Conclusion

We return, then, to where we started. The efforts of the postcolonial Kenyan and Tanzanian states at 'nation-building', their attempts to foster a national consciousness through the manipulations of History, were but the latest in a series of efforts to define community and (wo)man's relationship with it, efforts which stretched over the course of the two decades from 1940, and which, indeed, over that period formed the very heart of public debate. The differing constructions of national history that were displayed in those curriculums - in Tanzania presenting an image of the nation as a foundational unit, to which other visions of community, and most notably tribe, were at best incidental, and in Kenya, by contrast, offering an image of a 'community of communities', acknowledging, building on, and attempting to work with ethnic particularities and specifities, emphasising interaction and 'mutual respect' as the basis of a widening engagement - we can now see were the product of these longer debates and this longer process of the shaping of imagination.[1] As much, therefore, as post-colonial nation-builders sought to shape imaginations, their constructions showed how far their imaginations had already been shaped.

To understand, as earlier scholars did, 'tribe' and 'nation' as simply successive points in political time, the unthinking products of economic change, of 'modernisation' wrought by colonial innovation, or to regard both contemporary tribes and African nation-states as nothing more than the hopeless products of an alienation from ancestral cultures, the abandonment of African history - a battle between the invisible hand of the market and the dead hand of history - simply will not do; to ignore communities beyond the tribe even less so. In the time of strangers, in both Kenya and Tanganyika, African thinkers conjured various historically novel visions of community in an effort to make sense of and to order their world. These new visions were, in the first place, conjured in the

[1] On 'mutual respect', see Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education, *Curriculum Guide for Secondary Schools*, Vol.1 (Nairobi, 1973), p.1.

comparative context of what was by the 1940s a region-wide sense of disorder, the product of the strains placed on the moral economies that governed the reciprocal relationships of class, gender and generation, the legitimate bases of inequality and honour, by the uneven intrusions of colonial capitalism, the widening of markets in labour and produce, as well as the intrusions of western education across the region. Against this background of disorder, African thinkers in both territories invigorated the categories of colonial state-building, and drawing on the image of divine order offered by Old Testament Israel, imagined in place of their small groups and networks of connections, bonded and bounded racially and ethnically defined communities, tied to particular territories, with a shared historical destiny, moving through historical time, and to which men and women were involuntarily tied, and involuntarily obligated, by virtue of descent. In turn, these communities became in the 1940s the central object of public argument, threatened, above all, it was widely held, by the very disorder against which they were called into being, a disorder held to have a moral basis, the rise of selfish individualism, the abandonment of the involuntary obligation to serve the community into which one was born, and which in its various forms frustrated the quest for civil, reputable and prosperous communities. Against this background, thinkers tried to persuade their audiences to (re)adopt what were described in the postcolonial Kenyan History syllabus (echoing Kenyatta) as the habits of 'good neighbourliness and co-operation that characterised traditional African society', the antithesis of 'the self-interest and self-seeking tendencies' which had taken root 'since the advent of modern ways'.[2] Across the region, thinkers offered unity, the antidote to selfish individualism, and hard work, the basis of a durable and reputable prosperity, as the dual foundations of a good collective life.

In the 1940s, against the background of both these hardening visions of community and constitutional reform, the remaking of colonialism's collaborative bargains, thinkers in Kenya and Tanganyika began to give thought to the relationship between these conceptually similar communities. In Kenya, in the context of the prominence given to one ethnic group, the Kikuyu, by

[2] Osogo, *Kenya's People in the Past*, p.99.

the centralised economic geography of the colonial state, these efforts were supercharged, making calls to racial unity inseparable from the spectre of ethnic specificity, and, in turn, leading people to ask searching questions about both the right of ethnic groups to recognition and the nature and basis of accountable power. In the face of these questions, thinkers in Kenya came to organise ethnic and racial communities into a definite hierarchy, insisting on a qualitative difference between the deep story-telling group of the tribe and the wider racial group, that tribe was the necessary basis of any wider unity. How tribe and a wider racial unity were to be brought and held together, however, remained uncertain, a question not yet considered. In Tanganyika, on the other hand, while some thought was given to the relationship between these groups, against the background of that territory's more polycentric economic geography, African thinkers found more imaginative space, the urge to organise was less pressing, and the relationship between the two visions of community was left barely explored in popular argument. In this greater imaginative space, moreover, Tanganyikan thinkers gripped hold of the territory's borders, and drawing on the by now familiar models of community, imagined a conceptually similar vision of a territorially-defined, foundational community, an off-shoot of the wider continental African community, a vision without counterpart in Kenya, and which took its place alongside tribe and race in the easy pluralism of this decade.

Before the mid-1950s, African thinkers across the region critiqued aspects of colonial rule, particular policies, as denying their humanity or as standing as obstacles to their prosperity, against the self-proclaimed standards of Livingstone's civilising mission. In general, however, they had held that their quest for civil, reputable and prosperous communities was broadly compatible with their place in empire. As the intrusions of the second colonial occupation gathered pace, and colonial plans for constitutional reform proved endlessly frustrating, however, African thinkers in both territories began to rethink the potential of colonial rule from the mid-1950s, recasting foreign control itself as both a denial of their humanity, a failure of recognition, and inherently exploitative, an obstacle to their prosperity. Independence, the rejection of European rule, it followed, became an overwhelming imperative. This imperative did not, however, enter a vacuum, but an

argumentative context in which community and what ailed it, the fate of nations, and the obligations of men and women to community, variously defined, had been the central object of public argument for the best part of two decades. In both Kenya and Tanganyika, therefore, this new imperative *supplemented* longer-standing arguments about what made for civil, reputable and prosperous communities, and *acted on* (rather than wiped away) existing images of community and their relationship. Its impact was nonetheless significant.

Across Tanganyika, ethnic patriots in the 1950s continued to concentrate efforts on making civil, reputable and prosperous tribal communities. Nationalists, observing that colonialism was bigger than any single tribe, and seeking to turn these energies against the colonial state, sought to affiliate their organisations, and harness their energies, to their wider set of demands. Fearing, however, that ethnic division would undermine the sense of common purpose they held to be necessary to unseat their colonial rulers and to maintain a true independence in the context of the mid-twentieth century world of (cold) waring super powers, nationalists drew on the by now well-embedded image of Tanganyika as a foundational nation, and insisted that the territory was more than a mere collection of tribes. As independence approached, and in light of the ethnic conflict in the hastily decolonised Congo (a tragedy which haunted imaginations across the region), the nationalist leadership insisted increasingly loudly that the people's bond as *Watanganyika* was prioritised over all others. While this newly demanding insistence on national unity led some to ask hard questions of its propriety, to their audience, sharing this vision of foundational national community, and well-versed in the dangers and humiliations of colonial rule, the vision proved acceptable. There was no agonising here. At the same time, conscious of the sweat they had shed in the cause of Tanganyika's independence, people across the territory came to implicitly prioritise their territorial bond over that of a wider racially-defined, continentally-bound community. All must work, as the *Watanganyika* had, for their own benefit.

Even, however, as a community of *Watanganyika* was prioritised over other visions of community, without ever entirely displacing them, thinkers began to question who the

Watanganyika were, and so what Tanganyika was, questions bound up with the now pressing issue of the postcolonial fate of the territory's non-African population. Many continued to insist that the *Watanganyika* were, or remained, African, an argument given impetus by both moral concerns about rewarding the non-African exploiters of black people and, drawing on the longstanding understanding of men as being tied involuntarily to their community of descent, the dangers of future exploitation of Africans by racial others. Citizenship should, they therefore argued, be the prerogative of Africans alone. Others, however, while often accepting the image of Africa as a cultural unit, denied, in a novel move, the ethical significance of descent, asserting instead the necessary centrality of the principle of non-discrimination. Citizenship in the new Tanganyika, they insisted, could not morally be confined to black people alone, but must instead be open to all those of God's children who pledged their loyalty to Tanganyika. Belonging was an attitude of mind. Closely associated with the towering figure of Julius Nyerere, and his personal authority, the moral tyranny of the principle of non-discrimination proved difficult to escape, even as it threatened to tear Nyerere's party apart. Many, however, while accepting the man who would become known as *Mwalimu*'s underlying idea[3], worried, nonetheless, that the planned criteria for Tanganyikan citizenship were reckless in the lack of provision made for the protection of the interests of the African majority. Loyalty could only be tested by action; words were cheap, mere castles in sky. While they, therefore, accepted in principle the possibility of non-African citizenship, they insisted that this privilege must be earned over a period of time, not granted immediately as an automatic right, a tense and uneasy compromise pocked by uncomfortable threats and promises.

In Kenya, also, the imagination of community was not made from scratch in the 1950s, but, rather, the new imperative of independence intruded into, acted on, and further shaped ideas developed over the course of two decades. To understand how community was moulded under this new imperative we must, again, first understand the image of (wo)man and community people carried in their heads, the intellectual product of the previous decade. As on the other side of

[3] Brennan, 'Julius *Rex*', pp.467-8.

Kilimanjaro, thinkers in Kenya found it necessary to rethink their racial vision of society, a vision challenged simultaneously by coastal separatists and (more familiar) questions over the postcolonial future of Kenya's non-African population, the (it was widely held) exploitative white and Asian (and, indeed, Arab) settlers. Modelling their Bill on Tanganyika's, Kenya's government asserted that Kenya must be a non-racial nation, a beacon of a better world, a permanent rebuke to colonial discrimination, that sweaty loyalty would be the basis of a future common endeavour. In the last of Britain's three East African possessions to gain its independence, and influenced by provisions and arguments made in the neighbouring territories, there was little room for the critics of Kenya's new Citizenship Bill to insist that citizenship must in principle be open only to Africans, circumstances the Bill's proponents used to their advantage. As in Tanganyika, however, and drawing on images of community by now long familiar, many considered that the willingness of their government to allow non-Africans an automatic right to citizenship, on certain conditions, was both morally dubious and potentially dangerous, a threat to their nascent nation.

As in Tanganyika, the heart of their complaint turned on the question of 'loyalty' and its basis: what was the relationship between men and women and community? In Kenya, however, where imaginations had been schooled rather differently in the arguments of the 1940s, this question haunted the wider debate about the national future unleashed by the need for political power. Imaginative work in the 1940s had established tribe as (wo)man's basic community, deep story-telling groups, across the territory. Kenyan thinking, then, was both united, marking a distinctively Kenyan nationalism, and divided, in the specifics of the answers given, by a question barely asked in Tanganyika: how to create a sustainable unity in the face of honourable ethnic diversity? Lacking an existing shared image of nationhood, in the 1950s, Kenyans had to argue out their future relations more carefully, in more detail, and with more at stake, than their southern counterparts. KANU, the party of Kenyatta - launched in 1961 on the classic road from detention to political prominence, and eventually State House - insisted that no single tribe, Kenya's 'small kingdoms', the postcolonial History syllabus's 'traditional nations', was alone capable of evicting the

colonial monster and maintaining an independence free from external subversion. The biggest ethnic group needed the smallest as much as the smallest needed the biggest. If the new nation was to be prosperous and enduring, they further argued, Kenya would have to be characterised by two kinds of openness. To overcome the deficits of colonialism, foreign rule's very unevenness, KANU's spokesmen argued, the limited human capital the territory possessed had to be allowed to be dispersed across the country, without regard for ethnic origin, and, moreover, that interaction between ethnic groups, a 'widening engagement', was the necessary basis for the creation of a wider attachment to Kenya, a new national loyalty amongst Kenya's hitherto divided peoples. Honourable tribes would not, however, be destroyed by a crushing uniformity. Reservations, so far as they were compatible (a disputed question even within KANU) with the principle of inter-ethnic interaction, would be made to honour tribes' right of existence. At the same time, ancestral cultures, the stories, bonds and institutions of these groups, would both keep man moral, a bulwark against the inevitable disorder of cosmopolitan liberalism, and capable of the disciplined labours of nation-building, while at the same time infusing the new state with the concern with corporate flourishing that would enable the national collectivity to bloom, moralising the arbitrary structures of foreign rule.

KADU's vision of an independent Kenya was built from an understanding of what Kenya was, of the limitations and unevenness of the colonial project, shared with their rivals in KANU. While, however, they asked themselves the same question, their approach to the future looked markedly different from that offered by their rivals. While unity, a sense of common purpose, was essential to both get rid of the colonialists and to guard against postcolonial external subversion, the party's thinkers held, bringing together the territory's 'varied and virile' people was a necessarily delicate task. KANU's vision, they argued, was both badly formulated, failing to recognise the right of honourable ethnic groups to make decisions about their own future, and potentially catastrophically dangerous, threatening only bloodshed and civil war, a second Congo. In a territory lacking a shared inherited tradition, a sense of common identity, KANU's vision of a strong unitary state threatened,

they argued, to establish at the centre an illegitimate power, accountable, at best, only to the ethnic constituents of its president, and likely, therefore, to enrich the few at the expense of the many, threatening both quests for civil, reputable and prosperous ethnic communities and the possibility of developing the sustainable unity the territory's inhabitants so desperately needed. *Majimbo* was conceived as a solution to this dilemma. It would not create, as its critics alleged, ethnic enclaves isolated from the wider world, barriers to national integration, according to its proponents, but regions in which ethnic groups, secure in their own traditions, which *chose* to associate, were able to widen their understanding and interest beyond the ethnically narrow, creating, more organically than KANU would allow, the beginnings from which a fully-fledged national loyalty, a shared national identity, would tetchily grow, the basis of a sustainable unity.

From a common regional nightmare, and shared intellectual influences, then, over the course of two decades, thinkers in the two territories called into existence distinctively Kenyan and Tanganyikan visions of community. Independence is, of course, an end point as arbitrary as any other, not a true full stop, as postcolonial nation-builders knew all too well, and the question of how people could live well together in the modern world continued to occupy minds across the region across the postcolonial period. How those arguments and stories panned out, though, is for someone else to tell.