and self-reliance. For an overview of Tanzania's 'socialism', see Coulson 1982.

19. Electoral legislation stipulates that candidates must be backed by a registered party.

20. *Wananchi* is kiSwahili for 'the people', and in the Tanzanian context has an egalitarian connotation.

21. Interviews revealed that a series of struggles over remit and authority have developed between the DC and the District Administration, which are also reflected in Council minutes where requests for information and reports are made by Councillors, and evaded/delayed by the administration.

22. A phrase coined by the councillor for Lushoto township in his comments on the relations between NGOs and local government.

23. Lushoto is located in the East Usambara range and has become a key focus for environmentalists, as it has many steep hillsides which are intensively farmed and an ever-depleting highland rainforest. A great read about Lushoto's environmental development politics is Johansson 2001.

24. TIP is not headquartered in Lushoto, but has an office in the town.

25. Apparently, the Ubiri Women's Group had received funding from BP for its product packaging.

26. In fact, the DED was so busy either with a trail of requests for favour or in transit from various workshops and meetings outside Lushoto that he proved elusive to the end. Our failure to interview him was explained by some as a result of his personal hostility to external (or European?) investigations into Lushoto's politics. Lushoto's one expatriate technical assistant felt that he had been substantially marginalised by the DED from meetings and flows of information. On the other hand, even after three years, this consultant had not learnt kiSwahili.

27. Local government is generally regarded as one of the most corrupt sectors of the Tanzanian state; see World Bank 2001: 22.

28. The Code of Ethics was a highly moralised set of instructions about punctuality, sobriety and proper dress, not a code of behaviour promoting transparency, accountability and so on.

29. Daily life in Lushoto is busy but highly pedestrianised. There are many more pedestrians on the road than motor vehicles. Motor traffic is overwhelmingly made up of cars, minibuses and motorbikes. Lorry traffic is rare.

30. One person in a bar alleged that he had been subjected to death threats by this entrepreneur.
31. To be fair, practically all anti-corruption programmes have rested on this assumption.

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