Practicing Subalternity?

Nyerere's Tanzania, the Dar School, and Postcolonial Geopolitical Imaginations

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Following Tanganyikan independence in 1961, and especially during the period after the announcement of Tanzania's intention to follow an independent path of African socialism after the Arusha Declaration in 1967, Julius Nyerere challenged the geopolitics of colonialism and the Cold War. Like many other Third World leaders at the time, he sought a voice for those previously marginalized from the imaginings of the world order and proposed an alternative geographical imagination of a united Africa and an alliance of the poor.

This chapter will explore the challenges faced by Nyerere in trying to <u>practice</u> his postcolonial vision as the leader of a state that came into being on the lower echelons of the postwar world order. Subaltern studies, of course, emerged from scholars in the Indian subcontinent. However, while postcolonial African leaders focused on the neocolonial political and economic entanglements that the new states found themselves caught up in, these were not discussed in isolation from questions of the agency of new states and their people and of the politics of representation and epistemic power, more characteristic of subaltern studies. After all, Nyerere was effectively seeking to find a voice for those marginalized within a world order that actively sought to silence those in the South and that he felt was structured in such a way that it would ensure their continued economic, political, and epistemological marginality. Through the spatial politics of nation-building and pan-African, nonaligned cooperation, he sought to interrupt the system that created such inequalities.

It has been noted that, due to the challenge of enacting postcolonial politics in the postwar order, leaders such as Nyerere tended to a pedagogical style toward their citizens (Chakrabarty 2010). Nyerere emphasized the necessity of educating the Tanzanian population to create citizens able to make the new nation and, significantly, who understood the importance of unity and discipline in achieving this goal. He used a variety of education policies for nation-building, including moving talented students to high schools around the country; using Swahili as a nontribal, non-European language through which to narrate and perform the new nation; and using radio broadcasts to provide adult education. Within this political context, the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) was established as a postcolonial site of learning. During this period at UDSM, there were intense debates around the meaning of African knowledge, the role of the postcolonial university, and the most appropriate future for Tanzania, Africa, and the Third World. Drawing on both archival research and interviews undertaken between 2011 and 2015 with Tanzanian and international academics who spent time at UDSM during the 1960s and 1970s, this chapter will explore the challenge of bringing subaltern spatialities and imaginations into academic and (geo)political practice. It will explore the ways in which, by seeking to represent a geographical imagination from the margins, the examples of both Nyerere and UDSM highlight contradictions inherent to subaltern geographies and the necessarily relational nature of the concept of the subaltern in both temporal and spatial dimensions.

Subaltern Geopolitics

Ferguson (2006, 2) has suggested that "Africa, as a category, enters Western knowledge and imagination first of all, as Mbembe [2001] says, as 'an absent object,' set always in relation to the full presence of the West. Today, for all that has changed, 'Africa' continues to be described through a series of lacks and absences, failings and problems, plagues and catastrophes." What this has meant is that sub-Saharan Africa is more often seen as a place for Western knowledge to explore and explain rather than a source of explanation itself. This has ramifications, of course, for how disciplines have developed. Writing from within a world structured by Cold War geopolitics, Pletsch (1981) highlighted an academic division of labor wherein the Third World provided Western theorists with case studies of societies lacking the

characteristics of modernity; theory was made elsewhere. Political science, international relations, and political geography, for instance, have historically drawn on the experiences of dominant European and North American powers for theories of international politics such as realism. This is despite, as Ayoob (2002, 40-41) has highlighted, that it is "the common experience of all human societies that these are the elements that constitute the large majority of any members of any social system." While realism has faced extensive critique in international relations and political geography, Ayoob highlights the significance of realism's state-centrism to newly independent states seeking for the first time the political agency that this institution promised.

Ayoob's concept presents an apparently oxymoronic pairing of terms, tying together a position of structural weakness with a dominant way of seeing, ordering, and organizing the world. It is this tension that is also central to the conceptualization of "subaltern geopolitics," combining the notions of subaltern (a presence of lower-ranking order) and geopolitics (a dominant form of knowledge that has attempted to order and regulate space). The term's internal tensions and contradictions are thus an inevitability due to the spatial enactment of any subaltern imagination (Sharp 2011a, 2011b). Choosing to focus on geopolitics rather than realism looks not only to the role of the postcolonial state but also to an awareness of its entanglement in other scalar politics, whether dominant Cold War relations, the more resistant practices of pan-Africanism and nonalignment, or national or local politics.

Using "subaltern" as relational, and therefore shifting from a notion of the subaltern as a preexisting identity toward the concept of "subalternity," refocuses attention on practice. Subalternity is "endlessly (re)constituted through dialectical processes of recognition, within multiple networks of power" (Butler 2004, 44, quoted in Mitchell 2007, 706) and, as such, produces political identities that are "ongoing interventions in social and material relations" (Featherstone 2008, 6). Almost by definition, then, any expression of subaltern identity is a will to power whose very enunciation creates a political identity that can no longer be subaltern. Hence this spatial imagination is always already relational and always already in tension; the enunciation of subalternity moves the subaltern elsewhere.

What this means is that it is important to go beyond the binaries of conventional geopolitics, which are replicated in many critical engagements with it and that split the world into spheres of powerful states and those who represent "an assertion of permanent independence from the state *whoever is in power*" (Routledge 1998, 245, emphasis in original; see Sharp 2011a, 2011b, 2013). This moves the focus toward the entangled and contradictory politics of the middle orders, questioning, as did the subaltern studies group themselves in the late 1980s, "what it means for someone to be in a subaltern position. . . . that someone could be from the elite classes, from the middle classes, from the extremely deprived classes; there could be inflections of race and gender and so on" (Chatterjee 2012, n.p.). Leaders of newly independent countries "embodied an ambiguous and shifting relationship to dominant geopolitics, representing both national elites and countries marginalized in the international arena" (Craggs 2014, 42, emphasis in original). Such postcolonial hybrids represent a "a way of 'doing' world politics in a seemingly 'similar' yet unexpectedly 'different' way" (Bhabha 1990; Bilgin 2008, 6) within practices that are entangled with forces of both domination and resistance at a variety of often interlocking scales (see Sharp et al. 2000).

Regarding subalternity this way also recognizes the limitations to subaltern studies that Vivek Chibber (2013) has recently outlined in his controversial suggestion that there is an Orientalism in subaltern studies: "Its celebration of the local, the particular--whether as History, or as the 'fragment'--ends up justifying an exoticization of the East. . . . The more marginal, and the more mysterious, the better. The various practices are all construed as ways of being, or better yet, ways of knowing, that have escaped the totalizing grasp of capital, and hence presented as potential escape routes from it. Traditional Orientalism is thereby repackaged as resistance to capital" (Chibber 2013, 289).

Instead, Chibber (2013, 287), like Ayoob, regards nationalism and state building not simply as an internalization of Western knowledge and practice but as "a rational response to economic and geopolitical pressures." Chibber's conflation of postcolonialism with subaltern studies and his suggestion of a latent Orientalism in subaltern studies scholarship is, however, problematic insofar as it overemphasizes processes of similarity. It is unquestionable that the newly emerging states were subject to the same forces of capital as are the more established ones (see also Kuus 2013). Nevertheless, the

ways in which subaltern geographical imaginations were brought to bear in political practice have not simply been identical and instead offer a "useful past" through which to imagine alternatives today. Although there has been a tendency to reflect back on the period of decolonization as one of failure, a number of voices are now insisting upon the importance of understanding the significance of this period as one that not only promised a new world order but also did so with Africans, and other subaltern voices, as active agents creating this new order. For instance, as Craggs (2014, 40) has reflected, decolonization is "often seen in retrospect in a cloud of disappointment," and yet, she continues, the experience of the period and its ongoing struggles was "one of overwhelming optimism and opportunity" in which there were attempts to remake the world order. Certainly this was the intention of Nyerere's vision for postcolonial Tanzania, and it was a vision and experience shared by many Tanzanians and people who traveled to the country from around the world. Despite the fact that many of the policies, ideals, and organizations did not last, "to skip over this period--or to suggest colonial logics merely continued without transformation and disruption--excludes a whole range of practices which were invested with substantial value at the time and still have legacies in the present" (Craggs 2014, 40; see also Lee 2010; Sharp 2014).

Creating Postcolonial Tanzania

Julius Nyerere led Tanganyika to independence from Britain in 1961 in a mostly peaceful process of decolonization. Tanzania was created from the union with the islands of Zanzibar in 1964. At first, Tanzania was regarded by the West, and especially Britain, as an ally because of the relatively nonviolent nature of the independence movement and the respect Nyerere attained internationally as a statesman.[i] However, Nyerere made it clear that Tanzania would seek a nonaligned position, attempting to follow a path of self-sufficiency that would avoid political allegiance with either of the Cold War blocs. He was a powerful advocate for an alliance of African states as the only way for the poor to be heard on the international stage. In 1967, Nyerere's vision of a postcolonial African geopolitical imaginary was laid out in the Arusha Declaration, which promoted equality, self-reliance, "traditional" African communal values, and the virtues of education and hard work. Concerned with the growth of a divisive nationalism shaping newly independent African states, while also being cognizant of the neocolonial power relations within which they had emerged, the Arusha Declaration was a stand against the emerging indigenous elite and a statement about a form of development that was independent of existing models promoted by the United States or USSR.

Nyerere wrote extensively about his vision. His writing can be understood to construct a subaltern geopolitical critique of Cold War geopolitics and to posit an alternative geopolitical imagination from the margins (see Sharp 2013). Nyerere was clear that Tanzania would avoid either of the Cold War blocs and was a prominent advocate of both pan-Africanism and the Non-Aligned Movement: "Every possible attempt is made to squeeze African events into the framework of the cold war or other Big Power conflicts. . . . They imply that Africa has no ideas of its own and no interests of its own. . . . They are based on the belief that African actions must inevitably be determined by reference to either the Western liberal tradition or to communist theory or practice" (Nyerere 1969, x).

Nyerere's vision of a united pan-Africa challenged the Cold War binary and the zero-sum power-political geopolitics upon which it was based, and instead projected a geographical imagination based on issues of international justice and cooperation. To him, the challenge for Africa was to overcome this poverty by developing national economies in such a way that they did not "run the risk of being sucked into the orbit of one or other of the big powers" (Nyerere 1970, 6). The establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement and Nyerere's philosophy of pan-Africanism were based upon clear geopolitical principles: "just by the fact of meeting--asserting the independence of either bloc, the member states of that conference were taking an important political action: they were announcing that a refusal to become an ally of either side was not a temporary aberration of a few states! It was an important new international development, which the big powers could not ignore" (Nyerere 1970, 2).

Nyerere recognized that, within the international political system, subaltern states were not heard, and through cooperation and the creation of a transnational collaboration he sought to find a form of geopolitical expression. Nonalignment, he insisted, is not about neutrality; it is, "or certainly ought to be, a policy of involvement in world affairs" (Nyerere 1970, 3). This was a powerful rhetorical device as Nyerere placed himself as mediator between the international elite and his people.

Precisely because of his claims for the state's subalternity, then, he was able to claim power through uniting in opposition, thus placing himself alongside the Tanzanian population as a subaltern, despite his elite position within the country.

However, there were limitations placed on Nyerere's ability to enact this African-centric imagined geography, not least because he was, as he acknowledged, attempting to achieve the African socialist development of Tanzania in a hurry and from a position of what he considered to be very limited economic and geographical development after years of colonial neglect and within a system of neocolonial subjugation. The title of one book about Nyerere illustrates this well: We Must Run While They Walk (Edgett Smith 1971). Prashad (2007, 191) explains: "Hemmed in by pressures from the advanced industrial states, the aristocratic rural classes, and the emergent mercantile classes, the new state had little time. Things had to change in a hurry. But socialism requires imagination and time. It cannot be made in a hurry."

Although usually referred to as mwalimu (Swahili for teacher), Nyerere was "not just mwalimu" but also "a mwalimu-in-power--a moral teacher who [was] also a political leader with a great deal of authority and power" (Pratt 1976, 256). Nyerere's concern that Tanzanians lacked the education needed for full (modern) citizenship led to a pedagogical style of leadership and a system of leadership that put "development ahead of diversity" (Chakrabarty 2010, 55). Just as was the case for Nehru in India, for Nyerere, independence marked a shift from the politics of struggle against the colonizers toward a politics that was shaped around the negotiation of the day-to-day challenges of development (see Chakrabarty 2007, 38). His desire to channel the energy of the postcolonial population toward the common good of the nation was heightened by Nyerere's need to act decisively in the face of changing political contexts within which postcolonial Tanzania found itself.

Educating a Nation
Chakrabarty (2010, 53) noted how Nyerere's (and other postcolonial leaders such as Nehru, Nasser, and Sukarno's) "emphasis on development as a catching-up-with-the-West produced a particular split that marked both the relationship between elite nations and their subaltern counterparts as well as that between elites and subalterns within national boundaries." Nyerere was acutely aware of the limited education previously available to Tanzanians, and this limitation had significant implications for the skills required for developing various sectors of the postcolonial nation's society and economy. However, more than this utilitarian approach to education, there is also a sense that Nyerere felt the need to educate the population to be "good" citizens (Chakrabarty 2010). Nyerere had been a school teacher before he became involved in the independence movement, but the fact he is commonly referred to in Swahili as mwalimu is only partly due to this previous career as a teacher and the respect this profession attracts in East African society. It has often been noted that his leadership style was pedagogic. An academic who had spent time at UDSM in the 1970s described his style as follows:

> I heard Nyerere speak at The Hill [as UDSM was known due to its location] several times, and . . . it was fascinating to listen to him to figure out what the message really was, but there was no doubt he was lecturing his children, he was lecturing his flock, including on what was good behaviour and bad behaviour. . . . I think mwalimu, the Catholic notion, . . . is deep inside him, of the shepherd and his flock, I mean it just resonates even though it draws on the indigenous ideas as well as the role of the Chief. (interview, July 28, 2013)

The mixture of teacher, chief, and modern leader appeared to be a conscious performance by Nyerere to literally embody the nation and to negotiate the tensions between his elite and subaltern roles noted above. He often carried a staff with him at public events, something that one commentator suggested "provided a way to celebrate his African heritage and assert his identification with traditional African culture. It was also a symbol of his political authority and source of mystique" (Aminzade 2013, 143). Nyerere admired the work ethic of communist China and adopted a Chinese-style suit to embody a sense of frugality, an embodiment reinforced by his own thinness (Aminzade 2013).

This symbolism, drawing on both African and international images of leadership and nation, helped to narrate roles for Tanzania's postcolonial leaders and citizens. Nyerere's promotion of ujamaa as a model for his African socialism drew

upon idealized notions of community and interdependence, bonds of kinship and respect, characteristic of tribal society and he sought to promote these as central to postcolonial Tanzanian identity:

> The term ndugu, used to refer to comrades, actually meant brother/sister/cousin, and mwanachama, or child of the party, was used to refer to party members. Politics were also translated into kinship terms when the President was referred to as the father of the nation (baba wa taifa). This rhetoric of a founding father trapped into what Ali Mizrui refers to as an "elder tradition" which "carries a heavy preference for consensus in the family" and "a preference for reverence and reaffirmation of loyalty towards party leaders." In using such family metaphors, social leaders referenced traditional age categories by referring to political authorities as "elders" and to citizens as "youth." (Aminzade 2013, 142-43)

Despite this emphasis on traditional values, Nyerere recognized the need for the provision of nation building through the modern trappings of statehood. The need for an educated workforce was met with policies also intended to transcend tribal difference and build the nation. Literacy was considered vital to this endeavor, and great efforts were put into primary school education and the use of radio broadcasts to deliver adult education to a highly dispersed population. This was very successful, leading to an increase in literacy rates from around 15 percent at independence to nearly universal literacy when Nyerere stood down from office in 1984. His decision to use Swahili, the language of trade, as the national language evidenced Nyerere's desire to unite the country under one language but to avoid the privileging of either the language associated with any one tribal group and tradition or the colonizers' language as the lingua franca of the postcolonial state. Secondary school education reinforced this process. While primary education was to be rolled out to all, initially secondary education had to be more selective due to the lack of qualified teachers (and students) as well as broader financial constraints. Selected students were educated at institutions distant from their homes to ensure that the future leaders would have a sense of Tanzanian-ness rather than being tied to geographical or tribal perspectives, experiences, and loyalties. He also hoped that this would help to instill a sense of loyalty to Tanzania and its citizens--a commitment to a collective effort--rather than a selfish focus on individual careers. Such concerns were magnified in Nyerere's considerations regarding the establishment of tertiary education at the UDSM, an institution that has the country's president as its vice chancellor.

UDSM was established at independence as an affiliate college of the University of London but soon after became part of the independent University of East Africa, with campuses in Uganda and Kenya as well as Tanzania. In 1970, the University of East Africa split into three separate universities. UDSM was established to train local graduates to take their place in the nation's leadership, but it was not simply designed as a training college. In an article in the *Tanzanian Civil Service Magazine* in 1966, Nyerere (1966, 2) insisted that universities in developing countries must not simply receive ideas from elsewhere but "must also make their contributions to the world of knowledge."

The View from the Hill

> If Tanzania became known the world over for the humane social vision of its leader, . . . the Hill became renowned for the social critique of that vision. The Hill has seen days of intense intellectual debates--when radical academics from all over the world trekked to the Ujamaaist "homeland." --Issa Shivji (1992, backcover)

There had been a high level of dependence on non-Tanzanian academics in the early years of the university. In some disciplines, especially in the years before the Arusha Declaration, this could be seen as a Westernization of the university curriculum--an intellectual cultural imperialism. However, especially in the period after Nyerere's pronouncement about African socialism, particular types of academics were drawn to Tanzania, not to play their part in bringing "development" to the country or simply to transfer their skills to the next generation of African scholars (although this training component was essential in many areas) but to take part in this new endeavor and to learn from Tanzanians. A number of my respondents talked about "planned obsolescence"--that expats would make themselves irrelevant. The first wave of

perhaps more reformist academics would be replaced by a second generation of mainly East Africans. "Educating Tanzanians," was, as one U.S. medical researcher put it, "the most obvious means of putting self-reliance into practice. . . . Train Tanzanians and then leave; that should be a good credo for expatriates" (Swift 2002, 39). In a letter to then president of UDSM, Cranford Pratt, the History Chair Terrance Ranger explained the need for a Tanzanian to take up the post that he was vacating to relocate to the United States: "Thus although I shall myself in many ways be very sorry to leave Tanzania I think it will work out as the more or less ideal 'de-colonisation' process" (letter from Ranger to Pratt, February 16, 1968).

Most of those I spoke with talked of this process, and all considered it to be effective. One English academic told me that when he had arrived, "a certain, heroic moment of expatriates--big celebrities--had passed" (interview, July 28, 2013) and that the agenda was being set by Tanzanian and other African intellectuals. For many researchers and academics who were drawn to Nyerere's Tanzania, the reasons for going to UDSM went far beyond the requirements for training. Many saw in postcolonial Tanzania a place of knowledge production and vibrant political activity and thus regarded time at UDSM to be an enlivening learning experience, rather than simply a teaching job. For some, there was a belief that a shift in political and ideological leadership was immanent in the postcolonial world order and Tanzania was to be one of the countries at the heart of this change. As one English academic put it to me, you did really feel that you are at the center of things" (interview, August 16, 2011). One citizen of New Zealand, who had spent time at UDSM in the 1970s, explained the context for his move, an explanation that has been repeated in different words by other respondents:

> Well we were all pretty clear that capitalism was in its death throes at that stage. It's 1968 and everything was changing. . . . The Americans were definitely going to lose in Vietnam; in Czechoslovakia there was sort of a new form of socialism that might be possible--it didn't happen there either, but students basically took over Paris for a month in May in '68, and, ...So, essentially, these were all signs of the end of capitalism. On the other hand, socialism in Eastern Europe doesn't look incredibly attractive . . . and Africa was where it was going to be and it was going to be a new way. (interview, August 11, 2011)

In a similar vein, reflecting on his time at UDSM after he had been deported from Rhodesia for political activity, Ranger initially could not imagine that academic life could match the same level of excitement as public life before his move. "But," he continued, "I have found at Dar that the excitement of research and teaching is equal in intensity and in many ways more satisfying in achievement" (Ranger 2014, 172). Marxist theorist Giovanni Arrighi echoed Ranger's words in an interview with David Harvey in 2009:

> It was a very exciting time, both intellectually and politically. When I got to Dar es Salaam in 1966, Tanzania had only been independent for a few years. Nyerere was advocating what he considered to be a form of African socialism. He managed to stay equidistant from both sides during the Sino-Soviet split, and maintained very good relations with the Scandinavians. Dar es Salaam became the outpost of all the exiled national liberation movements of southern Africa--from the Portuguese colonies, Rhodesia and South Africa. I spent three years at the University there, and met all kinds of people: activists from the Black Power movement in the U.S., as well as scholars and intellectuals. (Arrighi 2009, 64-65)

Such examples suggest that Tanzania in the 1970s presented a material provincializing of Europe as intellectuals from the north moved to participate in and learn from Nyerere's Tanzania. In many ways this was a situation that moved beyond intellectual postcolonialism, critiqued as a movement that emerged only from the migration of Third World academics to the north, leaving certain geographies of privilege in place. As Shilliam (2009, n.p.) has suggested:

> Eurocentrism is most evident in the unspoken assumption that we do not need to attempt to travel to the intellectual terrain of the non-West and interrogate its archive of thought in order to problematize the modern experience. It is not just that the non-Western thinker must be added into the existing archive of the Western Academy, but rather that an engagement with the non-Western

thinker might be necessary in order to reveal the boundedness of this Academy and thus open the way for more salient explorations of the making of the modern world order.

The Western academics at UDSM in the 1970s, by definition, were privileged, but this was not straightforward. While some nationalities received expatriate salaries, others were paid at the same rate as local academics, and thus the significant division of wealth did not simply lie between Africans and non-Africans. Indeed, more than one respondent explained to me that their sense of privilege was not financial but instead inhered in their ability to leave should things not work out well. He believed that there was no sense of their either being looked up to, or down upon, by Tanzanians:

> The fact that you were a mzungu [Swahili for European, but refers to all white people] didn't really count for, either way actually, didn't count for anything. You weren't privileged and you weren't ignored. . . . And here at the university, then you were part and parcel of these debates and discussion and . . . there were all sorts of discussions there where you would see groups of whites and blacks, just very comfortable in each other's company and debating all sorts of things. It was actually a really nice time to be here, it was an exciting time. And you did feel part of the debates. Now, I don't think we were part of the struggle here because ultimately we were in a privileged position, and that privileged position was because we were expatriates. It wasn't a white thing. It was just an expatriate thing. At the end of the day, by definition, you don't have a commitment to the country. You are going to go home; this is not home. (interview, August 16, 2011)

In disrupting some of the geographies and epistemologies of the Western domination of knowledge production, this intellectual context allowed for solidarities that created a collaborative and often tentative model of postcolonial politics in the conventional sense. It led to some progressive collaborations, as one Tanzanian participant reflected later: "It was a very, very special time for us in Africa, I would say, not only in Tanzania. The kind of lecturers also who came, . . . they were from the West, but the West which believed in the liberation of South Africa, which believed that this apartheid system must go, it was full of value. . . . In the seventies, Tanzania was at the center of the decolonization movement" (interview November 29, 2011).

The process of shedding privilege was, of course, not straightforward as one Tanzanian commentator observed of the expatriate staff:

> They themselves are often anxious to help in the work of building our nation, but are frightened of appearing to push their own ideas too hard lest their motives be misunderstood. As a Professor said on one occasion--"I am anxious to be drafted for a job, but there are too many Europeans in the world trying to tell Africa what it should do and how. If I am asked to help I will respond with alacrity, but outside my own clear field of responsibility the Tanzanians in Government and [the party] must take the initiative." (Kawawa 1967, 10-11)

Teaching Postcolonial Tanzania

In the establishment of a postcolonial university, staff were only part of the issue. A further challenge was the problem of providing education to a nation that had been systematically exploited through German colonialism and then neglected by Britain under a League of Nations mandate. Very few students had a secondary education, let alone a university education. Nyerere feared the possibility of creating an elite class, cut off from the rest of the country in the rarefied atmosphere of the university campus, or "the College" as it was initially known. He noted that: "The cost of keeping a student at the College will be about £1000 a year. That is to say that it takes the annual per capita income of more than 50 of our people to maintain a single student at this College for one year. It should not be necessary to say more. It is obvious that this disparity can only be justified, morally or politically, if it can be looked upon as an investment by the poor in their own future" (Nyerere 1964, 11).

The symbolism of the campus built on a hill overlooking the center of Dar es Salaam some 10 kilometers away clearly reflects a Western tradition of elevated enlightenment. There were concerns that the university itself might be too luxurious and might start to create the national elites about whom Frantz Fanon (1963) had warned. One expat academic at the time remarked that while they were conducive to creating a focused study environment, the university buildings were not luxurious; "functional but frugal!" (Honeybone 1967, 31). Nevertheless, tension emerged from the very physical form of the new university. Its location on the hill and placement away from the distractions of the city center were designed to enable students to work without distraction and to concentrate on learning and thinking. At first there were very few qualified students. But even when more had passed successfully through the secondary education system UDSM, as the country's only university, still represented a highly selective environment. By its very nature, then, it separated the select few from the society at large. Nyerere (1966, 18) continued to explain, "anyone who walks off the campus into the nearby villages, or who travels up country--perhaps to Dodoma or into the Pare Hills--will observe the contrast in conditions here and the conditions in which the mass of our people live." Thus, he was keen to ensure that students saw themselves as "servants-in-training" to their fellow countrymen. His words were carefully chosen, as he was determined to instil the right sort of social responsibility in the minds of the students, reinforcing a postcolonial politics where effort should be directed toward the country's future and away from any divisive critical focus: "And this must not be the idea of giving aid to the poor. . . . It must be an attitude of wanting to work, in whatever work there is to do, alongside and within the rest of the community" (Nyerere 1966, 19).

It was a concern that appeared to have been justified. In October 1966 the government introduced a new requirement that after graduation students should do two years' national service before entering the civil service. This required them to spend the first two months "doing nation-building work in rural areas, followed by eighteen months performing skilled labor, mainly as teachers or civil servants, at 40 per cent of the job's regular salary" (Aminzade 2013, 153). The students protested and marched into town in their academic gowns. The students themselves thought that their actions were in line with the egalitarian society being promised by their leaders. One of those who had been involved explained in an interview in 2014: "We had written a long [pause] we had thought it was [a] very exciting and useful letter to government. The core of it was that we refused to go to national service on the grounds that you, government, are cheating us, you are writing budgets but people have no medicines, you are claiming to do socialism but you have big salaries and you are not going to national service. So if you want us to go, you go first!" (interview, April 24, 2014)

The government's interpretation of the protest was very different, painting students as spoilt elites who wanted special treatment. The embodiment of the protest--students walking down the hill into town clothed in their academic gowns-- was presented as a performance that highlighted the students' perception of their difference from the rest of the population, a clear violation of Nyerere's goals of a united and equal struggle for the good of postcolonial Tanzania. His anger at their challenge to this vision was intensified by some of the ways in which the students had chosen to express their protest when they arrived in town: "There were a lot of banners, but there was one banner that really made Mwalimu go mad. It was written 'Better colonial days' in English. It was written on a very small bit of paper and the media photographed that one: students telling the president that it was better [in] colonial days!" (interview, April 24, 2014).

The students were taken to the State House to meet with Nyerere who was furious at the nature of the protest. After a dressing down from their president, the students were taken back to the university to pick up their things before being "rusticated" (sent home from the university). As one Tanzanian who had been one of the rusticated students explained:

> We were rounded up at gunpoint, brought back here, escorted to our rooms, by gunpoint, to pack things, if we were hungry, go to the cafeteria to eat. We were taken to the bus and then taken home. So, it happened that we were taken to our home. I arrived home, in rural Moshi, the soldier took out his gun and he guided me, he asked me "who's your father?" and I said, "that one there," and he said, "Mzee [elder], is this your son?" and he said yes. "Take him from me. The university is closed and he should stay here. And teach him manners!" The soldier left. We were left at home. (interview, April 24, 2014)

Only those for whom their communities spoke up--who bore witness to the students' commitment to Tanzanian society through their hard work during their absence from the university--were allowed to return to UDSM a year later. Letters from the expelled students to the university highlighted the degree of social and economic marginalization they faced. One said that "the 'rebels' are broke and miserable" because people were reluctant to employ them back at home, while another puts a slightly more positive spin on things, explaining that "employment is of course very difficult although there seem to be people in [the] area who do not reject the students entirely" (student letter [November 3, 1966]). It should also be noted that immediately after his meeting with the students Nyerere cut his own salary by 20 percent and instructed other members of the government to take cuts of 10-15 percent.

In the end, the majority of the rusticated students were allowed to return to the university. As members of the government noted at the time, the country needed trained graduates. However, there was a great deal of attention focused on ensuring there was no repeat of this confrontation. A conference on the role of the university college was held in March 1967 to discuss the nature of the university in the postcolonial nation, especially in light of the Arusha Declaration presented a month beforehand. The response of some at the university was to seek changes to the curriculum. In 1967, in light of the student rustication and the Arusha Declaration, a group of nine radical academics, including Walter Rodney, John Saul, and Giovanni Arrighi, put forward a proposal for a discussion about the curriculum. It started as follows: "The Arusha Declaration has brought into sharper focus that whole question of the nature and role of our educational institutions. Tanzania is now firmly committed to the course of self-reliance and socialism; yet the implications of this commitment for the organization and curricula of our schools and colleges have scarcely begun to be examined" (Hoskins et al. 1967, 116).

Their proposal was based on a concern that the students "cannot be returned to the university with any confidence of a 'change of heart'--that is, of intellectual and moral conviction--so long as the present organization and assumptions remain unchallenged" (Hoskins et al. 1967, 117). This reflected a wider concern about the role of the university in postcolonial Tanzania. At the conference on the role of the university college, Second Vice President Rashidi Kawawa (1967, 9) stated that "many of our young graduates from Universities, from the Medical School, and from the secondary schools, began work with a conviction that society owes them a high-paying and interesting job. . . . And many of them have scant patience with their uneducated fellow-citizens, and very little interest in the needs and thinking of the men and women in the rural areas--or even those of the back streets of Kariakoo [the local market]."

There followed a proposal for a new course called "Common Course in Social Analysis" as an instruction in "Tanzanian realities." This course--proposed to take up a third of students' time-- would be both interdisciplinary and compulsory for students whether they were studying for arts, social science, or science degrees to ensure that all students understood the nature of the communities they would serve after graduation. The first year was to center on social formations in Africa, the second to put this East African system into dynamic context through a focus on social change, and the third year would consider East Africa within the current international system.

This new curriculum represented a conscious decentering of colonial knowledge in two ways. First, instead of starting with Europe and its history and experience, Africa and Tanzania were to be put on a central stage. This was not in any way parochial, however, as this understanding of Africa and Tanzania was firmly related to an examination of the colonial experience and the neocolonial capitalist world order with which the new states were struggling. Second, there was a resolutely interdisciplinary way in which issues were to be addressed. In discussions around the revision to the university syllabus, some argued for a radical interdisciplinarity that did away with disciplines altogether, thus avoiding the "fragmentation of perspectives entailed by separate academic 'disciplines' which provides the main obstacle to the development of an integral and coherent vision of man [sic] in history and society"[ii] (Hoskins et al. 1967, 117). This more radical version was not followed in the curriculum (although it was the driving force behind debates and seminars held alongside the formal curriculum), but the Common Course was introduced for all students. Inevitably perhaps, this was more popular with social science students and staff, and many interviewees told me of resistance from the sciences to this approach.

In addition to challenging the content and form of teaching, the debate challenged the privileging of particular academic practices. The proposal also suggested changes in the relationship between staff and students "to remove elements of privileges and servility at the University College," which should include a reduction in senior salaries, dropping of academic titles, and greater support of junior academics, while students should regard their education as going beyond the term and the campus and engage in project work during their vacation, which "should involve the student in activities through which he [sic] comes into contact with the problems and potentialities of his country" (Hoskins et al. 1967, 131).

Famously, the debates were inflected with Marxist analysis. However, while this involved a cosmopolitan collection of academics, the debate had a distinctively East African focus, as one participant explained: "the debates [were] about what kind of capitalism was established in East Africa as a result of colonialism . . . of course western Marxism can be highly problematic in many ways but the interesting thing when I was there . . . the debates were being set by East Africans" (interview July 28, 2013).

UDSM emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a place of intense political debate around the postcolonial condition for Africa. Nyerere took his role as vice chancellor of the university seriously, regularly visiting the Hill to talk with students and staff and hear their views. While there was considerable criticism of Nyerere from some quarters for not following a Marxist path closely enough, there was clear engagement with academic discourse on the nature of the postcolonial country. One U.S. expatriate noted that on one such visit in the early 1970s, the students' "questions were respectful in tenor but reflected a desire to hear their President affirm his commitment to socialism" (Swift 2002, 108). Debates continued about how best to achieve African Socialism with many staff and students feeling that Nyerere was insufficiently rigorous in his application of Marxist and socialist values. It became clear that, for Nyerere, African Socialism was a moral rather than a structural imperative. In 1969 law students occupied the faculty building because they opposed the number of U.S. staff who they felt had imperialist leanings. They pushed for more staff to be hired from socialist countries and for more Tanzanian leadership. Nyerere responded that the students should not be concerned by the place of origin of people--whether they were from a former colony or defined by race or class location--and instead look at what individuals do. He often warned people of the dangers of racism and xenophobia following the Arusha Declaration, claiming in a newspaper editorial in February 1968 that if these were not rejected, "socialism will become ruthless Fascism and will lose the belief in the oneness of man [sic]. . . . Neither is it sensible for socialists to talk as if all capitalists are devils. . . . To divide up people working for our nation into groups of good and bad according to their skin colour or their national origin, or their tribal origin, is to sabotage the work we have just embarked upon" (quoted in Aminzade 2013, 170).

In his reflections on the intellectual history of UDSM, Blommaert (1997, 131) suggests that, despite attempts at Africanization, "the philosophy of education . . . was still the one left behind by the British, and the products of higher education were still wazungu weusi--black- skinned whites." The vision presented by Nyerere however, attracted many expatriates to become involved, which also meant that it was not a simple case of Westernized knowledge coming to Tanzania and colonizing debates; many of the Western academics and the debates they took back home were profoundly Tanzanian-ized.

Conclusion

In postcolonial Tanzania, and especially in sites of active political theorizing such as was found at UDSM in the 1970s, the "margins" were seen, however briefly, as offering the future "center"; people were drawn to Tanzania from around Africa and from both Western and Eastern superpowers. The kind of "provincializing of Europe" that was witnessed through work undertaken at the UDSM might be thought of perhaps as a less theoretically pure, but more material and experiential, decentering of European (and Western) privilege as intellectuals and political figures from north and south moved to participate in and learn from Nyerere's Tanzania. At the time, the location of agency was clear. Speaking from his post at UDSM, Walter Rodney made it clear that this was something to come from the grassroots of African society--that "every African has a responsibility to understand the system and work for its overthrow" (Rodney 2012, 28). Commentators have highlighted the fact that "Walter dared to say and believe that such a stupendous transformation must be initiated by Africans and other dwellers in the nether regions of exploitation and domination" (Harding, Hill, and Strickland 2012,

xvii). It was an optimistic and powerful moment. As Issa Shivji, a student of Walter Rodney and now one of Tanzania's most prominent critical scholars, explained of the university and of Tanzanian society more generally, "we thought globally. We thought in terms of epochs, not in terms of a tomorrow, not in terms of years, not in terms of decades, but in terms of epochs" (Shivji 1992, cited in Shivji 1993, 204). Tanzania emerged as a site of an African-centered geographical imagination, which was developing a political presence that sought to provincialize Europe.

However, these processes of centering the margins and seeking to challenge the Western dominance of geopolitics and intellectual production cannot be regarded as a narration of the subaltern speaking as, simultaneously, new elitisms formed. In the messy realm of practice, it appears that subalternity can <u>only</u> be relational: Nyerere's vision created new forms of subalternity even as it sought to challenge colonial and neocolonial power. As a relational concept, subalternity is significant in exploring the quixotic experiences of the majority of the world, those who are excluded from the centers of power but who seek representation through such potentially emancipatory, but also inherently problematic, institutions of statehood. While he represented Tanzania's subalterns, Nyerere's role as leader made him an elite, and he established a political system that created elites within the country, even as the Tanzanian state languished in the lower echelons of the international system. Indeed, the subalternity of Tanzania's international role has provided a discourse that has helped to support Nyerere (and subsequent presidents) maintain consent within the country (see Sharp 2011), as it provides legitimacy for the president's claims for shared subalternity with his population. Similarly, UDSM produced local and national elites, even as it sought to challenge the Western domination of knowledge production and provincialize Europe. Such tensions and contradictions do not in any way diminish the value of the concept of the subaltern; but they do highlight the complexity of any spatial expression of subalternity. Shivji makes a similar point in his reflections back on Nyerere's role in Tanzania's postcolonial history: "As a head of state, it is true he came out against struggles from below. But does that mean that a progressive person should not celebrate Nyerere's progressive legacy and draw lessons from its contradictory character? My friend, a Marxist is not a purist; s/he is political!" (Shivji, n.d.).

Notes

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[i] However the union with Zanzibar to create Tanzania in 1964 saw considerable violence; see, e.g., Shivji (2008) and Myers (2000).

[ii] While some women were involved in the postcolonial Tanzanian government and at UDSM and "women's issues" were sometimes discussed, as was the case in most university environments at the time gender and feminism were not prominent in these debates.