

Towards Making Responsive Development in Governance of African States in the 21st Century and Beyond: Lessons from John Pombe Magufuli

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Abstract

Africa in the lenses of the developed economies is a continent that would not develop. The former USA president Donald Trump called Africa shithole. Africa it is agreed is the richest continent in the world yet the poorest. Africa's underdevelopment is the product of poor leadership since independence. The few good and pragmatic ones were either terminated by the agents of developed economies or eased out through questionable elections. In this group are revolutionaries. The non-revolutionaries but focused were the likes of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Nelson Mandela, John Magufuli of Tanzania whom this paper is addressing. Others fall into despotic and authoritarian and by extension agents of neo-colonial masters and hydra-corrupt. They would do all things to milk their countries dry and repatriate the funds either for building of castles in developed world or stash it in Swiss banks and other banks abroad while their people are wallowing in poverty and underdevelopment. In this group are found Mobutu Sese Seko of Congo Democratic Republic (Zaire), Marcias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea, Omar Bongos of Gabon, Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, Houphouet-Boigny of Ivory Coast, Sekou Touré of Guinea, Idi Amin Dada of Uganda, etc. Again, most African heads of state believed that development cannot come to their countries except they rely on the western aid and or borrowing, and of recent from China. Nigeria under Mohammadu Buhari fall under this category. Late John Magufuli had proved that 'theory' wrong. He developed Tanzanian people and economy without western aid, fought corruption and if death had spared him, he would have led Tanzania to greater height than where she is now. The paper concludes that other African leaders should emulate the foot-prints of John Magufuli - for African development. The paper uses historical and multi-disciplinary approach as methodology.

Key Words: Development, Governance, Corruption, Magufuli and International Relations.

Introduction

Africa is one of the enigmatic continents in the world. It is so because Africa appears to be a distraction to people the world over. It would be interesting to learn more about her position in terms of population, wealth and history. Africa has 54 countries and nearly one billion black people living in it. It is also believed that by 2050 it would exceed three billion in population. Statistically, African people constitute about 20 percent of the world's population. Africans are very poor with an estimate of about 80 percent living below \$1 a day. Indeed, Africa potentially house the largest mineral resources ranging from gold, crude oil, diamond, chromite, diorite, phosphate rock, bitumen, platinum, uranium, manganese, zinc, copper, bauxite among others. She has very rich forest and water resources. These minerals, forest and water resources would place Africa as the richest continent in the world when compared with other continents such as Europe or Australia.

Historically, Africa was the centre of a great civilization and in scholarship and art during the ancient and medieval times. For instance Egyptian hieroglyphics developed much earlier about 10BC. There was the University at Timbuctu once described as the 'Paris of the Medieval World', where the medieval scholars such as Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Batuta, Leo Africanus etc. taught and developed human capacity for Africa. Ethiopia featured prominently in ancient Greek literature, including Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. There were also pyramids in Egypt and the Sudan, the bronze heads in Ile-Ife; the terra cotta heads in the Jos Plateau etc. Africa was technologically built, for instance the Shaduff system for agriculture was developed in Africa. She also

produced great kings from the ancient to the modern era such as Mansa Musa of Mali Empire and Samori Toure. In contemporary times it has produced leaders such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso, Muammar Gaddafi of Libya and John Pombe Magufuli of Tanzania that this work picks as African leader of the era.

However, some of the African leaders that emerged after African independence turned out to be despots who pillaged and ran riot with African resources. Some African leaders are (were) corrupt to the marrow. Some despots and corrupt leaders are (were) Sese Seko Mubutu of Congo Democratic Republic, Marcias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Sani Abacha of Nigeria, Idi Amin Dada of Uganda, Museveni of Uganda etc. Africa is indeed a very poor continent with a Gross National Product, now called Gross National Revenue (GNP, now GNR) per inhabitant, at \$671 on average for the continent as a whole. This is more than forty-seven times lower than that of the United States (\$34000) and almost eight times lower than the world average (\$5,170). That is Africa, and in recent times emerged a Pan Africanist, a man African leaders should emulate, a man whose brief appearance in governance transformed his county – John Magufuli of Tanzania. Tanzania is a medium income country with a population of about 30 million people. Majority of the population live on farming. John changed the fortunes of these people with his short moment in governance.

This work is divided into four sections; section A deals with abstract, introduction and conceptual clarifications, section B looks at the man John Magufuli and his contributions to Tanzania development; Section C deals with the way African countries need to look inwards for their development and section D deals with the conclusion.

Conceptualizing Development

One word that is often used without drawing out its meaning is “development”. In the past, development was seen as the growth in volume or quality of goods and services or simply an increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country. And it was also observed that, this increase did not work for developing economies because the human conditions of the people did not change in spite of the change in GDP. Today, development is defined qualitatively to mean a general sustainable improvement in the welfare of the entire society; meaning that social indicators such as levels of employment, housing, education, poverty, nutrition, infant and maternal mortality, life expectancy have improved (Akpakpan, 1987; Tordoff, 19997). It is increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being (Rodney, 1972). Mayhew (2009) sees development in the area of resources and their utilization for development. Development is the use of resources to relieve poverty and raise living standards; the means by which a traditional, low-technology society is changed into a modern, high technology society, with a corresponding increase in incomes. This can be achieved through mechanization, improvements in infrastructure and financial systems, and the intensification of agriculture. To him, this concept is based on the more obvious distinctions in living standards between developed and less developed countries. Development is one's ability to have good, affordable and sustainable food to eat, access to safe drinking water, good shelter, access to good and affordable medical facilities, being able to communicate, have access to good education, have access to decent and sustained infrastructural facilities (Akpan, 2011).

Concept of Governance

It is a concept that lacks a concise definition, and that explains its abuses by different people especially politicians. However, we shall try to bring it the way it ought to be for the purpose of scholarly presentation. The university of Birmingham school of public policy describes governance as the “foundation upon which a country's political stability, economic success, conflict resolution, efficient service delivery and basic human rights rest.” The United Nations Development Programme UNDP views it as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. Governance is a process in which government at any level tailors its programmes such that everyone within the domain of the rule feel

the impact through having access to economic, social and political wellbeing which finally improves the standard of living of the masses. Governance indicators have strong positive association with development outcomes (per capita income, adult literacy, infant mortality) and aggregate governance indicators. It is in this aspect that we factor the term good governance and bad governance. Thus, the term 'good governance' is value based. It points to the values cherished by human society. In this connection, good governance must be seen in the ambience of or a context of acceptable values, that strives to move a group towards the achievement of its legitimate, collective vision or interest for the optimum welfare of each member of the group. This vision of interest, therefore, implies survival, harmonious existence in a pluralistic society and development of the whole.

Good governance is an indeterminate term used in international development literature to describe various accounts of how public institutions ought to conduct public affairs and manage public resources. For governance to be judged as good, it must promote equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability and the rule of law in a manner that is effective, efficient and enduring in translating these principles into practice – holding free and fair elections (frequent), representative legislatures that make laws independent of the judiciary to interpret those laws. It is on the above system that John Magufuli is represented.

Bad governance is ineffective delivery of governance services. Bad governance will result in a situation where there is no consensus building that is not consensus oriented; where political participation is either reduced or completely lacking (non-participatory); where the rule of law is completely absent or gravely undermined; where there is ineffectiveness and inefficiency, where there is lack of accountability, lack of transparency; where government is non-responsive; and where governance is non-equitable and non-inclusive. Bad governance is associated with corruption, distortion of government budgets, inequitable growth, social exclusion, lack of trust in authorities etc.

Bad governance generally results in huge losses of (in) economic growth, it also affects human resources, human ingenuity and the personality of the citizens. It also dovetails into undemocratic environment where welfare issues of unemployment, abject poverty (particularly, poverty in the midst of plenty), infrastructural decay, illiteracy, poor health services and power outages abound. Bad governance and corruption deter investment, wastes national resources and forebode misallocation and increased insecurity. Bad governance is typical of the Nigerian situation under Mohammed Buhari administration (2015 to date). In fact, DR Congo, Somalia, South Sudan are examples of countries with bad governance system. Bad governance usually leads to armed conflict etc.

John Magufuli

Magufuli was born in Chato district of Lake Victoria on October 29, 1959. He came from a humble background. During the campaign trail in 2015, he declared, “our home was grass thatched, and like many boys, I was assigned to herd cattle, as well as selling milk and fish to support my family...I know what it means to be poor. I will strive to help improve people's welfare”. (The Punch March 22, 2021 p.48). A school teacher by training, he studied education and science at the University Dar es Salaam, later earned a doctorate in chemistry in 2009. After a stint in teaching, he joined the Nyanza Cooperative Union as an industrial chemist 1989-1995. He later stood for election as Member of Parliament for Chato under the platform of the ruling Cham Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). His abilities caught the attention of the then President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, who appointed him to a succession of ministerial cabinet positions.

Magufuli and Politics/Governance

About 2002, John Magufuli was appointed to a position of Minister of Roads and Public Works in Tanzania. What Magufuli met was hydra-corruption and cowboy contractors. “The contractors handling works in this

area demanding pay – and getting paid – for works they did not execute, or those done way below specifications. Nearly the entire ministry was being used to clear pending bills that were rising daily. The ministry was neither constructing any new roads nor maintaining the existing ones. In July 2015, he won the CCM presidential primary against rivals Asha-Rose Migiro, former United Nations Deputy Secretary-General and veteran diplomat Amina Salum Ali. He went on to clinch the national elections and was sworn in as the 5th president of Tanzania on November 5, 2015. He won a second five-year term in October 2020.

Magufuli-Manifesto-Fulfilled in Governance

Looking back at his manifesto for a higher office - president, which read in part, “our home was grass thatched, and like many boys, I was...I know what it means to be poor. I will strive to help improve people's welfare”. One of the first decisions he took as president was to slash his own monthly salary from \$15,000 to \$4,000. On his first day in office, he made a surprise visit to the ministry of finance to find out how many people had actually turned up for work. He made it clear that he would not brook the traditional absenteeism that had been so rife among civil servants. That same week, he announced a blanket ban on all foreign travels for public servants in order to conserve scarce foreign exchange; saving in the process as much as \$430 million for the treasury in 2017 alone. In that direction, he made it clear that such money so saved would be used to bring down the poverty situation of people thus enhancing the standard of living of the poor.

Magufuli over the years has been watching how money was spent to celebrate independence while the populace were wallowing in poverty and want. In this connection, he scrapped the rather costly traditional Independence Day celebration that held every December 9. He rather declared that day, a day for cleaning up the country. He was often seen picking up rubbish outside state house in the capital Dar es Salaam. He said it was unseemly to spend so much on mere festivities “when our people are dying of cholera”. He also trimmed the cabinet from 30 to 19 ministers. Magufuli was nicknamed “bulldozer” because of his prowess in infrastructural development- highways and bridges, port facilities, aviation, energy, mining, and railways. His belief was that better infrastructural facilities especially energy, roads, railways, drive economies. His resolute action in favour of housing for the poorest had already earned him the nickname “Tingatinga” the bulldozer in Swahili, in reference to the construction programme he implemented.

Issues of Tax Evasion and Corruption:

John was not in love with people who evaded tax. He had expected companies (indigenous and foreign) to remit their taxes as at when due. He was an avowed enemy of corruption. He could not stand the idea of public officials using public resources for their own benefit, “if you hated corruption, you were his friend and confidante; if you were corrupt, you were his enemy”. Since Tanzania like many African states was neck-deep in corruption, John was elected on the promise to put an end to corruption, he put pressure on the big companies present in Tanzania and 'forced' them to let the indigenous people and state take a stake in their capital, renegotiated the contracts of certain mining and gas companies, and dismissed local executives deemed corrupt or incompetent. He did his best to develop the country and its economy and launched major works.

Magufuli Ideology

Ideologically, he was a populist and a social democrat. He allowed the private sector to grow, but under the very watchful eyes of the state. He felt that the private sector, if not watched, could be overbearing especially to the lowly in society. John was a CCM ideologue who grew through the ranks of the party and embraced Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's ideals on patriotism, self-reliance and Pan-Africanism. In many ways he went further than Mwalimu. While Julius Nyerere embraced internationalism and had a broader view of the world and Tanzania's place in it, Magufuli was a super-nationalist with little regard for the rest of the world. It would appear that Magufuli was following the footsteps of the founding-father of Tanzania, the illustrious Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922-1999). Julius like Magufuli was a scholar, Statesman and Pan-African Socialist, a

humble and incorruptible statesman, who gave Tanzanians a sense of genuine pride in their nationhood. Malaifa (2021), a technocrat, a former ambassador observed that 'Tanzania today is different from neighbouring Kenya, where ethnic animosities are bitter and toxic'. It means that Nyerere was able to bring all the ethnic nationalisties in Tanzania together, hence they see themselves as one nation in spite of the differences.

John Magufuli and International Relations

John outside Tanzania, his other business was Africa. He had little interest in other continents. Even in Africa, he was selective with his visits. Before his demise, he visited Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo. Tanzania was his first and last love. Meanwhile, Magufuli was among a new breed of African leaders that did not suffer from the innate inferiority complex that afflicts many of our people when they are faced with our new Roman Consuls. Other new breed of African leaders include Festus Mogae of Botswana, Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, Pechro Pires – Cape Verde, Hifikepunge Pohamba-Namibia and Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique. He must have inevitably made powerful enemies within and outside Tanzania. He expelled the UNDP country Representative. The reason for expelling the UNDP country representative was not unconnected with the representative involving in the affairs of Tanzania in areas he had no business with. It means he conducted himself outside the areas in which his office detailed.

He denounced the European Union-East African trade deal as a form of 'neocolonialism'. The European Union broke diplomatic relations and stopped bilateral aid to Tanzania. In 2017, he accused the British gold-mining company, Acacia, of tax evasion; slamming an unprecedented tax bill of \$190 billion, after 250 of their containers were intercepted at the port in Dar es Salaam. The company settled for a payment of \$300 million as well as concession of a 16 percent stake for the government. The government passed a new law empowering it to terminate or renegotiate a mining contract in the event of proven fraud. China since the middle of the 20th century had become so friendly with nearly all African countries. China offered various aid to African countries, some in cash and others in kind – for instance China built African Union building in Ethiopia. However, in a similar scenario, Magufuli famously dismissed the offer of a \$10 billion Chinese loan with a remark that only a “madman” could accept the terms.

Magufuli scored high on macroeconomic management. Tanzania for decades operated a poverty-stricken, centralized command economy. He successfully engineered a new prosperity. Economic growth averaged nearly 6 percent annually. He gave Tanzanians renewed confidence in their sense of nationhood. He left the scene at a time when things were looking up and the country was poised to register bigger milestones in economic development.

In defending the honour of Tanzania and the dignity of our glorious continent, Magufuli undoubtedly incurred the wrath of powerful enemies from within and outside his country. He was criticized for human rights abuses by Amnesty International and others. Churches and civil society groups cried foul about the alleged muzzling of opposition voices. In July 2016, he banned Shisha smoking, pointing to its bad effects on the youths. He upheld the legislation on a 30 year jail term for same-sex liaisons.

Lessons to Learn from Magufuli

There are many lessons to learn from John Magufuli. Magufuli came from a very poor and humble background. He grew up to understand what it meant to be poor. As a statesman, he worked so hard to reduce poverty – checking corruption from the period he was appointed a minister to when he became the head of state. Corruption dampens the growth and development of economies and by extension would affect the development of economic, social and political structures to drive economy. Most African leaders usually come from poor backgrounds, but soon grabbing the political power they tend to forget their roots.

African political leaders do not always understand that political authority has a language of its own. That language is called responsibility. Many African leaders now such as Museveni of Uganda or Mohammed Buhari of Nigeria do not understand the meaning of reasonability in governance. The people under their political care are not seen as humans, they use the machinery of political power to cow them and place them under servitude. Magufuli actually understood the political language, that explains why he thought positively about the youths; making plans and policies for the children discouraging them from anti-social behaviours. He knew that for one to be productive, there is need for one to be accommodated in good shelters.

Magufuli reduced his salaries so that others may survive but other African states are neck-deep in corruption, “for them to live and for others...” Foreign aid is necessary, either in the form of loan or technical skill, what should be noted is that such loans are taken to improve economic wellbeing of the state and by extension the livelihoods of the inhabitants. But in most countries where aid is taken and looted and transferred back to the developed nations. Nigeria has taken so much loan since the advent of Buhari administration, and things are getting from bad to worse. There is very high unemployment, livelihoods of people are diminishing by the day because of inflation. In addition to the foreign aid palaver and the enslavement by donor nations, Magufuli demonstrated that internally generated funds if prudently managed could be used for economic development. True to it, he was able to use the internal revenue to develop Tanzania, thus, China with all the intrigues for Tanzania to accept the \$10 billion loan did not materialize. It is believed that Tanzania is the only African state to reject the Chinese loan outright. Good infrastructural facilities drive the economy, this Magufuli understood – he built standard rail gauge, ports, good roads among other things. Most African states have the finance or fund but lack good infrastructural facilities. This could be seen in countries such as Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo etc. In clear terms, Magufuli understood the social contract theory (state and citizens) that he honoured to the latter.

Conclusion

Magufuli was no saint. But he was the quintessential servant-leader. He served his people with compassion and justice. According to Joseph Warioba, a former Prime Minister, in Tanzania under Magufuli Magufuli could easily have become one of the richest men in Tanzania. But it is to his eternal credit that he never succumbed to that temptation. He left something on the sands of time.

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