Neoliberalising infrastructure and its discontents: The Bus Rapid Transit project in Dar es Salaam

BRTs as a public transport policy fix for neoliberalism[1]

BRTs have been increasingly promoted as the solution to chronic and rapidly escalating traffic congestion and to the low quality of public transport provision, widely shared traits of urban life in developing countries today. In 2007, forty cities across six continents had BRT systems (ITDP, 2007: 1). By March 2016, the figure had risen to 202,[2] and many more BRTs were currently at the planning phase and/or on the pipeline.

'Think rail, see bus' goes the BRT motto. Proponents of BRT systems stress how they combine the flexibility of bus transit with the benefits of a rail-based mass transport system (namely speed, reliability, and mass ridership), at a fraction of rail's costs.[3] However, while BRTs are to some extent context-specific, there are five common characteristics that help to explain what is at stake in their promotion. First, while cheaper than rail systems, BRT systems still require substantial investment. International finance led by the World Bank has played a pivotal role in providing the funds for their implementation. Second, a major characteristic of BRTs is that they entail the phasing out of privately owned minibuses from the main arteries of public transport systems, and their deployment on feeder routes. As BRT

[1] This chapter is an adapted version of 'The New Face of Neoliberalism: The Bus Rapid Transit Project in Tanzania (2002–16)', chapter 7 of my recent book, *Taken for a ride: Grounding neoliberalism, precarious labour and public transport in an African metropolis.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, Series on Critical Frontiers of Theory, Research, and Policy in International Development Studies.
[2] On the current figure see 'Global BRT Data', <http://brtdata.org/#/location>.
[3] ITDP estimates that BRTs are four to twenty times cheaper than tram or Light Rail Transit (LRT) and ten to 100 times cheaper than metro (ITDP, 2007: 1).

buses are new and less polluting than those which provide public transport in many developing countries, advocates of BRT outline the environmental and traffic reduction benefits of bus-switching. Third, BRT delivers faster trips thanks to off-board fare collection, platform-level boarding, and a fundamental shift in the rights to urban road use, as BRT buses are normally granted two dedicated lanes. Fourth, as a result of this, BRT systems require major upgrading of the urban road infrastructure, including the rebuilding and widening of main roads. Finally, although BRTs are publicly funded, a conditionality attached to World Bank lending is that private companies operate the buses. The public sector's role is to oversee the system and carry out quality controls on the service providers. Therefore, although PPPs are not necessarily the only possible institutional set-up for BRTs, PPPs are *de facto* the way in which most BRTs operate, as suggested by their promoters. BRTs are therefore to be understood as the urban transport expression of public–private partnerships, the rationale for, and benefits of which, are contested (Loxley, 2013).

This chapter charts the political economy of BRT in Dar es Salaam as in instance of the changing face of neoliberalism in public transport. In Dar es Salaam, DART (as BRT is called) signalled by a remarkable departure from 30 years of pervasive economic deregulation and limited government capacity. The gap between the magnitude of the city's transport problems and the state's capacity to deal with them appeared macroscopic. Donor-imposed fiscal austerity and the shrinking of the size of the public sector—the defining features of 'roll back' neoliberalism (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) —were visible in the dearth of the human and financial resources available to public transport institutions in Dar es Salaam.

In 2016, a large-scale intervention, designed to radically change the transport system was the Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART), the Tanzanian version of Bus Rapid Transit systems (BRT). To facilitate it, a substantial and well-resourced unit was established within the Prime Minister's Office with funding from the World Bank. The capacity of the public sector on transport in the city has thus been significantly boosted, but to what end? Stepping out of Dar es Salaam for a moment, such a shift conforms to the broader transition from a first phase of 'roll-back' neoliberalism, to a second in which state intervention is 'rolled out' (Brenner and Theodore, **2002**), as it is more actively deployed both to manage the tensions generated by the first phase of neoliberalism and further promote the interests of private capital. 'To put it crudely, once you have done as much privatization as the system will bear under the neo-liberal rhetoric of withdrawal of state intervention, then the time has come to use the state to correct market imperfections and to improve its workings, as in Public–Private Partnerships (PPP)' (Van Waeyenberge *et al.*, **2011**: 9). As BRTs are promoted through PPPs in urban transport, the above characterization of the changing face of neoliberalism pertains to the direction of policymaking in Dar es Salaam.

BRT came to Dar es Salaam via Latin America, as research suggesting that BRT successes in Latin America opened 'a new era in low-cost, high-quality' transport is key to the argument for BRTs (IEA, 2002). Described as the 'world reference point for bus rapid transit systems' (Quality Public Transport, 2012: 1), Bogotá's highly celebrated Transmilenio became the 'first mass transit system in the world designated as a Clean Development Mechanism under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change' (ITF, 2010: 1). At the 2012 UN Sustainable Development Conference in Rio de Janeiro, international development banks pledged US$175 billion over ten years to support sustainable transport in developing countries (WRI, 2012), with BRTs playing 'a key role in creating sustainable [urban] futures'

(Cervero and Dai, 2014: 128). Furthermore, international development funding has been channelled into building links between Bogotá and prospective BRT systems, resulting in officials from more than twenty countries visiting Transmilenio to learn from its (alleged) success.[4] As transport systems that benefit the economy as well as the environment and the poor, BRTs are championed as the ultimate 'win–win' intervention to solve public transport problems.

Bringing the urban political back into the study of BRTs

The point of departure of this chapter is that much of the literature on BRTs displays two major, and related, shortcomings. First, is its apolitical technicism, manifest in its distinctive attention to the technical features of these systems. such as ridership numbers, speed of travel, distance between bus stops, and co2 emissions. Such a focus fails to pay attention to the politics and distributional impacts that the adoption of BRTs system, and the move away from the previous system of provision of public transport, entails. The second shortcoming is the lack of independence of far too many studies on BRTs, as they are by and large funded by institutions with economic interests in their promotion.

Addressing these shortcomings necessitates bringing back the urban political into the study of BRTs at two levels, which this chapter sketches out briefly. First is the analysis of the political and economic players promoting the adoption of BRTs and what this reveals about the place of BRT in international political economy. It will be argued that BRT, far from being a 'win-win' policy fix, is best understood as the new face of neoliberalism in public transport. Second is a brief analysis of the implementation BRT in Dar es Salaam,

[4] On learning about BRT from Bogotá, and more broadly from South American cities, with the aim of implementing it in South African cities, see Wood (2014, 2015).

Tanzania, with a focus on the politics of and resistance to BRT. Through this case study, the analysis reveals the contradictions intrinsic to BRTs in one particular context and its national political economy: what different Tanzanian actors stood to lose from its implementation, and the way in which they were able to resist and influence the project.

The BRT Evangelical Society

A look at existing research on BRTs and the narrative that presents it as the 'win-win' solution to urban transport problems in developing countries, reveals that a small set of institutions lies behind. The World Bank is the key player, providing the loans to implement BRTs, and also funding for the vast majority of the research on them. Volvo, which—not coincidentally perhaps—supplies buses to many BRT systems, also supports 'Across Latitudes and Cultures—Bus Rapid Transit', which is the BRT Center of Excellence. The latter's members include four academic institutions and EMBARQ.[5] EMBARQ, which is the World Resources Institute's Centre for Sustainable Cities, credits itself for having 'played a major role in expanding the BRT concept to cities throughout the world' (WRI, 2012) and is one of the organizations behind 'Global BRT Data', the most up-to-date dataset on BRTs.[6]

The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), a Washington-based NGO, is unfailingly on the horizon wherever BRTs are implemented. ITDP's growth from a small advocacy NGO to an organization with over sixty staff members in offices in Africa, Asia, and Latin America has been associated with access to BRT funding. ITDP has played different roles in this capacity. It produced a BRT planning guide, carried out prefeasibility

[5] See < http://www.brt.cl/about-us/members/> accessed 31 January 2017.
[6] See footnote n. 2.

studies in various cities, signposted potential new sources of funding for BRTs, and has been at the forefront of studies on BRT impacts (Matsumoto, 2006). In 2011, the ITDP Board of Directors, worthy of scrutiny as it provides some indication as to whom the NGO is accountable, included the managing director of the Goldman Sachs Urban Investment Group, a representative from the world giant investment firm Carlyle Group, and two representatives of the World Bank, including a retired former Vice President of the Bank (ITDP, 2011: 24). International finance obviously has huge stakes in the opening up of urban public transport markets—and more broadly of public utilities markets—in developing countries, and in the funding of the infrastructural work that they require.[7] These are examples of the vested interests of the institutions that present Bogotá's Transmilenio—and BRT more broadly—as a success.

By contrast, independent research and media coverage on Transmilenio present a more ambivalent picture, in which the positive impacts of BRT coexist alongside its negative consequences. Travel times and the quality of transport improved with Transmilenio, but claims that it is 'providing reliable transport accessibility for the poor' (World Bank, 2009) are contradicted by increases in transport fares, a trend observed elsewhere (Hidalgo *et al.*, **2007**; Munoz *et al.*, 2013).[8] Increased fares have inevitably prevented the poor from accessing the service and have led to public protests demanding lower fares (BBC News, 2012). Such demands could not be met, as the bargaining power of the public regulatory body vis-à-vis the private tenders was low, as is often the case with public–private partnerships.

[7] See Hall (2014: 5–44) for an excellent overview of corporate interests and networks in promoting PPPs.
[8] The inflationary impact of BRTs on transport fares has been observed in many other cities, with costs as high as 1.05 US$ per trip (São Paolo, Brasil). Most systems with a fare below 0.40 US$ are reported to be under financial stress.

Furthermore, the inclusion of previous public transport operators often proved problematic. In Bogotá, ownership of BRT buses increasingly became concentrated in the hands of a few private operators (ITF, 2010), while other contexts presented their own distinctive tensions with inclusion, at times violent (Paget-Seekins *et al*., 2015; Walters and Cloete, 2008). Another major problem with Transmilenio is the contraction in employment opportunities that accompanied the higher productivity of labour. The proclaimed goal of replacing the exploitative informal employment relations of the pre-existing transport system with better, formal jobs ran into difficulties as workers faced new types of pressures from employers under the new system. Access to these jobs for those who worked on the previous system was not straightforward. 'Only one in seven of the bus drivers in the old system were able to find work in the new one', partly because the harsh working conditions of the previous system prevented many from passing the medical test for a job in the new system (Quality Public Transport, 2012; Porter, 2010). Although the World Bank has praised Transmilenio as a 'financially self-sustaining bus rapid transit system', the system sustained itself on the basis of higher fares and funding from international loans which will effectively be repaid by national taxpayers. These loans were used to pay for the infrastructural work, thus acting as a hidden subsidy to the private companies operating BRT (Gilbert, 2008: 439–67).

In sum, a cursory look at the record of BRT in Bogotá shows the tensions of this 'success story'. This is in line with most public–private partnerships, which are promoted as being self-evidently beneficial, but more often than not entail an uneasy relationship between the public sector (which provides the funding) and the private sector (which provides the services on long-term leases). As PPPs, BRTs are better understood as a solution to tackle the crisis in public urban transport in which international finance and the corporate sector have a powerful interest, as BRTs allow them to capture new markets and public funding (Paget-

Seekins, 2015). Their implementation has complex and often contradictory impacts. While BRTs are capable of delivering improvements in the standards of public transport, they also generate a set of tensions that typically coalesce around the lack of affordable fares, the exclusion of the previous transport investors and workforce in the new system, and the contraction of employment opportunities. This chapter now proceeds to analyse the way in which these tensions characterised the implementation of BRT in Dar es Salaam.

The political economy of BRT in Dar es Salaam

First announced in 2002, Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART), as BRT is named in Tanzania, has been funded through a 150 million US$ loan (for phase one out of a total of six) from the World Bank to the government of Tanzania. In 2016, it was the most grandiose BRT to be launched in Africa, with the rebuilding and doubling in width of the main arteries in the city, for a total of 137 km of new road network, eighteen terminals, and 228 stations. BRT champion ITDP played a key role in Dar es Salaam BRT, as it suggested the project to the City Council in first place, and then it also sponsored an investigative trip by the City Council to Bogotá (Kanyama *et al*., 2004: 43). ITDP also facilitated a meeting at the World Bank, following which Dar es Salaam became the forerunner of BRT in Africa.

Before analysing the tensions associated with its implementation, it is important to critically assess the rationale of DART and, as a project which aimed to radically rethink the city's transport system, to determine whether it adequately addresses the poor state of existing services. To be sure, large-scale infrastructural work and the widening of key roads were a much-needed step to improve transport in the city. Dar es Salaam had grown rapidly since the late colonial period, while its road system had remained by and large unchanged since colonial times. In addition, the number of vehicles had increased exponentially (Briggs and Mwamfupe, 2000). Action was also needed to improve the poor conditions of public transport in the city, which were provided by primarily old, overloaded, and unsafe *daladalas*. However, it is important to ask whether there was no alternative to the phasing out of *daladalas* and to question the rationale for providing two exclusive lanes to BRT buses.[9]

The 2009 National Road Safety Policy put partial responsibility for the inefficiency of the transport system on 'rapid increased car ownership' (United Republic of Tanzania, 2009: 36). Indeed, DART itself acknowledged this when it stated in 2014 that in Dar es Salaam there are '120,000 private vehicles that carry only six per cent of residents with 480,000 of their seats lacking passengers' (DART, 2014). DART's vision of a better transport system and its desire to avoid any clash with private cars owners, the rising affluent, was a political one—one which leaves the inefficient use of private vehicles, by far the largest cause of traffic congestion, unchallenged. At the same time, DART proposed that 'the current state of affairs where Dar es Salaam has more than 6,000 commuter buses that carry *only* (emphasis added) 43 per cent of city dwellers is not sustainable'. Equally problematic is that *daladalas* were identified as the sole culprits of transport problems and were therefore not to be permitted on the two lanes exclusively set aside for public transport. It is worth reflecting on the fact that the types of buses to be operated by DART were taken as a given, and no thought went into supporting the improvement of the *daladala* fleet with, for example, effective regulation and a recapitalization programme to scale up the average size of buses

[9] According to the DART plan, 150-seater buses will serve the main roads, while on feeder roads smaller buses, carrying approximately fifty passengers, will operate. This increased carrying capacity of buses, from the current scenario in which the majority of vehicles are thirty-five-seater buses, is aimed at easing traffic congestion.

and reduce their average age. Therefore, the rationale of DART and its prioritization of the solutions to public transport chaos in Dar es Salaam were questionable from the outset.

An outstanding feature of the BRT implementation in Dar es Salaam is the slow pace at which it has progressed, resulting in the loss of its status as BRT forerunner in Africa. Cape Town and Johannesburg, for example, embarked on BRTs well after Dar es Salaam but completed their projects earlier—although not without similar tensions (Schakelamp and Beherens, **2010**; **2013**). While DART officers have exclusively attributed the slow implementation to the size of the project (interview with Schelling, 2014), there is arguably more to it, as urban politics were at the root of the slow implementation of the project. Two layers of explanation stood behind the delay. The first includes the practical barriers against which DART stumbled: that is, the concrete sites around which the tensions between project implementers and affected parties coalesced. But there is a second layer, that of the deeper roots of the delays in implementation, to be explored.

The local politics of BRT in Dar es Salaam

The practical barriers faced by DART implementers changed over the years, but two disputes stand out due to their prolonged nature. These were concentrated around two sites of key importance to the project. In both cases, resistance was collectively orchestrated. The first one was in Gerezani, in the Kariakoo area of the city centre, where DART planned to locate a terminal, its main office, and its control tower. Within this area there were fifty-three twin houses with a total of 106 owners. Twenty-nine owners accepted the proposed compensation for demolition, while the rest resisted the expropriation through a legal dispute that lasted over five years. The second main obstacle to implementation was over the use of Ubungo station for which Dar es Salaam Council and DART had conflicting agendas. Ubungo station is Tanzania's largest terminal to up-country destinations and, as such revenue from Ubungo was an important asset to the City's policymakers.[10] However, Ubungo station was also key to DART. Ubungo was planned as one of DART's five main terminals and one of its two bus depots, using 52 per cent of the existing terminal area. The fact that the City Council faced a loss of revenue, and the presence of traders/council tenants who stood to lose their business premises resulted in resistance to the proposed change of land use in Ubungo. This was orchestrared by leveraging a number of strategies, such as withholding or slowing down the public support that the project needed to make progress (including the carrying out of demolitions and the payment of compensation for land expropriation) and drawing on an opposition MP who championed the grievances of the citizens affected by the project.[11]

An aspect that stands out when scrutinizing the main hindrances to the implementation of DART is the mismatch between the relatively small nature of the problems that caused the delay and the time that it took to overcome them. Seventy-seven house owners slowed the project by five years. No authority stepped in to solve the impasse which halted progress with works at Ubungo Station. Arguably, a lack of high-level commitment to the project by the Tanzanian government underpins such an impasse, the reasons for which are explored next.

DART advocates promoted the project as a solution to urban transport problems that was beneficial to society and the economy at large, but as implementation neared, some groups stood to be negatively affected. A document entitled '*Daladala* grievances plan',

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[10] The Ubungo station manager claimed that revenue from the station was worth 50 per cent of the council's direct revenue.

[11] The practical barriers to the implementation of DART are discussed in more detail in Rizzo (2017: 153-157).

written in early 2010 by a consultant to the project (Kamukala, 2010), provides clues as to the tensions between the real politics of DART and its rosy portrayal, and to the often contradictory way in which these were handled. The document outlined how to manage 'the grievance process with *daladala* bus owners and operators in order to bring about a *win–win* (emphasis added) situation for everyone involved' (Kamukala, 2010: 1). However, such optimism sat alongside awareness of how delicate the issue of incorporation of previous operators was: 'DART has to clearly inform the *daladala* owners and operators how the introduction of the BRT is likely to affect their overall employment opportunities in the public transport sector, otherwise there might be strikes and violence due to lack of appreciation of the BRT system'. Along the same lines, one reads that 'it is important for DART to let stakeholders understand that introduction of the BRT system is an opportunity and not a threat to their existence'. However, no evidence was given for why this might be the case.

There were several different reasons for resistance to the project by affected parties, other than the 'lack of appreciation' of BRT. The unknown yet likely negative impact of DART on employment and on the estimated 20,000–30,000 workers in the sector was problematic for the Tanzanian leadership and one of the two key causes for its half-hearted support. At a dialogue on unemployment organized by Japan International Cooperation Agency in July 2013, the then Tanzanian president, Kikwete, expressed his concern about the gravity of the problem of under- and unemployment by identifying the decrease in the rate of unemployment amongst the youth in Africa as central to future political stability. As he put it, 'The Arab springs were about government that overstayed but the unemployment spring is coming to Africa and will not spare democratic governments' (*Daily News*, 4 June 2013). The President also openly voiced his worry about the employment implications of DART. At a show to publicize the project in Dar es Salaam in 2006, Kikwete stated that DART was going 'to reduce employment' (interview with Sykes, 2011). Kleist Sykes, Mayor of Dar es Salaam from 2001 to 2005 and a major force in the project since 2002, protested that this fear of unemployment was misconstrued as DART would 'create rather than reduce employment', thanks to training programmes for all affected parties, including workers, station attendants, and mechanics.

Yet, as I have shown, there was ground for scepticism about this smooth integration of pre-existing operators into DART predicted by its promoters. As 'a single DART bus will displace about 10 minibuses', job destruction will inevitably be considerable (*All Africa*, 24 August 2012). Although there were funds earmarked to train some drivers to qualify for driving on BRT buses, DART operators could not be under any obligation to hire them (interview with Schelling, 2011). In sum, DART entails a shift from labour-intensive to capital-intensive urban bus transport, with a contraction in the quantity of jobs and, ideally, their replacement with more secure and better-quality jobs. The role of the sector as a source of employment for the urban poor was a goal of secondary importance to increasing the carrying capacity of buses. From this perspective, one can understand the dismissive tone with which the 'grievance management planner' addressed workers: 'Some of these drivers will be re-routed; absorbed in the BRT system; lose jobs etc. *They should categorically be informed what would be their fate*' (Kamukala, 2010). The government, and first and foremost the President, seemed less enamoured with such a stance.

Difficulties in incorporating *daladala* owners in DART constituted the second main reason behind the lack of support by Tanzanian leaders for the project. As previously discussed, the involvement of pre-existing transport providers in BRT often proved to be a thorny issue. Dar es Salaam is no exception. Such difficulties stemmed from the place of *daladala* owners in DART being an afterthought to its planners. A study in 2009 found that, although there was a 'strong will to involve current *daladala* operators', there was 'no clear plan on how that will be accomplished' (Ahferom, 2009: 21). In May 2014, weeks away from the actual tendering process, lack of clarity persisted, as evidenced in the DART Project Information Memorandum, and in particular in its '*daladala* transition policy' (Rebel, 2014: 38). One of its pillars was the resettlement of *daladalas* to routes on the outskirts of the city. The Memorandum conceded that 'some *daladala* owners may then decide to withdraw from the public transport business altogether and invest in other sectors' but concluded that 'the fast population growth and rapid spreading of suburban neighbourhoods will create sufficient need to absorb most of this freed capacity' (Kamukala, 2010). However, as DART aimed to capture more and more of the market share controlled by *daladalas*, thus pushing them out of their areas of operation, the expectation that supply would create its own demand and that their business could be sustained when displaced to feeder routes was implausible.

The real issue was how *daladala* owners could become part of DART proper. Their inclusion was complicated because the bidding document for tenders for the two companies that would operate DART buses required that bidders must have been successfully engaged in something similar (interview with Schelling, 2011). As there were no Tanzanians with experience of this kind, this ruled out domestic investors from fully owning DART and fuelled tensions between foreign and national ownership of BRT implementation in Dar es Salaam. Indicative of the deep-seated tensions that characterized Tanzanian leaders' thinking on urban transport, Tambo Mhina, former secretary of the Dar es Salaam Region Transport Licensing Authority (DRTLA), recalls how in 2003, when the City Council had already endorsed the BRT proposal, his office prepared a plan to consolidate ownership of (larger) buses in Dar into two or three companies. Such a plan did not convince high-level decision makers, who objected: 'These people who own one or two buses, they are original Tanzanians. If you advertise a tender for large buses and large companies, investors of international calibre will come. They [Tanzanians] have already invested in the sector and will be sidelined. Where will they put their capital?' (interview with Mhina, 2010). Therefore, as late as 2003, the year in which the Council formally endorsed DART and its planning began, the Tanzanian leadership clearly prioritized the interests of indigenous investors over and above foreign investors and considerations on how to improve urban transport. With the attempt to roll out DART, ten years later, the problem had presented itself again, and more pressingly so. How then were the interests of Tanzanian investors being protected this time?

At the official inauguration of the construction of DART in 2010, the president Jakaya Kikwete urged *daladala* owners not to 'just remain idle complaining about the arrival of foreign investors' (Stewart, 2014). By this, he intended that owners should ensure that they were able to meet the requirements to operate the smaller buses on BRT feeder routes, and should form collective enterprises to join the operations on BRT main routes (as opposed to its feeder routes). Some owners had indeed been preparing for this, most notably the Dar es Salaam Commuter Buses Owners' Association (DARCOBOA), which registered a company to this end (Mutasingwa, n.d.).[12] However, a major barrier to joining BRT was the cost of buses and the lack of finance. Owners organized lobbying of various ministries, including the Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Finance, to facilitate support in the form of a loan guarantee and tax exemption, yielding promises but no tangible results. DARCOBOA

[12] The company is called Cordial Transportation Services (PLC).

responded by setting up a meeting with ‘the Member of Parliament for Dar es Salaam and Councillors who intend[ed] to be involved in the 2010 country election as candidates, to help them to sell the idea’, as they felt the issue required ‘political will’. The government offered public funds to promote *daladala* owners’ incorporation into DART in September 2012, when it announced that it would purchase all old *daladalas* six months before DART was due to start operations (*Daily News*, 25 September 2012). Thus, similar to the cases of Johannesburg and Cape Town, political pressure resulted in public funds becoming available to owners for the purchase of ‘free’ shares of the new BRT (Schakelamp, 2011: 10–11). However, the bus owners’ association turned down the offer, as the compensation that could reasonably be offered for fairly old vehicles was expected to be low (interview with Mabrouk, 2014).[13] Furthermore, many bus owners doubted the possibility of making a profit on shares without being cheated. Instead, owners restated their request for government support in the form of its guarantee to access finance for purchasing new buses. But as the chairman of the bus owners’ association explained, the failure to achieve any breakthrough had to do with reasons beyond government control: ‘In the words of the World Bank, there is no way we would give a loan guarantee to the private sector … I told people at the World Bank, that if we continue like this, it means that you want us [*daladala* owners] to get out. To us this is an elimination process’ (interview with Mabrouk, 2014).

Arguably, the World Bank and DART were merely paying lip service to the importance of local ownership of the project, since, according to the DART Chief Technical Adviser, a retired World Bank Transport specialist, ‘whatever we do with *daladalas* has to be

[13] The value of the buses became a hotly contested issue in other cities. On Bogotá, see Gilbert (2008).

compatible with the market. We cannot sell the project unless this is the case' (interview with Schelling, 2014). The implication was, in terms of the policy priorities on DART in 2014, that the foreign companies that successfully bid to operate DART, and from which *daladala* would have to subcontract their business, will have a key role in determining the terms and conditions of their service. What remained unexplained was the way in which Tanzanian bus owners were expected to compete in the market with much larger and wealthier foreign transport companies without any external support. In the words of DARCOBOA's chairman: 'Even in boxing, Prince Nasseem [a featherweight world champion], you cannot put him with Mike Tyson [heavyweight former world champion]. He will kill him, you cannot do that. This should be the logic, people with the same weight compete' (interview with Mabrouk, 2014). Along the same lines, Engineering Professor Mfinanga, a researcher on urban transport and on the Board of Directors of DART, 'cautioned that expecting [owners] to form companies and compete in an international bidding contest is "insulting to them"' (Stewart 2014). This is the way things stood, unsolved, as tendering became imminent. However, one would not remotely sense this from the Project Information Memorandum's rosier version of the situation: '[Bus owners] are generally supportive of the DART initiative … This industry restructuring and reorganisation process is also meant to give *daladala* owners a chance to associate with local and international parties in bidding for the DART system and participate in the tender process' (Rebel, 2014).

While the inconclusive search for ways to incorporate previous bus owners unfolded, DART faced a new challenge in the rapid growth of *Shirika la Usafiri Dar es Salaam* (UDA), a Tanzanian company, which sought to claim a key role in the project. UDA was the state-owned company that provided public transport in Dar es Salaam under a monopoly regime from 1970 until 1983, when private operators were permitted into the sector to satisfy the demand for transport that UDA could not match. As the decrease of its fleet progressed over the years and buyers could not be found when it was initially offered for privatization, UDA laid moribund, operating an average of as few as seventeen buses a year from 2002 to 2008 (National Institute of Transpor,t 2010). However, the scenario for UDA has looked much brighter since the early 2010s. In February 2014, the company owned just under 400 buses and had ordered a further 1000 buses, which when delivered would make it the largest urban passenger transporter in Africa. Its ambitious plan was to field 3000 buses by the end of 2014 (*The Guardian*, 17 February 2014; *Daily News*, 11 February 2014).

Such dynamism was a result of UDA's privatization in 2011 at a price and through a process that generated controversy and a legal case (*The Guardian*, 29 January 2012).[14] UDA had been previously co-owned by the Dar es Salaam City Council (with 51 per cent of its shares) and by the Tanzanian government, holder of the remaining 49 per cent of the shares. By purchasing the City Council's shares, Simon Group became the largest shareholder of UDA, and Robert Kisena, the Executive Chairman of Simon Group, became its new CEO. Kisena was purportedly closely connected to the son of the then president of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete, who was believed to be the main man behind UDA's rise.[15] While there was

[14] Prominent CCM leader and businessman Iddi Simba, then chairman of UDA board of directors, was involved in the controversy as he was charged, and then declared innocent, with forgery and abuse of office for selling UDA shares at a far too low price and for cashing in the money from the transaction. See Faustine Kapama, 'State files fresh charges against Iddi Simba'. *Daily News*, 1 May 2013, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201305010352.html>, accessed 11 November 2014.

[15] See discussions in *Jamii Forums*, <http://www.jamiiforums.com/jukwaa-la-siasa/159840-uda-connetion-ya-robert-kisena-na-msharika-wake-ridhiwani-kikwete-4.html>, accessed 12 November

no evidence to verify this claim, UDA's ambitious 'future plan […] to be involved in DART' was clear (UDA leaflet n.d.). Unlike those of DART, UDA's public statements seemed more attentive to the employment dimension of its operations. As Kisena explained when commenting on the introduction of 300 new UDA buses, 'the company's move will also help in the fight against unemployment as the 300 buses, once operational, would provide 900 direct employments and about 2,000 people will be employed indirectly' (*Daily News*, 8 October 2012).

Although UDA's rapid growth and self-promotion as a DART operator were well-received by public institutions, it caused bitterness amongst *daladala* operators and DART (*The Guardian*, 15 February 2014). For the latter, a particular concern surrounds UDA's procurement of thousands of vehicles without consultation with DART. As DART's Chief Technical Adviser explained, 'UDA buses are not the buses we need. We cannot use them. Our stations are designed for specific buses, with bus stops and lanes designed to match them' (interview with Schelling, 2014). Therefore, the foundations for a new clash were laid between the technicalities of bus designs and project specifications and the 'made in Tanzania' version of BRT promoted by UDA. While the accusation of a connection between UDA's new owner and the son of the current Tanzanian president, Jakaya Kikwete, is unverifiable, one can see how UDA intended to seize a lucrative contract as one of the DART service providers by virtue of being the only large Tanzanian transport company that could

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2014. Three informants, whose identity cannot be revealed, concurred with this rumour. Robert Kisena was an MP candidate at the parliamentary elections for CCM in 2010, when he lost to an opposition candidate. See Florian Kaijage, 'UDA scam: Simon's damning version', *The Guardian*, 29 January 2012.

supply buses to DART. As UDA directly addressed the anxieties of Tanzanian leaders over the impact of DART, most notably because it was owned by Tanzanians and aimed to employ a larger workforce, it continued to enjoy the support that the Tanzanian authorities had afforded it since its revival in the build and early stages of BRT implementation in Dar es Salaam.[16]

The international and urban political economy of BRTs

This chapter has argued that the narrative of BRTs, as a 'win–win' intervention to solve the public transport crisis in developing countries, obscures the many tensions associated with their implementation. Such a narrative stems from research sponsored by international finance, its NGO brokers, and BRT vehicle manufacturers, and is functional to their interests in opening up public transport markets in developing countries. While public transport in most developing countries cities is experiencing a serious crisis, BRT is a solution that must be understood as one of the latest—and most rapidly expanding—fronts of the promotion of neoliberalism in Africa through PPPs in urban public transport. This chapter has debunked BRT rhetoric, and has briefly reviewed its implementation in Dar es Salaam, as a window into the real politics, the main tensions and contradictions associated with one instance of 'actually existing neoliberalism'. More specifically, the chapter highlights the lack of any serious attempts to include the current public transport workforce by DART, and documents the destruction of employment opportunities and tensions over the incorporation of previous owners, compensation, and the affordability of the new service.

[16] See Rizzo (2017: 162-170) for a discussion of the way in the politics of DART continued to evolve in the early months of its life.

I have argued that such tensions have been problematic for the Tanzanian government and thus go a long way to explaining its unwillingness to resolve the conflicts that DART generated. Above all, the slow progress of DART stems from the tepid commitment to the project by the Tanzanian government, which reflects its attempt to bring into harmony the conflicting interests of the World Bank and the demands of a number of local actors to whom it is electorally accountable. In sum, this chapter makes the case that understanding the emergence of BRTs as policy fix of urban public transport must rest on a grounded understanding of its place in international political economy and that making sense of their implementations in cities around the world must start from an analysis of the urban politics in which BRTs are rooted.

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