

**Decolonization and Higher Education: the Experience of
Makerere Institute of Social Research.**

ASA Hormuud Lecture

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Soon after I returned to Makerere in 2010, I became conscious of being a part of few networks. Since I went to school in the colonial period when all schools were racialized, all my former schoolmates had left with the 1972 expulsion, with the result that I had no local network of former schoolmates. Even more important, since I had been the beneficiary of one of the 20+ fellowships gifted by the US government to Uganda at independence, and so had not gone to Makerere as an undergraduate, I did not have a local college network. My only network was of Dar es salaam exiles.

I had come to Makerere in March, 1972 as a TA while doing research for my doctoral dissertation at Harvard. Expelled eight months later, I returned in 1979, when Amin was overthrown. I was employed by the World Council of Churches and seconded to the Church of Uganda, as a Frontier-Interne-in-Mission. My mission was to research the foreign relations of the Amin regime. I wrote a book on it: *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*. Those days, everyone had to carry an ID card. I remember the perplexed look on many a policeman's face when they would look at my Church of Uganda ID card, with my photo, and my name: Mahmood Mamdani. The unspoken question was: what is this Muslim doing in the Church?

I joined Makerere the next year 1980, and left a decade later in the aftermath of the 1991 strike when the World Bank began to restructure higher education in Uganda. The Bank claimed huge success for its pioneering program at Makerere, which it went on to introduce in one African university after another. I returned to research this claim in 2007, during a sabbatical leave at Columbia. The result was a book titled *Scholars in the Marketplace*.

Makerere, I realized, had been turned into a marketplace. Every activity had been commodified and had a price tag. Courses and programs, even departments, had to show that they were

responding to a market demand; otherwise, they were written off as so many bad investments. The Makerere Reform was justified as a series of survival strategies. The Department of Geography issued a degree in tourism. The Institute of Linguistics trained bi-lingual secretaries. To attend a meeting, whether of the faculty board or the appointments board, or even to invigilate an exam, an academic had to be paid a sitting or an invigilation allowance.

The Bank argued that higher education was a private good and since its returns were individual, that individual must pay for it in the form of market-determined fees, whether or not these were affordable. With the admission of private students, numbers sky-rocketed from 6,000 to over 40,000 in a decade and a half. Academic staff were offered twice their normal salary if they taught the same classes in the evening as in the day program. Fees earned from private students were divided between departments and faculties, and management: at the start of the reform, individual departments and faculties kept 90% of the fees, and the central administration received 10%. Academics were happy with being paid higher salaries, except that they had no time for research. Makerere began to resemble a glorified technical college, or at times even a secondary school. The only exception were the science faculties, which refused to introduce an evening program and multiply their numbers.

The World Bank went further, demanded and got a transfer of government subsidies from higher education to primary education. The result was the introduction of free primary education alongside fees for higher education. But since an expansion of primary education required strong support from higher education institutions – by way of training of teachers and preparing appropriate curriculum and text books – the resulting crisis cut across both primary and higher education.

At Makerere Institute of Social Research – the acronym is MISR – research gave way to consultancy. When Makerere invited applicants for the post of executive director of MISR in 2010, I applied. In my interview, I said I would begin by revising the mission of MISR, to combine graduate teaching with research. We would not just host researchers, we would introduce a doctoral program to create a new generation of researchers.

Where to Begin

It is easy to formulate and announce goals, far more difficult to implement them. Where to begin? Did we begin armed with a blueprint or were we prepared to improvise? In reality, we constantly moved from one to the other. The fact is you can only begin from where you are, and draw lessons from where you have been.

We began with a set of don'ts. It was easier to identify no-go areas than to charter a way forward. The first no-go area was Area Studies. I had spent ten years in the U.S. as a student, at Pittsburgh, Fletcher and Harvard, and another ten teaching at Columbia. In my ten years as a student, I had stayed away from area studies. I said to myself I had not come to the U.S. to gather more and latest facts about where I came from. Rather, I had come to study how to learn, theory, method and the world. For these reasons, I turned to the disciplines.

I had also spent three years in Cape Town as A C Jordan Professor of African Studies and director of the Centre for African Studies. The first thing I learnt in South Africa was that the academy was racially divided in ways more profound than just the definition of which color students could be admitted where. The more profound division was epistemological. The study of natives took place in inter-disciplinary area studies institutes – such as the Centre for African Studies. The study of non-natives took place in discipline-based departments. Theory and comparison were the preserve of departments, not area-based institutes.

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The Greeks made modest comparisons, first between cities like Athens and Sparta. Later, they turned to larger contexts, Greece, Persia and Egypt.

Then came Arabs and Berbers. The great Berber historian, Ibn Khaldun – and the Arab traveler, Ibn Battuta, compared the Mediterranean, the North African and the West African worlds. Others compared Arabia and lands to the east, particularly India.

But the most comprehensive comparative work was carried out during the European colonial project. With the European colonial project, classification became global. In the heyday of European expansion, the 18th and the 19th centuries, European intellectuals – starting with Hegel, then Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Maine and others – began comparing the European and the non-European worlds. Their central question was: what was and is so distinctive about the West? For Marx, why was capitalism born in the West? For Weber, why was rationality Western?

The production of knowledge begins with ordering phenomena. Comparing means classifying, mapping. Durkheim looked to chemistry as the master classificatory science. Marx looked to biology and its most elementary unit of analysis, the cell form.

Comparison requires a standard, the familiar, through which the not-so-familiar is understood, sometimes as not-quite-yet, at other times as an outright deviation.

All ordering has a reference point. For those who did the classifying and ordering of everything around the world, the reference point was the West, the reality they knew and considered natural. The problem is unavoidable: Since we are part of that which we compare, how does one avoid the problem of being evaluative and subjective? In the words of the great Nigerian historian Yusufu Bala Usman, you cannot avoid it; you can only be conscious of it, and thus limit your claims.

Sheldon Pollack, the erudite Sanskrit scholar, gives take the example of Jesuit priests who went to China looking for ‘religion’. Non-Buddhist China has no scriptures, but plenty of ritual. But religion for Europeans had a particular definition – there could be no religion without sacred texts. Thus they concluded that China had no religion. In later years, missionaries reached a similar conclusion in Africa, that it had no religion, only magic and superstition – to its practitioners, they gave new and perjorative names, witches and witchdoctors.

Dar

It is this knowledge-producing, and not just knowledge-transmitting, apparatus that was brought to the colonies starting in the 19th century. We get the concept of a university from the premodern period, specifically the European model of a corporation whose members were granted two freedoms: freedom from conscription by the political power, and freedom to teach by the Church. The modern university went through a number of changes, external and internal. Externally, it claimed to be independent of the church. When it came to the state, though, the university claimed autonomy. This autonomy is inscribed in faculty governance. The modern university has three clearly defined groups: students, faculty, administrators. It is a fee-paying and degree-awarding institution. It authorizes knowledge, so that to be considered an economist, you need a degree in economics awarded by an accredited department in an accredited university. Finally, knowledge in this institution is disciplinary. Degrees are awarded in disciplines, and disciplinary gates are managed by discipline-based bodies.

The proto-type of this modern university was the University of Humbolt, created in the aftermath of Napoleon's conquest of Prussia in 1811. The defeat triggered a great social renewal in Germany, which led, among others, to the emergence of a new kind of institution of learning, one supported by the state and mandated to produce the human resource considered necessary for this renewal. It is this basic model of the university that spread from Germany to other parts of Europe, the United States and elsewhere.

Except there were two differences. When it came to independent countries, this model was adapted and changed, as the result of a process both top-down and bottom-up. In the colonies, however, this institution was implanted, not even grafted, as a strictly top-down project.

We can draw certain generalizations from this historical overview. The modern African university was a colonial implant. It was a key institution in colonial modernism: a central part of 'the civilizing mission'. The mission of the modern university was to disseminate universal knowledge, and universal knowledge made no compromise to time or place. It stood for standards. It claimed to be a center of excellence, a global centre. It was the first institution

dedicated to the idea that ‘one size fits all’. Its mandate was to create cadres who would faithfully discharge this mission. It was the secular counterpart of the Church. University graduates would be like catechists trained by the church, except that they would be secular missionaries of the state. They were meant to function, without reservation or remorse, as the native ‘vanguard’ of civilization.

The Nationalist Challenge

The first challenge to this notion of the university, as an institution charged with a universal civilizing mission, came from the nationalist movement. That challenge broadened the mandate of the university to beyond excellence to include relevance. This shift underlines the significance of the University of Dar-es-Salaam from the mid-sixties to the mid-eighties.

The turning point at Dar was the student demonstration of October 1966, protesting the introduction of national service. Nyerere called the students, all 334 of them, to State House, withdrew their scholarships and sent them home. The next year, he proclaimed ‘The Arusha Declaration’, a clarion call for socialism, and nationalized key sectors of the economy. The university called a conference in March, 1967 on the role of the university in a socialist Tanzania. Calling into question the relevance of the existing curriculum, the conference recommended a ‘continuous curriculum review’.

The core recommendation concerned inter-disciplinarity. The academic staff divided into three: one side called for a continuation of the existing discipline-based system and the other side demanded an abolition of all discipline-based departments and their replacement by a single inter-disciplinary education. A middle group wanted the departments to remain, but called for the introduction of an inter-disciplinary core to supplement a disciplinary focus. The University Council supported this middle course. It said the object should be to produce ‘reasoning graduates’, not just those dedicated to problem solving.

My first full-time academic job was at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. I was hired to teach the inter-disciplinary core to first year students. This was a year-long double course called ‘East African Society and Environment’, taught to all students in the arts and social sciences.

The process at Dar was not limited to formal structures of the university. There was strong student involvement outside the classroom, starting with the ‘ideological class’ that was held every Sunday morning, as an alternative to Sunday morning Church services. There was also a proliferation of study groups. I remember being a member of six different study groups at the same time, each meeting once a week, and each on a different subject: Das Kapital, the Three Internationals, the Russian Revolution, the Chinese Revolution, the Agrarian Question, and so on. Each group had four to eight members. And then there were student magazines: *Che Che*, and when it was banned, *Maji Maji*.

Transition

Makerere remained the hallmark of colonial education, seeing itself as the keeper of ‘excellence’. That claim was upheld by Ali Mazrui who defined an intellectual as a person ‘fascinated by ideas.’ To those of us at Dar, this smacked of an indulgent individualism, totally devoid of social and political commitment. But the pressures for innovation and change were strong at Makerere too, except that these developed outside the formal confines of the university.

The most important and consequential was the founding of a magazine called *Transition* in 1961, the year before the country’s independence, and indeed the year the University of Dar-es-Salaam was founded. Many of you may be familiar with *Transition* in exile, now at Harvard, which is more of a potted plant in a green house; at home in Kampala, *Transition* had no choice but to weather rain, fire and storm. From the outset *Transition* crossed boundaries. Stylistically, it reached beyond the gown to the town; no article was more than five pages. It also reached out beyond the local to global Africa. The editor was a Ugandan Asian of Bengali origin, Rajat Neogy. The contributors included writers like Ngugi, Soyinka, Achebe, Gordimer, Mphahlele, James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, Paul Theroux; academics like Mazrui; and nationalist politicians like Nyerere, Mboya, and Kaunda. The important point is that it was *Transition* that

made the scholarship in the university relevant to town, more than anything produced on the hill in Dar-es-Salaam.

Its content was literary and political. The articles included strong critiques of the constitution introduced in the aftermath of the 1966 crisis for undermining individual and political liberties. Some of the articles – like Paul Theroux’s *Tarzan was an Expatriate* and Ali Mazrui’s *Tanzaphilia* and *Nkrumah, the Leninist Czar* – achieved legendary status. Each stirred controversy, which multiplied when the fact that *Transition* had received funding from Paris-based Council for Cultural Freedom, a secret CIA conduit, became public knowledge. The Obote government used this fact to close the magazine and imprison its editor, along with the writer in question, Abu Mayanja.

Left and Liberal Critiques of Radical Nationalism

Both the scholarly and the political debates of that period focused on the question of radical nationalism. The discussion focused on the inner and the outer dimensions of militant nationalism. A key work underlining the larger global significance of militant nationalism was Walter Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Radical nationalists contended that whereas colonialism had ended, imperialism had not. Militant nationalism was a response to the demands of a continuing struggle.

The critique of militant nationalism focused on its inner dimension. It came from both left and liberal circles. The left critique was formulated by Issa Shivji in two books, *The Silent Class Struggle* and *Class Struggles in Tanzania*. Questioning Nyerere’s claim that the country was building socialism, Shivji argued that nationalization had actually led to the development of a new type of bourgeoisie, one that had privatized public enterprises. He called it ‘bureaucratic bourgeoisie.’ The liberal critique came from Ali Mazrui, and from non-academics like the lawyer Abu Mayanja writing in *Transition*. The focus was more political: militant nationalism had appropriated the mantle of the nation and stifled democratic freedoms. Mazrui called on intellectuals to strive for autonomy from the new African state and its ‘nationalist’ rulers.

In the debate between Rodney and Mazrui, we at Dar lined up behind Rodney and dismissed Marui as some kind of a gadfly. Of course, Rodney was right: place matters; scholarship needs to be anchored – in time and place; universities cannot just be centers of excellence – in that case, they as well be on the moon – which is why they must also be centers of relevance. But, today, in retrospect, I think there was more to the debate than we realized. The debate between excellence and relevance was not just an ideological debate. It was about the definition of an intellectual in our times. Mazrui and Rodney represented two faces of the intellectual: universal scholar and public intellectual. We will do well to cast the debate in a broader historical frame.

Mazrui's response to Rodney's call for ideological commitment was contained in his article published in *Transition: Tanzaphilia*. Mazrui defined 'Tanzaphilia' as 'an opium of Afrophiles.' Nyerere's Tanzania had cast a 'romantic spell' over the left; its effect was 'particularly marked among Western intellectuals', who were complicit in the drift to one-party rule.

'Many of the most prosaic Western pragmatists,' Mazrui wrote, 'have been known to acquire [a] dreamy look under the spell of Tanzania.' Mazrui cast a worried eye on the radicals at Dar, but he singled out Colin Leys, who had in 1961-62 been principal of Kivukoni College, an ideological school in the mode of Ruskin College (also in Dar), established by Joan Wicken, a Ruskin graduate who also happened to be Nyerere's private secretary. Leys had lamented that besides the three obvious social ills – 'poverty, ignorance and disease' – Tanzania was also suffering from a fourth: empiricism. Mazrui was alarmed by the possibility that Dar, too, would become 'an ideological college' as a result of pressure from a 'superleft'.

Responding to figures like Leys – and presumably to the entire string of left intellectuals at Dar, including Rodney, Shivji, Nabudere and maybe even I – for whom Mazrui thought ideological orientation was everything, he invoked a deeper epistemological reality which he called the 'mode of reasoning'. Ideological orientations, he argued, are both superficial and malleable: 'Under a strong impulse one can change one's creed. But it is much more difficult to change the process of reasoning which one acquires from one's total educational background.' He gave the following example: French Marxists are still French in their intellectual style. Ideologically, they may have a lot in common with communist Chinese or communist North Koreans. But in style of

reasoning and the idiom of his thought, a French Marxist has more in common with a French liberal than with fellow communists in China and Korea. And that is why a French intellectual who is a Marxist can more easily cease to be a Marxist than he can cease to be a French intellectual. Both formulations, ‘ideological orientation’ and ‘mode of reasoning’, appear in his essay in *Transition*, which came out in 1967, and if they evoke the work of Foucault it is surely because the two were thinking along similar lines about ‘discursive formations’: *L’archéologie du savoir (Archeology of Knowledge)* was published two years later.

I wrote of this some months ago in *London Review of Books (LRB)*, 19 July, 2018). In a letter to the editor, Colin Leys objected (letters, *LRB*, 2 August 2018) that I had obscured the Cold War context that lent legitimacy to radical nationalism. But my purpose was not to return to the parameters of the early debate, the left highlighting the danger of imperialism on the outside and liberals pointing to the undermining of democracy on the inside. The purpose, rather, was to point to the need to sublimate this discussion in which neither side, the left or the liberals, had offered a satisfactory response to the challenge of the times. The universal scholar and the public individual are not two different persons. Rather than see them as alternatives between which we need to choose, it makes more sense to see these as two sides of the vocation of an intellectual who needs to be involved simultaneously in a two-fold conversation: a global conversation with a community of scholars, and a local conversation with the state and society.

CODESRIA

Another source of inspiration for the post-doctoral program at MISR was CODESRIA. CODESRIA, Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa, was established in 1973. Its first director was Samir Amin. Samir died a few weeks ago. There has been an ongoing discussion of his life and work in CODESRIA circles, but none so far as I can see at ASA. The reason I think points to an important difference between ASA and CODESRIA. I will offer a few thoughts on this. Since I have been an active member of CODESRIA since 1975, and since CODESRIA was an important influence on MISR, I would like to say a few words in appreciation of its founder, Samir Amin. I will confine myself to his intellectual work.

Samir's doctoral thesis, the multi-volume *Accumulation on a World Scale*, was written on a vast canvass. It presented an ambitious outline agenda, one that Samir spent a life time filling and fulfilling. Samir was hugely prolific. Among his writings, there were two which came closest to taking up the challenge formulated in his doctoral thesis. The first was *Eurocentrism* and the second *Unequal Development*.

I have taught *Eurocentrism* at least ten times over the past two decades. Every time, I am amazed at the world historical grasp that informed its author. Samir was more a man of history than a man who we could identify with a particular place. The places that most come to mind are Cairo, Dakar and Paris. Even if Samir moved between them, he was a moving target, a man of no fixed abode. His life resembled that of Marx, a man without a homeland, but one whose home was a chosen commitment to a historical project. Like Marx, Samir was a man of a fixed time, the modern. I remember being struck by Samir's critique of Edward Said's politically important work, *Orientalism*. Samir objected to what he considered a trans-historical critique. He argued that rather than present us with an ahistorical discourse of Western culture, as if it were timeless, Edward should have given us a critique of the modern Western discourse on the Orient. I believe Samir was the first to formulate this critique, which has since been repeated over and over again by many others.

Even though he thought of his own writing as grounded in Marxism, Samir is best known for his works on dependency theory. He introduced an entire generation of young scholars, myself included, to think of under-development in historical terms. The work I found truly compelling was *Unequal Development*, and its companion volume, *De-connexion*. One gave a historical account of the present, the other charted a way forward.

As Marx never tired of repeating, the test of theory lies in practice. I recall Samir telling us of when he received a call from Thomas Sankara asking him to travel urgently to Bourkina Faso to discuss a challenge. On arrival, Samir was told by Sankara: "You have told us that we must have the courage to de-connect. Before we could gather that courage, the French have taken the lead and de-connected us. What shall we do?" Samir was flummoxed. He admitted to us: "I had not imagined that the question of de-connection would first arise in a country as poor as Bourkina

Faso.” It seemed to illustrate a practical dilemma: whereas prescriptive formulas – as short and succinct as ‘de-connexion’ – seemed to apply to one and all without discrimination or difference, each case is in practice different and so are the consequences of the application. It seemed to raise a problem similar to that faced by the Russian Revolution: how was one to achieve ‘socialism in a single country,’ in this case ‘de-connexion of a single country’?

I thought the story pointed to a broader issue. The objective claims of structuralism appear less convincing when bathed in a historical perspective. Historical specificity begins to distinguish one case from another. Although I never had an opportunity to discuss this with Samir, I thought the history of the past few decades raised a central question for dependency theory, and its conclusion that there can be no ‘development’ in the context of an imperialist-dominated world. What does the emergence of China as the new economic challenge to the only super-power, the United States, say about the claims of dependency theory? And what about the emergence of others, such as India and Brazil, all with a colonial past and without a socialist present?

The debate over CODESRIA’s overwhelming theoretical orientation to political economy and policy preference for a state-led growth model came to a head at the 1984 General Assembly. It led to the initiation of a new multi-national research group on social movements and democracy.

Samir walked on two legs, to use a Maoist phrase, constantly moving from theory to practice and back. The political economist in him was constantly put to task by his continuing engagement in real life politics. I thought his most difficult moment came with the Arab Spring in Egypt. We disagreed on political Islam several times. The first was decades ago at a CODESRIA working group on the gender question. I recall Samir being firmly and totally opposed to political Islam of every hue. He gave his reasons: he said political Islam was socially regressive on the gender question, and its laissez faire economic thought went no further than philanthropy. The debate resurfaced at the 1991 Symposium on Academic Freedom in Kampala, except this time as a debate on democracy. How were we to think of the past century of state-enforced secularism against the reality of ethnic and religious mobilizations in society?

Samir was single-minded, a man with conviction, focus and determination. He wanted clear sight of the enemy and a clear choice between alternatives. But the Arab Spring gave no such easy alternative. The alternative it did pose was between a military-led secularism and a Muslim Brothers-led parliamentary democracy. The single-minded pursuit of secularism led to a military coup. The debate, which had been rife in CODESRIA for over a quarter century, flared up once again at the last General Assembly.

Political Islam is today divided between two major tendencies: both are socially reactionary and economically free market-oriented. The difference between them is political: one tendency – illustrated by Daesh and al Qaeda, and supported by Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, with the US fully complicit – calls for a top down armed struggle. The other champions a parliamentary road. More of a bottom-up approach, it reflects the actual historical experience of Turkey and Iran. The stakes are becoming clearer as global consequences of the Saudi-led Wahhabi mobilization against Muslim Brothers become evident.

Samir was a thinker and he was a public intellectual. This founding father of CODESRIA was determined that it must not become just another donor-funded collection of individual or small team researchers, indulgently watered like so many potted plants in green houses. CODESRIA, he was convinced, must remain open to sound and fury, wind and rain, storm and lightening. It must, above all, provide a home to discuss issues central to the future of African peoples. In the absence of a real African parliament, it must function like one. In contrast, ASA is a professional organization, devoted above all to building careers and monitoring the terrain known as African Studies in the U.S. As the home of public intellectuals in Africa, and as a scholarly forum, CODESRIA does not limit its discussion to Africa. At a CODESRIA General Assembly, no part of the world is forbidden territory. Rather than focused on a place called Africa, the debate is thematically and issue driven, drawing on experiences from around the world.

One last word about Samir Amin. Samir came of intellectual age during an era when the battle was for independence. It was a time we understood independence in terms of state sovereignty and decolonization of the economy. But success along this road has posed new challenges: central among them is that of extreme violence. It calls on us to think of the underside of state

sovereignty, but without letting go of the gains of independence. This challenge calls on us to broaden and deepen our understanding of political modernity and to critically think the notion of sovereignty at the heart of it – if we are to develop a richer and a deeper understanding of decolonization.

What Did We Learn?

We drew several lessons from the experiences I have just recounted in bare outlines. The first was that we had no choice but to develop a home grown doctoral program. It would be the only way to move beyond the assumption that had so far driven higher education: that theory is produced elsewhere and applied at home. This assumption has served to reify theory, whereby students assume that theory is produced elsewhere, it can only be read of in books, as a set of formulas. The result is to get young eyes glued on a set of texts, whether Marx or Foucault, or Weber, or Francis Fukuyama, as if they were sacrosanct.

Second, we were determined to move beyond the confines of area studies, but without losing our rootedness. Students were required to have a research competence in two languages other than the language of instruction, which was English. Initially, we even required that a student identify a key scholarly text in English and translate it into one of these languages. But the task proved arduous and we gave it up as a requirement. Refusing to be confined to an area like so many convicts, we said our ambition was to understand the world from Africa.

Third, we introduced an inter-disciplinary core – a set of courses on method, theory and history – which every student had to take. But we combined inter-disciplinarity with a disciplinary rigor. Student were in addition required to declare a major and a minor in one of four disciplinary fields: political studies, historical studies, cultural studies and political economy.

Finally, we were committed to move beyond the binaries we had inherited: between excellence and relevance, or the scholar and the public intellectual. Each was one side of a single quest. The question arose when we had to decide on the nature of comprehensive examinations students would take in their third year. What should these be? We decided that one would be thematic,

and the other place-specific. For the first comprehensive exam, the student would define a theme – say, the land question or political violence – and then proceed to identify debates, authors and texts that have shaped the literature on the theme globally over different periods. For the second comprehensive exam, the student would identify a place – say Tanzania – and define the themes (and for each theme, the authors and texts) that have driven the scholarship on the place.

Our final source of learning was by negative example. That was the World Bank's assault on African higher education which began at Makerere University and then moved to the University of Dar-es-Salaam. At both places, it had faced remarkably little resistance. Why? In spite of their differences, there was one commonality between Dar and Makerere. The post-independence renaissance in both places was more political and ideological than academic and scholarly. It had been part of the great nationalist upsurge.

But the nationalist upsurge did not last long. When the nationalists came to power, they and dissidents in universities soon parted ways. The repression was not long in coming. Academics responded in different ways. Some, myself included, spread wings and crossed oceans to work in the global academy. We reinvented ourselves as global scholars. Those who stayed at home were embraced by donor institutions – courted to become public intellectuals of a different order, relevant in a different way, as consultants to governments and sometimes to donors, in both cases called upon to provide data to make possible evidence-based policy-making.

Why had we succumbed so easily to the World Bank's assault? Partly because our academic endeavor had lacked institutional depth. In my 6 years at Dar in the 1970s and nearly 15 at Makerere in the 80s and 90s, I cannot recall a single discussion on the need to develop a doctoral program. Had we developed viable doctoral programs, we would not have ceded the ground on research that easily. The unquestioned assumption was that doctoral training would take place overseas. This is why research at both institutions came to be identified with individual scholars. When the researchers in question migrated or just left, the flame flickered. This is what happened at Dar with the departure of the generation of the 70s.

There was also a second reason. The university was in society, but not yet quite of it. When academics got involved off campus, it was out of individual need: to earn extra money or to strive for government favors or government positions. The political agenda of oppositional academics was limited to regime change. We had little to offer those outside campus by way of alternative conversations, alternative intellectual orientations and alternative social projects. The magazine *Transition* turned out to be a solitary and short-lived initiative. That challenge still remains.

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