

Religious Tolerance, Transnational Dynamics and the State in Tanzania

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Abstract

The past decade 2004-2014 has seen increased, although not unprecedented, levels of religious intolerance and violent conflicts in Tanzania. Acts such as arson, acid attacks, killing of religious leaders and inter-religious contestations over who has the right to slaughter animals has called for a fresh re-examination of the role of the state as a mediator of social conflicts in the liberal era. This article argues that the change from a monolithic political culture to a liberalised political culture has led to a multiplication of political forces and actors in the country. At the same time, a mismatch in economic opportunities, accelerated poverty and the politicisation of the grievances have left Tanzania vulnerable to the forces of disunity and conflict. The state is not only an arbiter in a situation where various actors are competing for socio-political space but is itself highly contested. The article concludes that, although seemingly disparate and isolated, the incidents of religious conflict under review thrive on a situation where people question some of the traditions that have hitherto upheld the foundations of the nation.

Introduction

This article examines the nature, character and relationship between religious tolerance, transnational dynamics and the state in Tanzania. Focusing on the last ten years that coincide with the Fourth Phase Government (2005-2014), it scrutinises the upsurge in religious tension evidenced by violent acts, including assassinations of people, assault, attacks on religious leaders, destruction of property and Christian-Muslim disputes over who has the right to slaughter animals such as cows. As Moyo (1987:59) observes, “religion has always occupied a central position in the life, thought, and institutions of most African peoples.” Religion is “enormously important in guiding the choices of billions of people and it influences viewpoints on individual agency and collective responsibility” (Haynes, 2007:26). Religion is a value system consisting of strong symbols and rituals that can be used to mobilise social action (Turner, 1967). This value system, in turn, is associated with human interests, purposes, ends and means, whether these are explicitly formulated or have

to be inferred from the behaviour of the followers of a particular religion (Turner, 1967:20).

Religion has provided followers with a justification for fighting against real and perceived “evils”, including unjust socio-political systems. It has been used as a tool for mobilising social action against domination and exploitation and has given voice to the socially marginalized people. A good example of this may be religion’s role in people’s struggles against repressive regimes such as the apartheid system in South Africa (Ferm, 1988). In South Africa, the African independent churches resisted the Dutch Reformed Church that allegedly endorsed the apartheid system.

Religious tolerance relates to a diversity of faiths. If there were only one religion in the world, tolerance would lose its significance. Tolerance, according to Powell and Clarke (2014), is anchored in the liberal tradition and religion resides in the private sphere in which nobody should interfere. Religious tolerance must exist in a society even if the society does not approve of the practice of certain religions. The 1977 Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania provides a somewhat liberal foundation for religious tolerance in the country. Article 3(1) states that “[t]he United Republic is a democratic, secular and socialist state which adheres to multi-party politics.” Article 19(1) gives Tanzanians the freedom to practise any religion of their choice or to change one’s religion or faith. This could be viewed both as state protection against harm or harassment and an understanding that every religion has a right to exist in Tanzania and to have followers, provided that the laws of the land are respected and observed. It is for this reason that religious pragmatism is common in Tanzania and that people convert to Christianity or Islam for various reasons. Many families in the country are composed of members of different religions, especially Christianity and Islam, and live together peacefully. Many Tanzanians are actually nominal Christians and Muslims, since they also follow African traditional religions (Mhina, 2006).

Religious intolerance occurs when in an atmosphere of religious diversity religious followers and leaders refuse to listen to the points of view of others, especially when they believe that their faith is the only right path to the afterlife. In this regard, Groff and Smoker argue:

A significant problem with organised religion and belief, as this relates to peace and conflict, is individuals and groups often confuse the map (their socially-learned version of reality or culture or religion) with the territory (or ultimate reality). Thus people believe that their personal or subjective version of reality or religion is valid, while other views are invalid. Instead it can be argued that the many maps are different, but possibly equally valid interpretations and attempts to understand the same underlying reality or territory (Groff & Smoker, 1996:5).

Similarly, in the face of increased levels of religious intolerance, violence and conflict can also result from a general feeling of alienation that may arise in times of profound socio-political change. The Tanzania state has undergone profound changes in the 1990s, departing from the 1960s post-independence policies (such as Ujamaa) that stressed communal aspects to ones that are individualistic, leaving people on the margin to bear the brunt, struggling to cope (OECD, 2013). The result

has been, as Stewart (2008) has contended, the increase of horizontal inequalities (or inequality among groups). We argue that the Tanzanian state finds itself caught in the middle where it is not only an arbiter in a situation where various actors are competing for socio-political space but is itself highly contested.

Religious tension in Tanzania

Two cases are examined in this article to demonstrate the incidents of increased religious tensions in Tanzania. The first is related to the inter-religious conflicts in Geita that arose out of contestations over the right to slaughter animals in the municipality's abattoir and the second involves a spate of acid, arson and explosive attacks largely in Arusha and Zanzibar targeting religious leaders and foreigners. The latter was attributed by security organs to encroaching terrorist influence in Tanzania.

Inter-religious conflicts in Geita

The 2013 inter-religious battles over who, between Muslims and Christians, have the right to slaughter animals such as cows in Geita marked the continuation of the religious tension in Tanzania that began in 2005. On the morning of 12th January 2013, a group of people (Christians) slaughtered a cow on the African Inland Church premises with a view to selling the meat at "Christian Lugeye Butchery", owned by one Obadia Mulokozi in Buseresere. When some Muslims, who were in a mosque, heard about it, they intervened and questioned the legality of the act and the environment in which it had taken place. In consequence, violence broke out and one Reverend Mathayo Kachila (aged 44) of the Pentecostal church in Buseresere was killed and many others wounded (interview with Geita Police Officers, 14th August 2014). This conflict was unexpected and shocked Tanzanians as Christians and Muslims continue living together in peaceful and have done so for years (interview with Khamis Mrisho, Geita, 13th August 2014). Generally, Tanzanians display a relatively high degree of religious tolerance. What then explains the present religious intolerance, acrimony and animosity?

In Tanzania, it might be "very difficult to manage a Christian-Muslim dispute that evolves into a generalised hostility that leads to disputes over economic resources and political power" (Heilman, 2006: 294). A similar concern was expressed by a Pentecostal Church Bishop in Geita, who said that the political parties were not to blame for the conflict but the government was because it deals with certain people's faith insensitively: "The Bible emphasises the importance of peace and the peaceful co-existence of people. However, servants of God can be either agents of peace or agents of violence. Tanzanians will not fight because of ethnic differences, but they can very easily slip into a religious/political conflict" (interview with Bishop Stephano Saguda, Geita, 15th August 2014).

The increase in the number of religious denominations and the competition for religious followers caused the violent conflict in Geita. Apparently, some Christian denominations, especially the newly-established Pentecostal churches, supported the Christians who slaughtered the cow, but established denominations such the Roman Catholic Church opposed the idea (interview with Geita District

Commissioner, Manzie Mangochie, 14th August 2014). Both the Christian and Muslim leaders interviewed agreed that the unregulated open-air preaching was changing into inter-religious retaliatory accusations. The cause of the conflict is related to the “new” culture of questioning everything, including the old and well-established traditions such as the slaughter of animals for public consumption.

In the past, preaching was civilised, sober and professional and was focused on the propagation of the quality of one’s religious belief so as to influence, win over and attract new followers. Things started going wrong in 2007 when it was alleged that some Muslim clerics were preaching against Christianity, that the government favoured Muslims, that Muslims earned some money by slaughtering animals, that animal slaughter was *ibada* (worship) for Muslims (interview with Geita DC, 14th August 2014) and that the government should follow the constitution in its dealings with religious issues. The claim that animal slaughter was a form of worship for Muslims made many Christians uncomfortable; they felt alienated and cheated. Because the government had upheld the Muslims’ right to slaughter animals, Christians thought that the government was against them. Surely, abusive open-air preaching against believers of other religions sowed seeds of hatred between Muslims and Christians in Geita. The interviews held in Geita indicate that both Christians and Muslims invite powerful public speakers from outside the region to go to Geita and preach in a bid to strengthen their positions, retaliate and defeat the opposite group. In consequence, the tension generated was so high that the police had to intervene. Christians protested the ban on open-air preaching; eventually the DC relented (interview with Bishop Stephano Saguda, Geita, 15th August 2014). This occurrence is consonant with the global trends in the neo-liberal era. Groff and Smoker note:

When religious beliefs take the form of dogma, and the believer’s beliefs and behaviour are known to be right, while those of non-believers, or the other religions—or even different variants within one’s own religion—are known to be wrong, this leads to what has been variously called ‘fundamentalism’ or ‘fanaticism’ or ‘extremism’—a global trend in almost all of the world’s religion today (Groff & Smoker, 1996:3).

Economic benefits of the animal slaughter service

The animal slaughter battle was heightened by claims related to income generation. It was claimed that Muslims denied people who belong to other faiths an opportunity to generate an income by slaughtering animals. BAKWATA leaders in Geita maintained that animals must be slaughtered in an officially-designated abattoir under the supervision of relevant government authorities so as to ensure public health requirements were met. Over the years, Muslims have been slaughtering animals because their religion prohibits them from eating meat slaughtered by non-Muslims.

It is true that some fee is charged for the animal slaughter service, but it varies from person to person and is negotiable. It may be a kilo of meat or Tshs 5,000 per cow. In Geita, BAKWATA officials said that in practice most of those who slaughtered animals were paid Tshs 2,000 per cow and Tshs 500 per goat (interview

with Geita District Veterinary Officer, 14th August 2014). BAKWATA gets 10 percent of the proceeds. In some villages, they slaughtered only one cow a week during auctions. According to the District Veterinary Officer, 20–60 cows are slaughtered in Geita every day. BAKWATA in Geita claimed that the money it received from the service did not enable it to develop and undertake its major projects (construction of schools, mosques and health facilities).

Some Christian denominations did not believe this, and so they continued to demand the right to slaughter animals. They felt that it was not correct for Muslims to refuse to eat meat slaughtered by others while others ate the meat of the animals they slaughtered (interview with Bishop Stephano Saguda, Geita, 15th August 2014). They emphasised the need to differentiate between animal slaughter as a religious obligation and animal slaughter as a source of income. Animal slaughter battles have divided Tanzanians into the two groups mentioned earlier. A similar conflict broke out in Tunduma four months later. This conflict disrupted businesses in the town, but fortunately the Police Force quelled it.

Arusha and Zanzibar: Acid, arson and explosive attacks

A related set of violent events that shook the foundations of religious tolerance in Tanzania is related to church torching and bombings, murder, arson and acid attacks in Zanzibar and Mainland Tanzania (especially in Arusha) (LeSage, 2014; Brents & Mshigeni, 2004). For instance, in a span of less than twelve months (between May 2013 and July 2014), seven bomb explosions occurred in Arusha alone. On 5th May 2013, during the inauguration of the new Olasiti Catholic Parish by the Vatican Envoy to Tanzania, Archbishop Francisco Montecillo-Padilla, a bomb exploded and killed four people and injured 60 others. The Envoy and other bishops cheated death. Another bomb, which killed four people, exploded at a political rally in Soweto, Arusha, soon after CHADEMA had concluded its campaign for the June 2013 by-election. In April 2014, a bomb exploded at the Arusha Night Park Pub in the Minazini Area. It killed one person and injured 15 others. On 7th July 2014, an explosion at Verma Restaurant in Arusha wounded eight people. The police managed to defuse another bomb at Washington Bar on the same day. This happened less than a week after another explosion in the Majengo Area at the residence of a Muslim cleric, Sheik Sudi Ally Sudi of Answar Sunni's Mosque in Kilombero. The cleric and his guest, Sheikh Muhijiwere, were seriously injured. In all, eight people lost their lives in Arusha and more than 70 were injured in the blasts (*Daily News* of 24th July 2014). In June 2012, a Muslim cleric, Sheikh Abdulkareem Njonjo, was badly wounded after a bomb exploded at his residence in Sokoni-One (*Daily News*, 24th July 2014).

In Zanzibar and Arusha, partly religiously and partly politically-motivated bomb and acid attacks were prevalent in the early months of 2013. In mid-February 2013, a Roman Catholic priest, Father Evarist Mushi, was shot dead as he neared the church premises in the Stone Town, Zanzibar. This happened less than two months after an attack on 25th December 2012 left another Roman Catholic priest, Father Ambrose Mkenda, critically wounded. In November 2012, acid was thrown on to

Sheikh Fadhil Suleiman Soraga, the Zanzibar Mufti's Secretary. He sustained serious injuries.

Debate is going on in policy and academic circles on the interconnectivity of these events. On the one hand, there are those who argue that the analysis of the events should be based on the local contexts. On the other hand, there are those who maintain that a fine reading of the events provides a loose connection. One possible clue is the similarity of the targets of the attacks. However, the government's position on this issue has not been very clear. Speaking to the nation during his monthly address on 30th March 2013, the then President Jakaya Kikwete brushed aside the claims that all the events were somehow related to the overall performance of the state. He said that each event had a particular context in which it had occurred and that it was foolhardy for anyone to link them. Yet, in the same speech he had cautioned:

My fellow Tanzanians, I want to let you know that there are people who are playing dirty games, people who are bent on fomenting confrontations and conflicts between Christians and Muslims in their own interest. They are planting seeds of hatred between the government and the followers of the two major religions. They want you to feel that the government has abandoned you. It is a bad game and we should not dance to the music we are not familiar with. Dear Tanzanians, have you ever asked yourselves what causes the conflicts between Christians and Muslims in our country...?

The then president here resorts to the conspiracy theory to address a problem that is fundamentally shaking the foundations of the nation. He shows that he is privy to some hidden forces—internal or external— which have a vested interest in the conflicts. Who will benefit from the conflicts and what kind of benefit will it be? The president repeated this precaution in July 2013 when he was opening a two-day national symposium organised by the Tanzania Centre for Democracy (TCD). He acknowledged that things were not well in the country in terms of peace and that if Tanzanians did not take precautionary measures war could break out in the country. Contrary to what he had said during the March 2013 speech, the president was more explicit in July 2013 in naming the actors: “It was political activities coupled with seditious religious statements propagated by few religious leaders who intentionally preach hatred, thereby causing religious disputes.”¹ He further noted that some religious clerics were treating religion as a political activity, which was against religious ethics.

The handling of inter-religious conflicts by the state

In conflict resolution, timing is as important as the strategies employed to achieve the desired results. More often than not, strategies differ from one context to another, depending on the underlying causes, the intensity of a conflict, the actors involved in

¹www.tcd.org.tz/news.php?p=269, accessed on 10th November 2014

the conflict and their interests. Sometimes explicit symptoms “camouflage” deep-rooted grudges arising out of people’s exasperation at the state, its institutions or functionaries.

Maybe the state’s intervention in Geita falls within the following three strategies of conflict resolution/management: mediation and negotiation, coercive intervention and passivity/avoidance. Overall, each of these strategies bore some fruit and, perhaps, they have led to the declining levels of violence and the stabilisation of the area. It was not clear what agreement was reached in the numerous government-led mediation sessions. Terms of agreement are crucial because they form a benchmark against which to judge the success achieved. It may also be used to assess adherence to the agreement by adversaries. If they don’t adhere to it, the agreement breaks down and the conflict cannot be considered to have been effectively resolved.

Generally, the government has not utilised the conflict in Geita to provide adequate education on matters of animal slaughter to the people. The root-cause of the problem was not addressed and the government did not effectively reconcile the contending parties. The government was not as forthright in dealing with the animal slaughter issue in Geita as it was in dealing with the Mwembechai conflict over the pork butchers. The argument of some Christian denominations is that the followers of each religion in the country should be granted the right to slaughter animals and arrangements be made in this regard. In the Mwembechai conflict, the government stood firm and took legal action against all those responsible for the violence (Muslims), irrespective of their ideology or belief.

In the case of the animal slaughter conflict, the violence stopped and things seem to have cooled down, although no agreement had been reached through formal mediation/negotiations. It may be argued that the intervention by the police deterred people from committing similar acts of violence. Given the prevailing circumstances, this intervention may or may not end the conflict in the long-run.

Mediation/negotiations

A conflict is a state of disagreement between two or more parties with incompatible goals arising from a breakdown in communication (Ohlson, 1996:4; Mujaju, 1989; Zartman & Touval, 1985: 11; Burton, 1969). Mediation is an intervention by a third party with a stated objective of re-establishing communication and facilitating an agreement between the contending parties (Smock and Gregorian, 1993; Zartman & Touval, 1985:7; Burton, 1969:154). The inter-religious conflict in Geita escalated partly because of the government’s hesitation to state clearly the position of the law on the matter. The government leaders who were involved in the initial stages of the mediation process seemed to be surprised at the issue and treated it as if it were an unregulated business. In Tanzania, animal slaughter is regulated by law and attendant regulations, and if they were enforced right from the beginning the conflict and the ensuing violence might have been averted.

To begin with, Stephen Wasira, the then Minister of State in the President’s Office for Social Relations and Coordination, paid a visit to Geita before the murder of the priest and found Nyeuhunge in turmoil. The mediation session he organised

failed. It was after his visit to the area that the killing of the priest occurred. John Nchimbi, the then Minister for Home Affairs, and Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda also tried to mediate between the Muslims and Christians. Nchimbi's mediation session failed because he had allegedly acquiesced to the Christians' demand that their fellows be released from police custody, as a pre-condition for their participation in the talks. The Muslims made a similar demand, but it was not met. This dealt a blow to the Nchimbi-led mediation. This point, however, is regarded by the Police Force and the Geita District Commissioner as a distortion of the facts. They insist that there were no preconditions for the talks. This seemingly favouritism also led to the breakdown of the Pinda-led mediation as well. It is instructive to note that the tension between the two groups remained so high that both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Home Affairs met with the two groups separately.

The Muslims' participation in the talks was already compromised, as they blamed the police in Buseresere who had prior information about the Christians' intention to slaughter the cow but who apparently did not act decisively. Also, the Christians said that the government did not deal effectively with the signs of the conflict, with the result that the Pentecostal pastor was murdered (interview with Bishop Stephano Saguda, Geita, 15th August 2014). The Christians were infuriated when Minister Stephen Wassira announced that an agreement had been reached despite the talks being inconclusive. Similar statements were made after each visit by the ministers. If an outstanding violent conflict is resolved through mediation, mediators win political credits and national and international recognition. In Tanzanian politics, this should be understood against the atmosphere of the imminent 2015 General Election in which those jostling for the highest office in the country—the presidency—avail themselves of every opportunity that comes their way.

It seems that the conflict has died a natural death or has ceased (interviews with Sheikh Khamis Mrisho, Geita, 18th August 2014; Bishop Saguda, 15th August 2014; Geita Police Station, 13th August 2014). The impression one gets from talking to people is that it is not yet celebration time. The conflict may have ceased, but it cannot be concluded that the government's intervention ended the conflict (interview with Geita Police officers, 13th August 2014). The people in Geita are silent, but are not necessarily satisfied with the way the animal slaughter conflict has been dealt with. The truth is that two groups of people who belong to two different religions have been clashing and the government has literally been "sitting over the fence". Inter-faith committees were formed, but they have not started function in earnest and the work plan had yet to be prepared. What is disturbing is the fact that the conflict has inflicted a deep wound on the society. Some people have stopped buying meat from the butcheries; they are waiting for the government to come up with regulations "that allow the Christians to slaughter animals for public consumption" (interview with Bishop Saguda, 15th August 2014).

It should be noted that the slaughtering of animals for public consumption is stipulated clearly under the law and in related regulations. The Veterinary Act of 2003, the Animal Diseases Act of 2003 and Regulation No. 7 (G. N. No. 27) of 2007 demand compliance with religious beliefs in slaughtering animals. The Animal

Welfare Act of 2008 provides procedures that one must follow when one is slaughtering animals for public consumption. The law states that “[t]he provision of this part shall not apply where religious beliefs specify the mode of slaughtering an animal provided that:

- (i) it is performed by a person in possession of necessary knowledge and skills;
- (ii) it is performed exclusively in the presence of a veterinarian in charge of slaughtering and meat inspection;
- (iii) it is performed in a way that the large blood vessels in the throat area are opened with one single cut;
- (iv) the equipment is available to ensure that animals intended for such slaughter can be brought into the position required for slaughtering without any delay (sic); and,
- (v) it is performed in a way that other animals waiting for slaughter do not to see the slaughtering process.

Even if this law and the others are contested, they provide a starting point. Strangely, the national leaders, including the President and the Prime Minister, did not say that the establishment of discriminatory “Christian butchers” was contrary to the law, procedures and regulations. President Kikwete’s end-of-month address to the nation on 30th March 2013, almost two months after the Buseresere conflict, largely focused on the government’s position on the conflict and other inter-religious conflicts. The President spent a lot of time talking about Christian-Muslim relations. He warned, advised, cajoled and coaxed the people to maintain peace in the country. His arguments were based more on logic than on legal requirements. The implication is that the meat business was not a much regulated business. He said:

Wisdom should help us find a way to make the Christians and Muslims of Buseresere talk and understand each other and continue to live together peacefully as before. They can address the animal slaughter issue peacefully. Why, despite the presence of pork butcheries in various parts of the country haven’t people fought? It is not a good idea to use the Buseresere conflict to make Christians and Muslims all over the country hate each other.

This speech is largely a reflection of the passive/avoidance style of conflict resolution employed by the government in this case. By referring to the conflict as the “Buseresere problem”, the government was not putting in place “firm institutions” for addressing conflicts such as the Buseresere one in future. Its position that “[i]t is an event that cannot be linked with other events in the country”—it is a Buseresere problem which is associated with the Christians and Muslims of

Buseresere—makes people ask themselves why a similar conflict occurred in Tunduma, two months after the one in Buseresere.

Coercive interventionism

Initial incidents of animal slaughtering by Christians occurred in Nychunge, a suburb of Sengerema District, but they were short-lived as the Geita Regional Commissioner issued stern warnings against the slaughtering of animals by Christians. By that time, signs of violence had begun to appear, including the opening of “Christian butcheries”. The government seemed to have been taken aback by what was happening. Before embarking on what is termed “coercive interventionism”, several peaceful means of resolving the conflict, including several reconciliation sessions which took place in the DC’s office, were used. The District Administrative Officer (DAS) was responsible for supervising the implementation of the agreements reached. As a provisional measure, the DC stopped animal slaughter at the Katoro abattoir, and thus all meat was to be obtained from Kasote. Meanwhile, efforts to communicate with the Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority (TFDA) were made; the TFDA directed that the usual procedures must be followed. This position mirrored the directive issued by the RC that the Animal Diseases Act of 2003 and Regulation No. 7 (G. N. No. 27) of 2007 must be effectively enforced.

In dealing with the inter-religious violence, the government employed the coercive instruments of the state to calm down the tension and normalise the situation. The police addressed criminal matters so as to ensure that peace and stability were restored in the area and that socio-political activities continued normally. Twenty-two people were charged with six different offences, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Charges and the number of suspects, Geita, 2013

S/No.	Type of charges	Number of suspects
1.	Murder	4
2.	Causing injuries to people	1
3.	Selling of uninspected meat	6
4.	Destruction of property	6
5.	Assault	3
6.	Riots	2
	Total	22

Source: Police reports obtained from the Office of the Regional Police Commander, Geita

At the time of writing, all the suspects had already been taken to court and the cases were at different hearing stages. Some of the files had already been sent to the

government attorney and some of the charges had been modified. It is interesting to note that the charges prove that some laws had been contravened.

Apart from dealing with people who are suspected of fanning terrorism, the government also meted out penalties to two radio stations for sensational reporting. On 28th February 2013, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) closed for six months *Kwa Neema Radio FM* of Mwanza owned by one Bishop Augustine Mpemba of the Tanzania Field Evangelism Church and *Radio Imaan FM* of Morogoro owned by the Islamic Foundation of Tanzania. *Kwa Neema Radio FM* was accused of fuelling the animal slaughter conflict by airing things that incited people to stop buying meat (see also President Kikwete's end-of-month speech of March 2013). *Radio Imaan FM* was accused of telling Muslims not to participate in the 2012 Housing and Population Census. The TCRA was accused of trying to balance the blame by punishing the two radio stations owned by Christians and Muslims, respectively, albeit for unrelated offences.

Terrorism and transnational dynamics in Tanzania

In Tanzania, terrorism should be understood in the global context in which it occurs. Almost invariably political conflicts that are labelled as "terrorist activities" seem to have external links or at least they target foreign interests and influences. Brents and Mshigeni (2004:60) argue that terrorists are rational actors, seeking to achieve political ends through terrorism and, therefore, terrorism is relational—"[i]ts raise and trajectory should be understood in relation to other groups, and in response to perceptions of threat." Terrorist strategies lend themselves to collective group feelings of alienation from the global or domestic resources or a sense of inequality systematically perpetrated by a dominant group. Therefore, groups referred to as "terrorist groups" have clear targets in mind.

Global terrorism is associated with the decline of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the Eastern/Communist Bloc in the early 1990s. The disintegration of the USSR marked the triumph of (neo)liberalism and the onset of unipolar global politics steered by the United States. The USSR was generally regarded as a spokesperson for the voiceless people in the world; it also offered moral and material support to freedom fighters in the former colonies and Third World countries. Its decline, therefore, marked the end of the exploited people's fight against inequalities and global socio-political asymmetries.

On the global plane, religion (Islam) is linked with symbolic resistance to global injustices. In the politics of the North-South divide, the United States symbolises the North, the wealthy and socio-political and economic dominant economies of the world, as it imposes itself on the South, the poverty-stricken, powerless consumers of the policies formulated by the North. As Huntington (1996) argues, in the aftermath of the cold war, fault lines are shifting to cultural and identity distinctions from ideological distinctions.

Terrorist acts have been committed in Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and even Tanzania in the past five years. In Nigeria, Boko Haram (which means Western education is sinful) has emerged in the poor but natural resource-rich areas of

northern Nigeria. It is opposed to Western education and culture and considers them the cause of the deterioration of Nigeria. In April 2014, Boko Haram abducted 270 girls from a secondary school in northern Nigeria. In Kenya, local and foreign forces led to the attack at the Westgate shopping mall that resulted in the death of 67 people. The attack was retaliation against the Kenyan government's decision to send its troops to Somalia to fight against Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab has vowed to escalate attacks as long as Kenya maintains its military presence in Somalia. As LeSage (2014) points out, Al-Shabaab linked up with the already existing forces of Al-Qaeda in East Africa (AQEA), especially in Mombasa, that were demanding the expansion of the democratic space and the inclusion of Muslim interests in the Kenyan government. The AQEA is associated with the 1998 simultaneous or twin bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

A survey of the ongoing cases related to terrorist acts in Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Mtwara, Tanga and Zanzibar creates the impression that the "terrorist enemy" is slowly becoming radicalised and young Muslims are bent on destroying American, Western, Christian and, to some extent, Islamic interests. Numerous court cases and the involvement of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in investigating the perceived terrorist attacks in Zanzibar and Arusha bear this out. Future research should establish the opaque interests of the US in Tanzania, given the nature of the US foreign policy.

In Zanzibar, accusations and counter-accusations have been made by the Civic United Front (CUF) and the government over the use of the label "terrorist". CUF claims that the government harasses and embarrasses the opposition under the guise of fighting terrorism. It also says that it is not responsible for the bomb explosions that occur in the country and says that the ruling Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) uses such explosions as a justification for harassing CUF (Bretns & Mshigeni, 2004). The Unguja-Pemba unequal distribution of wealth, poor sewerage systems, dressing styles and the behaviour of Western tourists, conspicuous consumption of alcohol, the rising rate of local drug abuse, prostitution and the corrupt practices associated with both local businesses and political elections are some of the issues that are contested (Le Sage, 2014).

Insofar as Zanzibar is concerned, violence can be traced back to the 2009 *Maridhiano* (Accord), which paved way to the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) after the 2010 elections. *Maridhiano* played a critical role in ensuring that peaceful elections were held in Zanzibar in 2010 and addressed some of the causes of the conflict which remained unresolved despite the signing of the two agreements, *Muafaka* I and II in 1999 and 2001, by CCM and CUF. The unanticipated consequence of *Maridhiano* has been the resulting vacuum, as CUF, the main opposition political party in Zanzibar, is seen as an integral part of the status quo (Le Sage, 2014) whose constituency lacks a mouthpiece. CUF used to take a radical position on the Revolution, the Union and religious affairs, a position which had been weakened by its then being part of the same government, to which it had been fiercely opposed previously. The vacuum had seemingly been filled by the radical groups which wanted to ensure that Zanzibar's autonomy was enshrined in

the new constitution whose writing process started in 2011. Le Sage has captured the movements thusly:

One particular local movement called UAMSHO (also known as the Association for Islamic Mobilization and Propagation, the Awakening, or in [Ki]Swahili, as Jumuiya ya Uamsho na Mihadhara ya Kiislam) has capitalised on this situation. Led by Sheikh Farid Hadi, the group was established as an Islamic Non-Governmental Organisation in 2001 but has progressively become more involved in radical politics over time. The group openly calls for full independence from Tanzania for Zanzibar and has been involved in multiple protests since 2012.... UAMSHO is most often blamed for attacks that take place in Zanzibar, including the acid, arson, and explosive attacks (Le Sage, 2014:9).

Brents and Mshigeni (2004) have shown the relationship between people's dissatisfaction with certain political processes and the upsurge in terrorist attacks in Zanzibar. For example, in the aftermath of the hotly contested 2000 elections, nine bombs targeting local bars, posh tourist resorts and political headquarters exploded. In 2004, violence flared up when the government attempted to ban Muslims' religious events. A Roman Catholic Church, a school bus, a police car and a transformer were set ablaze. Other attacks were directed at an American diplomat and a British diplomat, a minister of transport and the residence of the Mufti of Zanzibar. Although the causes of terrorism in Zanzibar seem to relate to Zanzibar's wish to be more autonomous than it is and Western, Christian "influences", Muslims on Mainland Tanzania began to protest against the alleged government bias in favour of Christians. Le Sage (2014) discusses the establishment of *Baraza la Uendelezaji Koran Tanzania* (BALUKTA – the Council for the Promotion of the Koran in Tanzania). The process of establishing the council was led by Sheikh Yahya Hussein in the 1980s and the council was formed to counter the government-sponsored *Baraza Kuu la Waislam Tanzania* (BAKWATA). BALUKTA was banned in 1993 and the groups mentioned earlier emerged to fill the vacuum. God's Lion is led by Sheikh Ponda Issa Ponda, who is also a key leader of *Jumuiya ya Taasisi za Kiislam* (the Community of Muslim Organisations). This group is associated with organising open-air inflammatory preaching and the takeover of "moderate" mosques (Le Sage, 2014).

The intriguing question is whether the intra-religious strife and the bomb explosions witnessed in various parts of Tanzania are connected with external forces. The government solicited external assistance in terms of intelligence in relation to the murder of Father Evarist Mushi in Zanzibar. William Lukuvi, a government minister, said that the murder of the priest was a terrorist act, and by implication foreign forces were at work. FBI sent a special contingent of criminal investigators on the request of the government. The investigation led to the production of a sketch image of the suspected murderer who was later arrested. Because the case is still going on, it is difficult for me to establish the actual involvement of the arrested person in the murder. FBI also helped with the investigation of the bombing of the Olasiti Roman Catholic Church in Arusha. The outcome of the investigation is not known as yet.

Another pointer is the linking of some of the incidents with terrorism and terrorist networks in Africa and even beyond. In Mtwara and Tanga, sometime ago the police said that they were holding some people who were allegedly receiving terrorist training in certain forests in the country through DVDs that were allegedly prepared by Al-Qaeda or Al-Shabaab in Somalia. This drew public interest, although the exact link between the people and the terrorist organisations was not established. These claims were substantiated by the Special UN Peace Envoy to Somalia, Ambassador Augustino Mahiga, who said that some Tanzanians had been recruited by Al-Shabaab to fight in Somalia and that some were in Iraq and Syria. It is claimed that they are attracted to money, fanaticism or simply adventure. These youngsters may pose a security threat when they return home. Le Sage (2014) has shown why Tanzania could be the next centre of terrorist activities in East Africa. His analysis indicates that Al-Shabaab might focus on soft targets in Tanzania, including tourist attractions or diplomatic personnel to demonstrate their military prowess. Tanzania's support for the government in Somalia and the presence of a network responsible for the 1998 attacks on the US Embassy and the increasing sense of discrimination against Muslims set a perfect atmosphere for such activities. The discovery of terrorist training camps, weapons and the indoctrination centres shows the presence in the country of foreign influences linked to terrorist groups in Kenya and Somalia (Le Sage, 2014:9). Le Sage says a group known as Ansar Muslim Youth Centre (AMYC) led by Sheikh Salim Abdulrahim Barahiyan of Tanga has direct links to al Hijra in Mombasa, itself a strong ally of Al-Shabaab and part of the network that bombed the US Embassy in 1998.

On 21st October 2013, the Arusha Police Commander said during a press conference that they had killed one Yahaya Hassan Omari Hela, who was allegedly the mastermind of the terrorist attacks that rocked Arusha. He was arrested in Morogoro, transferred to Arusha and was killed by the police as they were travelling to Kondo, where he was going to show them the place where more bombs and weapons had been hidden. The killing of the suspect did not resolve the terrorism mystery in Tanzania, but rather it solidified the uncertainties. The police neither disclosed the identity of the group nor indicated that the bombs had originated from outside the country. In Arusha, four people, allegedly from the Middle East, were arrested immediately after the Olasiti church bombing. They were later released and immediately deported to their home countries. The government apologised and said that the arrests were carried out erroneously and that the four men were tourists. However, it was criticised for the way in which it had handled the matter. Usually, the public expects a lengthy, satisfactory investigation before suspects are exonerated in serious crimes. It was claimed that an "invisible foreign hand" had influenced the release and deportation of the four men.

The charge sheets in various courts also indicate cases related to terrorism. At the Senior Resident Magistrates' Court in Kisumu, 17 suspected members of Al-Shabaab were charged with two related terrorist offences. They were charged with conspiracy and recruitment of people to participate in terrorist activities. On 18th July 2014, the front page of the *Daily News* newspaper carried a story entitled "Al-

Shabaab members in court”. According to the *Mwananchi* newspaper of 28th July 2014, the 17 suspects were arrested in Zanzibar but they appeared before the Resident Magistrates’ Court in Kisutu, although this fact was not mentioned in the charges. In Zanzibar, protest charges were filed against the Zanzibar Commissioner of Police, who had decided to try the suspects in a court on Mainland Tanzania for a crime they had committed in Zanzibar. The court dismissed this case on technical grounds. This is a second case to be filed at the same court relating to terrorist acts. The first was filed in November 2013 against four people.

Sometimes it is said—as was the case with the bomb that exploded in Arusha—that the explosives come from outside the country. Indeed, it is said that they come from China, although the factory was closed down some years back. On 23rd July 2014, several media outlets carried a story of the explosives and other weapons that were seized at the home of an Arusha resident by the police. In the report, the police said they had nabbed seven grenades, six rounds of shotgun ammunition, two swords/machetes, a bag of gunpowder and a screw driver in the house. Additionally, the police said they were holding two suspects (Yusufu Ali, 30, and his wife Sumaiya Juma, 19, both of Sombetini) in connection with the bombs. The two were also held in custody in connection with the explosions that had happened in prayer houses. One of the bombs was manufactured in Russia and the other in Germany. The suspects were also accused of bombing the church at Olasiti.

The suspects in Arusha were charged with four offences: conspiring with other people to commit terrorist acts; committing terrorist acts; unlawfully possessing the grenades; and financing the terrorist acts that were committed at Varma Restaurant. In a similar development, in Dar es Salaam, suspected terrorists appeared before the Resident Magistrates’ Court in Kisutu. The suspects were accused of facilitating entry of foreigners into the country (from unspecified countries) with the intention of committing terrorist acts. Previously, 16 suspects were arrested in Arusha on 29th May 2014. Eight of them were believed to be terror agents and the rest were thought to be behind the bomb attacks that had happened in Arusha. All of them have appeared before the Arusha Resident Magistrates’ Court; they were charged with murder, vandalism and affiliation to terror groups.

It is instructive to note that at the time of writing several cases related to terrorism were at different hearing stages. For this reason, it might be premature to conclude that the state has failed to prove that the unrest in Arusha, Mtwara, Tanga and Zanzibar was caused by “terrorists”. Tanzanians will be interested to know why the police are quick to associate turbulent events that happen in the country with terrorism, but fail to prove their allegations in court.

Conclusion

The Tanzanian state has over the years changed quite significantly, compared to what it was in the 1970s and the early 1980s, particularly in terms of its political culture and degree of control over the civil society. The change from a monolithic political culture to a liberalised political culture has allowed new political forces to develop in the country. The Tanzanian state is not only an arbiter in a situation where various

actors are competing for socio-political space but is itself highly contested. This provides wider space for political action, including the use of religious platforms by people to express discontent with political and economic hardships. This explains why the demand for inclusiveness in the process of wealth creation and more transparency in the governance and management of natural resources is at the core of some of the recent conflicts. In other words, many of the demands are more economic and political than spiritual. Although seemingly disparate and isolated, the incidents of religious conflict under review thrive on a situation where people question some of the traditions such as the right to slaughter animals for public consumption. This has, in turn, been a source of critical tension and conflicts between radical Christians and Muslims.

This article makes a number of recommendations for action and further research:

- a) The major “reform” policies adopted in the late 1980s should be reviewed to determine their ramifications, with regard to the relationship between the state and the civil society, and specifically between the state and religion. The review should take into consideration the change the Tanzanian state is undergoing, from being a “socialist” state to being a neo-liberal state and its implications for the marginalized people.
- b) Multidisciplinary research should be carried out so as to establish the decline of religious tolerance in Tanzania. There is a need to interrogate the established tradition of treating religion as a taboo that cannot be debated. In the future, questions about how much religious groups or individual followers of certain religious beliefs benefit from the state will not be avoided. Specifically, the state should ensure that the syllabuses of all the schools, colleges and universities owned by religious institutions do not contain abusive/inflammatory contents.
- c) The government should swiftly intervene and resolve conflicts that have religious overtones, no matter their spread and intensity. All terrorist cases which have attracted the interest of the public should be heard and concluded without further delay.

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