



East African Legislative Assembly 2018.

Political City

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Each city has its own character. It is individual in its structure and position. Basic functions of one city may be applied to another, nevertheless, no two cities are the same. We differentiate several types of cities ranging from industrial cities, market cities, university cities over cities of culture to political cities. With growing urbanization and the development of megacities, geographers have faced the problem of one city fitting more than one type. The perception of cities has become a conceptual issue (Calder 2021).

Consequently, a new term had to be found that best described the importance of cities without reducing them to only one characteristic. Saskia Sassen introduced the concept of the **global city**, a concept that realizes the multipurpose of cities and acknowledges the relational importance of them in a global economic and political arena (Sassen 2001: 169). Sassen has expanded our scope of understanding politics and economy in space.

The political sphere of space has been integrated into urban studies in the early 2000s in order to widen our perception of politics and cities. Kent Calder and Mariko de Freytas have primarily defined the **political city**, a concept based on the idea of Saskia Sassen's global city. Cities are no

longer conceptualized as solely physical containers but are of relevance in global economic cycles. They represent **significant settlements in the global context** hosting important political institutions and political actors.

The world manifests itself in each city in its own way and each city is an actor, manifesting what recognize as the world (Marent et al. 2013: 59 ff.).

For many years, geographers did not accredit the "role of cities in the international system" (Calder et al. 2009: 79). Only in the 1960s did an interdisciplinary field of urban studies form. It was no longer only geographers that were interested in the development of urban places, instead scientists from sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and urban planning broadened the field. Almost a decade later, more and more political scientists became interested in the role of cities in political discussions. International organisations were becoming more powerful and more prominent in the global political arena, and the urban spaces they were based in were looked at differently (Beveridge et al. 2016: 4). However, up until Sassen's publication the approach to urban

studies was limited by a state centric worldview (Calder et al. 2009: 79). Following the realist epistemology, states were the only central actors in the geopolitical system and relations between political actors were equivalent to relations between nations (Flint 2018: 38). Concomitant to the **spatial turn** in geography, the hegemony of state centrism was called into question, and the individual dynamics of cities were increasingly considered.

Based on Sassen’s definition, Calder and de Freytas have specified the (global) political city, emphasizing the political role of cities. They acknowledge a participatory role in issues of **governance, agenda-setting, and resource distribution.**

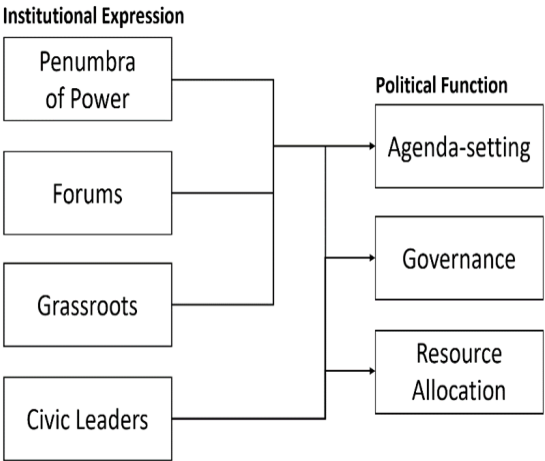


Figure 1: Illustration of a Political City. Source: Calder 2021

Consequently, cities have emerged from their host role and have become “actors in twenty-first century international affairs” (Calder et al. 2009: 94). They

have developed their own agency and have become agents in world politics, attracting political institutions and expanding the scope of power a city has. Not only are the actors present in a city of importance in the analysis of the political of a city; their interconnections, institutional organisation and representation express their embeddedness within the global political system (Calder et al. 2009: 80).

The term political cities came into being with the urbanization of the world (Sassen 2001: 169). State-centrism was no longer determining the geopolitical discourse on cities and was replaced by an actorness-oriented epistemology (Acuto 2009: 176). The Westphalian era of nation-state dominance was only an interlude in the history of global politics (Calder 2021). Nowadays, it has become apparent that cities of international political relevance do not imperatively require to be within a country of international political relevance. Cities are in this sense somewhat independent from their nation as they host institutions and organisation sovereign to the national government (ibid.).

This new understanding of cities brought to light their political functions that manifest in a larger geographical area (Acuto 2009: 177). Global cities provide surrounding regions with resources, perform political functions, and function as an exchange platform for international political actors (ibid.).

Although it is humans acting in a political sense, cities too can be responsible for setting policy agendas (Healey 2002: 1778). This can be manifested in declarations, agreements or treaties, each referencing the city of its origin. Characteristic for political cities is their spatial structure, a hub for political actors on different scales, integrating municipal, regional, and international players creating networks and building “**governance hotspots**” (Acuto 2009: 177).

“[T]o challenge head-on theories derived from the global North ... cities across the global South can pose fundamental challenges to theories from the global North. We look forward to a time when our urban theory is derived as much from studies rooted in Buenos Aires ... as in ones rooted in Chicago or Los Angeles” (Seekings 2012).

At the same time, the concept of global political cities is limited to cities of the Global North (Mabin 2014: 24). Many scholars have expressed their critique of the exclusion of perspectives from the Global South in the development of the concept of the political city. Spatial structures, urban dynamics, and their integration within the region and the world at large cannot be explained by solely relying on Western theories (Mabin 2014: 25). The main reason for this Global-North-

centrism is the idea that ‘cityness’ is interlinked with modernity, which on the other hand is often only ascribed to cities of so-called developed countries (ibid.). Scholars have restructured urban studies by acknowledging the politicality of cities, however, the understanding of politics and its spatial organisation differs in cities of the Global South. What needs to follow is the provincialization of thought and allowing for actors of the Global South to participate in the process.

Materialisation of “Political City” in Arusha

Political Cities are characterized by their political influence. Oftentimes major political cities are the equivalent to capital cities, however, in the case of Arusha another explanation can be found. Political influence cannot be reduced to the mere residence of national governments, rather it is extended by regional and global headquarters of international organizations. Political cities are often associated with the Global North, however, countries of the Global South also have important political cities to show for. In Tanzania, the hub for regional integration and international cooperation is Arusha.

This city in the north-east of the country cannot be described as a global political city, still it is of political importance in the wider east-African region. One of the

main characteristics of political cities is their function as a “nodal point in regional development” (Healey 2002: 1778).

Nowadays, Arusha is known for the many international political institutions settled in the city. On a global scale, offices of the United Nations are located in Arusha as well as the United Nations Detention Facility (United Nations 2013). In 1993, the United Nations Security Council and representatives of governments involved in the genocide in Rwanda were in session to preside over criminal cases and find a transnational resolution (Fruchart 2007: 19).

On a regional scale, Arusha is the headquarter of the East African

Community (EAC), a regional economic community representing the countries of Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda (East African Community 2022). The EACs objective is to form a “prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa” (East African Community 2022: n.p.), Arusha takes a powerful position in fulfilling this vision.

Power and interdependence are the key concepts of regional integration with its member states being connected in complex networks, based on multilateral principles (Keohane et al. 1998: 83-86).

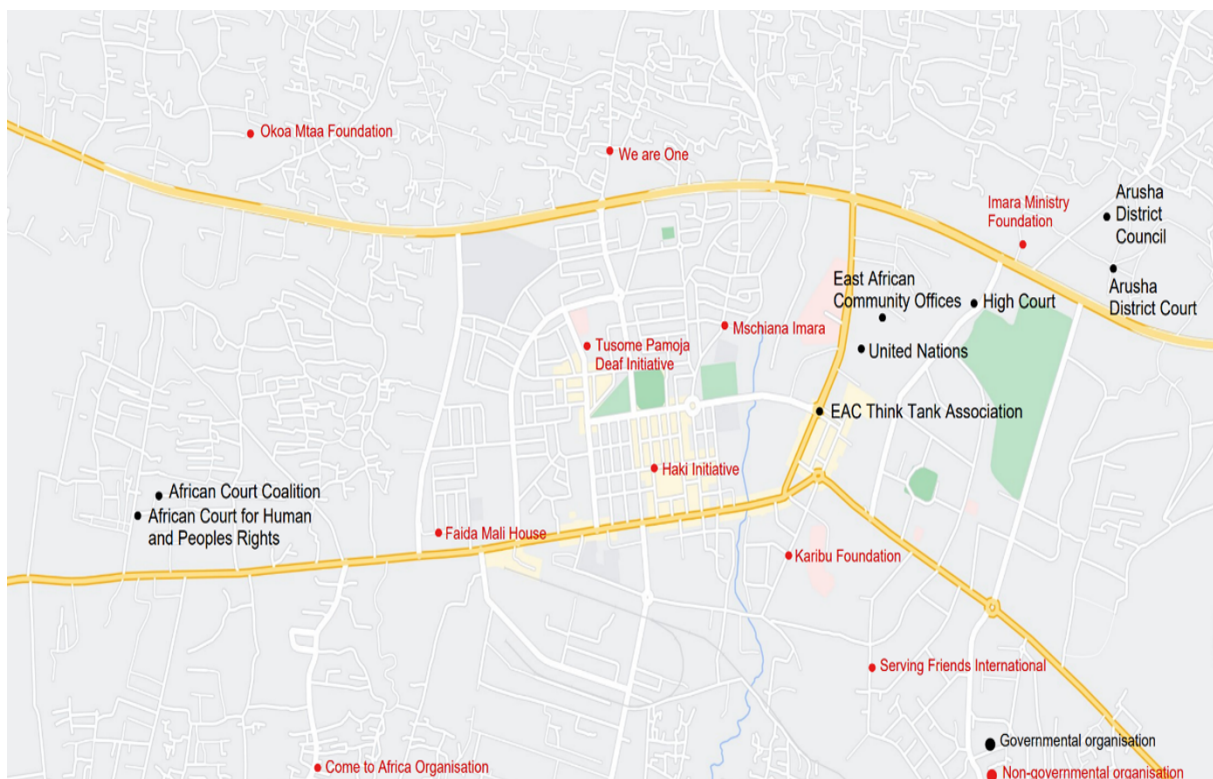


Figure 2: Political institutions in Arusha. Custom graphic based on GoogleMaps 2022. Source: Google Maps (accessed on: 06.03.2022)



Figure 3: Logo of the East African Community. Source: http://africapolicyreview.com/partner_directory/east-african-community-eac/. (accessed on: 23.02.2022)

President Julius Nyerere declared his objective of **African Socialism** in what was later referred to as the Arusha Declaration (Hunter 2015: 86). In his speech, Nyerere announced Tanzania's path to true independence by socialist ideals. His ideas were based on the concept of Ujamaa as the key pillar of this new ideology, which paved the way for structural changes throughout politics, economy, and society (Hunter 2015: 87). Ujamaa is Swahili and translates into 'familyhood' and stands for co-operation and introducing a **"geopolitical vision of hope and inclusion"** (Sharp 2013: 20; Coulson 2013: 7).

Of the six main organs – those which have a permanent domicile – three are located in Arusha, this includes the East African Court of Justice, the East African Legislative Assembly, and the Secretariat (van der Mei 2009: 407). Evidently, Arusha is what Calder et al. (2009: 82) phrased as the "locus for international institutions". All three divisions of power are situated in one city and this city has become the space for checks-and-balance representing the united organs of the EAC. All legislative, judicature, and executive decisions are generated within this particular urban space and the city itself becomes the voice of the EAC.

Arusha politically can also be explained by the position it holds in Tanzania's history. On February 5th, 1967, the former Tanzanian



Photo 1: Arusha Declaration Monument. Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bobcatnorth/3830837702/> Flickr, (accessed on: 23.02.2022)

Some scholars consider the declaration to be just a structural development plan, set out to tackle the issues of poverty, illiteracy, and inequality; others regard it as a political manoeuvre aimed at silencing the voices of critics (Hunter 2015: 86). During the Cold War, the Arusha Declaration was reduced to Tanzania's eastern – therefore non-western – positioning, while negating the unique character of it. As Nyerere once wrote: “They [western countries] 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: 43).

While many scholars of different academic fields were debating about the implications of the Arusha Declaration, no one raised the question of Arusha's position in it. It appears rather a paradox that a political city became the symbol for state-centrism, however, the composition of political arenas on the African continent cannot be equated to those of the Global North (Sharp 2013: 21). The Arusha Declaration was not only a call for independence, self-reliance, and civil rights, rather it paved the way for Pan-Africanism and continental unity (ibid.).

Since the idea of Tanzania's socialism was recorded in this declaration, it was Arusha that became the symbol of Ujamaa; it became the symbol of a strong

nation, a strong East African region, and a strong united Africa (Sharp 2013: 24). Following the years after 1967, political leaders from all around the world were associating African Socialism – rather than Pan-Africanism – with Arusha, it developed a radiant power, exceeding the borders of its territory and portraying the socialist agenda (Coulson 2013: 7; Sharp 2013: 21). Arusha took an active role in Tanzania's political development; **the city was no longer just a city it, became an agent.**

Script for the Excursion Day



Figure 4: Political Institutions in Arusha. Source: Google Maps (accessed on: 12.03.2022)

1st Part: East African Legislative Assembly (08:30 am)

We will start the first day of our excursion with a visit at the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA). The EALA is the legislative branch of the EAC, the decision-maker of policy changes and here we will be meeting with Hon. Josephine Sebastian Lemoyan to receive a better understanding of the work of the EALA and its regional integrational influence. The EALA’s vision is to be ‘an effective and independent

Regional Parliament’, Hon. Lemoyan is going to help us in answering in how far this objective has been realized.

2nd Part: East African Court of Justice (10:30 am)

Subsequently, we will be staying at the headquarter of the East African Community and take a closer look at the judicial arm of the institution. At the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) we will be

meeting with Mr. Fikirini Juma who currently holds the position of the Court Clerk since 2009. At the EACJ we will be focusing on the legal implications of the EAC and the legal milestones the court has set for the region and beyond.

Lunch break (12:30 am)

3rd Part: Arusha Declaration Museum (2:00 pm)

After a 1,5-hour lunch break we will be meeting at the Arusha Declaration Museum where we will be given a private tour. In this museum we will be confronted with the history that has brought African Socialism to Tanzania and the implications of such for its current state and development.

4th Part: Arusha Declaration Monument (4:00 pm)

Our first day will end at the Arusha Declaration Monument, a five-minute walk from the museum. This landmark attraction represents the 10-year Anniversary of the Arusha Declaration, and we are going to take our time to reflect on the relicts of the declaration we can still find today. At this point there will be time to reflect on the day, discuss unanswered questions and bring our first day to a close.

Postscript for the Day of the Excursion on: **Political City**

Summary of the Day

Our second official day in Arusha started differently as expected. At 9 am, we met with Peter Anael Mbise, who gave us a tour through the city. We started at the Arusha National Natural History Museum, a boma that was formerly built and occupied by the German colonial military outpost. On our way to our second stop, the Central Market, we passed by the headquarters of the East African Community where we were to return later in the day. At the market we experienced a wide variety of foodstuffs and walked alongside people doing their daily grocery shopping.



Photo 2: Clock Tower in Arusha. Source: Own Picture, 2022

In the inner part of the city, we looked at the Clock Tower, a famous monument that is believed to represent the central point between Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, the founders of the East African Community (EAC). It is also considered the middle point between Cairo and Cape Town. Although neither case is ultimately true, as the actual middle points lie south of Arusha and in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but its representation as the African central point underlines the perceived importance of Arusha across borders. To end the first activity for the day, we visited the Old Arusha Cemetery, a place where Tanzania's history is remembered. It showed the relicts of colonial occupation, while at the same time demonstrating Tanzania's idea of unification and togetherness, caring for the graves of various religions and origins.

At 10:30 am, after having gotten a glimpse of the city, we met with Mr. Fikirini Juma who has been working as the court clerk at the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) since 2009. We got to the EAC offices and had our meeting in the room of the first appellate division. During our meeting we discussed the impact of the EACJ, sovereignty of member states and its dampening effect on the

unification of the East African region. Furthermore, we received insights into the work at the EACJ, its work cycles and communication among the partner states.

At 12 pm we had a lunch break with some free time in which everyone could explore the city on their own. The idea was to observe the dynamics in the city and feel what the city, the political city, expresses.

After refreshments and some time to cool our heads, we met again at the Arusha Declaration Museum, which is a national treasure. Here we heard a presentation from one of the staff members on Tanzania's socialist history and the impact of Ujamaa. We learned about the details of the villagization program and the rise and fall of Nyerere's African Socialism. Thereafter we explored the museum on our own as well and got to read more about its colonial past, Tanzanian culture, Maasai livelihoods and the implications of Nyerere's ideas.

Our day ended in front of the Museum on the grass, where we took some time to discuss the inputs of the day and reflect on the position of the Arusha Declaration for Tanzania's development.

Reflecting on Political Cities “after the Field”

When thinking about a political city, one might initially think of political hubs in Geneva, Brussels, or Luxembourg. Arusha is often referred to as the **Geneva of Africa**, the African political hub (wa Lutengano 2000: 139). But why should the city be compared to another city from a completely different geography and even more different context? Before arriving in Arusha, it was obvious that the literature on political cities – cities in general – originated in the Global North. Consequently, being in the city, wandering around and seeing how the city was organized, it became apparent that it was nothing like Geneva. Arusha has its own character and despite institutional similarities, both cities have little in common. Arusha is a political city nonetheless, just not in the Western definition of the term.

From a Global North perspective, the EAC and United Nations are the main political forces that constitute Arusha's politicality while at the same time being products of precisely this manifestation of politics in space. In our meeting with Mr. Juma from the East African Court of Justice, we learned about the reality in which the EAC works. In our classrooms in Bayreuth, we have often heard about the successes of this regional economic community (REC), especially when it comes to cooperation

among the partner states. At least in my view and based on scientific literature, the EAC was always presented as the ideal REC, consisting of members that are invested in the harmonization of common ideals, guidelines, and goals (Frimpong Oppong 2010: 95). When we were allowed inside the headquarters and got insights from within the community, I was surprised to learn that the success story was also a story narrated by the Global North. I do not want to negate the positive impact the EAC has had, but several obstacles remain which cannot be easily overcome within the next couple of years. To paraphrase Mr. Juma: The EAC has contributed to the unification of East Africa, however it cannot be expected that this goal can be achieved within such a short period of time, the community is progressing slowly, but at least it is progressing. Compared to other RECs of the Global South, the EAC has achieved a lot towards completing its objectives, a customs union, a common market, a monetary union, and a political federation (Frimpong Oppong 2010: 101). Although this thought is not new to me, I realized that development takes time, and that Arusha, as the main site for East African politics, has not yet tapped its full political potential. The future will show in how far Arusha as the place for political institutions will become an active actor in global political affairs.



Photo 3: Uhuru Monument. Source: Own Picture, 2022

At the same time, we need to remind ourselves that Arusha's politicality is not necessarily derived from the many political institutions settled in the city but from its historical importance. Ujamaa, Nyerere, Arusha Declaration and African Socialism have been terms that were all time present during our learning trip. The Arusha Declaration is no relic of the past instead it has remained a constant influence for Tanzanian society. Social gatherings, policy decisions, and economic orientations often reflect socialist impulses set some 50 years ago. During the first topic of the excursion – conservation and coloniality – Ujamaa became relevant in the political decisions on land distribution and the legal

question of right to the land. Likewise, Tanzania's Socialism played a role in the development of the agricultural sector, as we could see during our visit later at the Hortanzia Farm. During Nyerere's legislative period, most farms were nationalized and redistributed, however what was missing in the calculation was the need for investments into agricultural technologies. What followed was a collapse of the agricultural sector and the socialist objective of the country was replaced by liberalization and privatization. Land was partially offered for sale and private investors were encouraged to promote cash crop and export-oriented strategies. Nyerere's idea of Ujamaa remains present in issues such as land ownership. Throughout the excursion, property and ownership issues were consistently discussed, always with a reference to Tanzania's socialist past. The Arusha Declaration had and still persists to have a great impact on the country's economic and political objectives and future developments. Likewise, Ujamaa can be found in everyday interactions. During our city tour with Mr. Mbise we learned that there are almost no conflicts between different groups, be it religious groups, cultural groups, or ethnic groups. During the villagization program, people were relocated – in many cases we need to speak of forced displacement – and resettled in

heterogeneous communities. Consequently, people were forced to live and work with individuals from a completely different background and learned to overcome their differences. Nyerere often pointed out that tribalism should not prevail and that a functioning socialist state has to rely on cooperation amongst everyone. Throughout the excursion, it was emphasised by individuals from different backgrounds that Tanzania does not have problems between peoples. They pointed out that it is a country with a sense of community and mutual support, an idea that clearly derives from the Arusha Declaration. Although socialism is not practised anymore it remains somewhat present in the structures and lives of Tanzanians.

Ethical and Methodological Challenges of Upscaling the Topic

In terms of my own positionality during the excursion, a lot of thoughts have come together. The first thing I realised was our privileged position when it comes to questions of access. We were fortunate enough to meet with high-ranking persons of their fields and everyone welcomed us with open arms, contacts we might not have got without our geographical and academic background and our whiteness. On “my” day it was easily apparent when it did not

pose too big of a barrier for us to visit the headquarters of the East African Community. On other occasions, for example, when we visited the Tanzanian Coffee Board or a coffee plantation, our positionality as students from Germany helped us immensely in opening doors. Of course, in this regard we have to ask ourselves, why is it that we have access to institutions, companies, and respected scholars and others do not.

One of the most obvious answers is colonialism. Although Tanzania became independent in 1961, past structures of the colonial hegemony have remained and crept their way into today's reality in Tanzania. Before, **critical whiteness**, the hegemonic introspection that focuses on the ones perpetuating racist structures and different forms of racialised discrimination (Tißberger 2017: 88), was merely a concept discussed in class, although not very often. When we arrived in Tanzania and travelled through the country, we were persistently reminded of the privileges that develop from our social positionality as financially very well-situated people that grew up in the Global North with all its perks.

If I had to create a research project based on the concept of political cities, several obstacles would have arisen. The main one is what I have just touched upon: privilege. In how far does it make

sense for me – a white woman from Germany – to conduct research in Arusha? What insights can I reveal and who is profiting from it? Am I able to understand the context of the place and study political cities apart from prejudice and misinterpretation? These are only the superficial questions I have asked myself. Although, I believe that research in Arusha is not entirely impossible, it would be very hard to conduct research in which I find a place to bring new insights. It is not my place to research local contexts without a real connection to the place and the people.

On a more practical note, the concept itself poses a lot of difficulties. Political cities can have different meanings, forms, and impacts. As already laid out in my entry on this matter, cities can either be hubs for political institutions and actors or serve as a symbol for political beliefs and guidelines. Arusha can be analysed from both angles. On the one hand, it would be interesting to analyse the impact of the EAC. In how far has the EACJ improved the implementation of legal statutes? How has the EALA introduced binding objectives for the member states? And how regulates the Secretariat and directs issues within the community? On the other hand, an analysis on the effect of the Arusha Declaration on the country's economic, social, and/or political development could be

another topic for a research project. At this moment I cannot conduct research in Arusha as I cannot yet answer the questions regarding my own positionality. I have been provided with a lot of “food-for-thought” but nonetheless, I am still in the process of figuring out where I stand and what this means for me and the people involved in a potential research collaboration.

The excursion has shown me that literature-based research is a lot easier to conduct, but cannot answer every question. Also, this would not automatically lead to arriving at the questions that really matter as these may only arise during direct encounters. In order for me to conduct research on the political city of Arusha, I would have to find a new angle that allows me to discover underlying structures, tackle prejudice, and propose new insights from which everyone can benefit.

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