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Contested Urbanities: Negotiating Belonging and Identity in Colonial Dar es Salaam, ca. 1920s –1960

Maxmillian Julius Chuhila, Saleh Yasin*

Abstract
This article analyses the interplay between planned and everyday experiences of urban housing by focusing on colonial Dar es Salaam between the 1920s and 1960. Despite the emphasis on urban planning and formal settlements during this period, informality emerged as an indicator of the incompatibility between bureaucratic imaginations and people's desires to belong to the city. We argue that what came to be regarded as informal housing was primarily a feature of the struggles to maintain a sense of belonging to a contested urban space for the majority of people. Planned housing and settlements benefited only a few residents with financial resources and excluded the majority who were on low incomes. Using historical methods, this article shows how local actors can sometimes go beyond official regulations and define their own ways of surviving within and outside the existing framework.

*Maxmillian Julius Chuhila, Senior Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Dar es Salaam. Contact: chuhila@udsm.ac.tz
*Saleh Yasin, graduate student at the Department of History University of Dar es Salaam. Contact: salehy658@gmail.com

Introduction and contextualisation

African urban histories stretch back to historic periods but are differentiated by regional biases with some regions being more developed than others. In West Africa, Nigeria takes the lead by having a more developed tradition of urban history compared to others (Coquéry-Vidrovitch 2005: xv-xxxviii). In other regions of the continent, urban history is rapidly developing with a general focus on issues like politics, society, race, identity, environment, post-coloniality – to mention just a few areas. Urban planning entails imaginations put forward for urban structures and their relationships. It foregrounds what type of structures, how they should be located and where in the urban spaces. By having a common understanding about particular land uses, urban planning helps to reduce contradictions in land developments over time and space. In most cases, planning is a technical aspect envisaged in modernising cities and townships and avoiding the loss of urban aesthetics.[1]

Under colonial experience, planning was also used as a tool of control and domination over the subjects. Commenting on colonial planning, Ambe Njoh – a renowned author on international development and planning – points out that, "officially, the policies [colonial planning policies] were designed to accomplish public welfare goals, such as ensuring sound architectural standards and promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of the built environment" (Njoh 2009: 301). Spatiality ensured proper management and control of the ethnically and racially categorised urban residents who were easily identified by where they lived in the city. Inadvertently, post-colonial governments lacked innovativeness and opted to promote colonial designs and standards of urban planning. This makes most urban centres in Africa a reflection of colonial experiences (Home 1983: 165-175; Njoh 2004: 435-454; Bigon 2013: 477-485; Chuhila 2023: 51-56). Informed by the 20th century garden city movements in Europe, colonial powers found themselves instilling more desire in the colonised by implementing planned neighbourhoods (Richert/ Lapping 1998: 125-127).

As a colonial legacy, modern cities in Africa are still informed by colonial masterplan designs despite the failures they present in coping with rapid developments and the economic capacity of town residents (Scholz et al. 2015: 67-94). Tanzania, for example, inherited the stipulations of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, as modified for the first time in 1956. Such legal provisions occupy all land developments in the country, though with minor modifications now and then. The colonially developed towns on the continent represented colonialism and its operations. They were designed to accommodate

[1] For a discussion of planning theory see Fainstein (2005).

small administrative and commercial class populations while keeping the lower class on the fringe areas of major urban centres.

Colonialism in Africa disregarded pre-colonial urban designs in favour of European thinking and practice (Demissie 2012: 1-7; Ross 2018). Modernity in the colonial order was equated with the adoption of European-style culture, education, infrastructure, social systems and planning. Concerns regarding the built environment in the colonial town were a means of systematizing civilizations by checking social and environmental interactions (Demissie 2012: 1-7). Classifying non-European races as 'others' and labelling them as 'uncultured' and 'irresponsible' justified the philosophy of environmental corridors as control and monitoring mechanisms (Home 1983: 165; Christopher 1990: 421-440; Njoh 2008: 579-599; Dill/ Cow 2014: 187-200; Wood 2019: 257-271; Ese/ Kristin 2020). Consequently, "...the geographic segregation of the native population was considered necessary to safeguard the welfare and identity of the European settler population" (Demissie 2012: 2-3). This was a common feature in all colonial towns and Africans had to find their way of maintaining identity and resilience in urban spaces. Urban spaces in Dar es Salaam were contested in terms of belonging, identity, race and opportunities for which marginalized groups (Africans) had to struggle more than privileged Europeans, Asians and Arabs.

Dar es Salaam was a town of colours divided and separated socially and physically. Urban advantages (e.g. improved social services, infrastructure and employment) followed the colour lines and zoning of areas predetermined through racial localisations and belonging (Smiley 2009: 178-196; Brennan 2012). African areas in the town were different from Uzunguni (areas for Europeans) and Uhindini (areas for Indians) where first and second-class residents lived. Sanitary corridors separated the different racial and geographical zones maintained in a colonial city space (Brennan 2012). Surviving within such a racially troubling and conscious urban space required both strategies and innovations to bypass official making of urbanity and sociality of the environment.

In the long run, rapid urbanisation and limited resources for government control of the expanding settlements ended up producing unmonitored housing. The case was severe in the unplanned African localities on the outskirts of the town and its peripheral areas. Subsequently, as the colonial government's economic woes increased, and the African population soared in the aftermath of the Second World War, informalities penetrated into the planned areas of the town. Designed locally and expanding outwards, housing in the African areas innovatively used local infrastructures to sustain the lives of local inhabitants. Sanitation, sewage, roads, electricity and water followed the already existing settle-

ments which was different from what existed in the Uzunguni and Uhindini areas (Tanganyika Territory 1946: 31). Pit latrines, for example, and waste disposal served the purpose of survival when it was not possible to have established sewage infrastructures in the African areas (Tanganyika Territory 1954: 37).

In this article, we focus on an analysis of the struggles and innovations of residents living in areas that were not prioritised in government planning. Instead, they used cost-conscious mechanisms to ensure that they belonged to the urban space, but outside of government-controlled specifications. We use archival sources from the Tanzania National Archives (TNA) and The National Archives – UK, Colonial Office (TNA–UK CO) to show the interface between government planning experiences and people's adaptation to similar experiences. From these archives we collected correspondence, annual district reports and secretariat files. They contain valuable information about the role of government in urban planning during the colonial period and how the government controlled unwanted urban sprawl.

We have structured the article as follows. The first part investigates the urban space of Dar es Salaam and how this influenced the development of a colonial township. This is followed by a discussion of how informality was used as a mechanism to survive in the urban environment despite government measures to control it. The next section examines the role of private investment in providing affordable housing for low-income people, especially when government capacity was low. The last subsection analyses how the municipal town planning intervened in housing development most often unsuccessfully. The conclusion summarizes the main findings of the article.

Dar es Salaam's urban space

Housing is a major component of town development, and residents struggle to belong to urban spaces, first of all by securing accommodation. Personal home development starts with land ownership followed by adherence to land development regulations instituted by government authorities. The 1923 Land Ordinance made all land in Tanganyika public under the control of the governor, but in addition it allowed freehold and customary right of occupancy to coexist in the territory. Being allocated a piece of land, one was supposed to pay specified fees to complete the right of occupancy and then pay specific amounts for standard-

ized building permits. This was not in favour of many African residents who had a low-income base.[2]

Land ownership was only a small aspect to be considered when someone wanted to build a personal home because the financial capacity to develop the land was a major factor. Ownership as defined by government regulations such as the Right of Occupancy also excluded a large proportion of urban dwellers who did not qualify for it. After obtaining the Right of Occupancy as defined by the Land Ordinance Act 1923, developing that land required following town development regulations where standard formats for housing development were set in different urban quarters (Tanganyika Territory 1923). The economic capacity remained unfavourable to the African population. Not everyone was able to afford government authorisation of building permits and at the same time adhere to specified construction standards. Failing to pay the stipulated fees excluded many from the right to build residential houses in the planned areas. As a result, many African residents were in a constant state of relocation, moving towards the peripheries where there were fewer restrictions as opposed to the centres that were already exhibiting indications of rapid urbanisation.[3]

Though dominant in terms of number, the African population remained less influential in the urban space during the colonial period. They had little financial muscle and few political positions necessary for decision-making associated with their welfare in general. Estimates show that by 1931, Dar es Salaam was already a cosmopolitan town where different racial groups were growing in numbers as a multicultural, multicoloured society. At this time, the European community had reached 1,300 people while the Indian community was the largest foreign group in town with approximately 9,000 people. This was a significant increase in the Indian population within a decade since the end of German rule. At the end of German rule, there were 2,600 Indians who maintained influence as a trading and business group. The Zaramo ethnic group, who are considered one of the indigenous groups of Dar es Salaam, formed the majority of the African population in 1931, with 6,642 out of a total number of 16,064 of the African population. Despite the number, they had little impact on town development due to their low incomes.[4] The population of Dar es Salaam increased by over 50 per cent from about 26,000 to about 40,000 between 1938 and 1944, causing immense pressure on the town's infrastructure that did not expand at the same

[2] Tanzania National Archives (TNA) 11/29, 'Land alienation by non-natives'.
[3] Ibid.
[4] TNA 61/167, Fryer to provincial commissioner Eastern Province, 10 July 1931.

rate. Rapid population growth expedited urbanisation and necessitated immediate interventions to coordinate its direction.[5]

Residents of Dar es Salaam, as elsewhere in the colony, were required by law to register their land and any development they wanted to undertake (Tanganyika Territory 1923). Registration was followed by town planning, land surveys and demarcations for different urban uses within established racial zones. Landowners had to bear written titles over the plots they claimed ownership of except for those under the customary tenure system. To formalize ownership, they were required to apply to the District Commissioner – Dar es Salaam for a written Right of Occupancy.[6] Land registration was for the good of both the colonial government that designed measures to control land division and distribution and residents who got assured with what they owned. It also aimed to control in-migration into the town and the sprawling of unplanned buildings. Furthermore, registered land aided the government to oversee the development of land and evict the poor African landowners who failed to adhere to state requirements of land development. With that at hand, land registration helped the government to keep records of who owned what and the amount to be charged as land rent.

Belonging to the urban space

Living conditions in the countryside and increasing demand for access to cash stimulated immigration to Dar es Salaam. New migrants found themselves trapped in poor housing and jobs just to make ends meet in the town. Destitute, with no money or legal entitlement to access better housing in the town, they became central to search for whatever accommodation that was available. The period from the 1940s witnessed more twists and turns in racial relations, housing and settlement patterns, and African reactions to settlement planning (Tanganyika Territory 1943: 19-20). Scarcity of housing in the period following World War II forced Africans and Asians in the urban centre to contest and evade colonial residential and racial segregation policies. Similarly, as the housing crisis gathered pace, African urban landlords in the town rented or sold houses or land to better-off Indians, resulting in Indians establishing themselves in formerly African areas (Tanganyika Territory 1946: 20-31; Aminzade 2013: 46). The Africans who sold their houses and land wanted to escape the urban

[5] See TNA 20795, 'Report on native affairs – E.C. Baker, proposals for the re-organization of Dar es Salaam township and district', 3 July 1940 and TNA 61/443/1, 'Report on unemployment and wage rates in Dar es Salaam', 27 September 1941.
[6] TNA DC. 4/11/C/T'MUTI, 'Right of occupancy'.

core and find alternative areas outside the town where they could afford to develop new homes.

The colonial government turned a blind eye to the unauthorised movement of Indians and the building of houses in the African zone. It was an overwhelming situation for the African residents, who had experienced over twenty years of official settlement and racial zoning to control the influx of Indians into their areas. Optimistic Africans saw the influx as an economic opportunity as Indians needed housing. Established African landlords who had capital invested in housing to accommodate low-income Indians who could not afford the escalating rents in the Indian zone (Brennan 2007: 127-128). Low-income African tenants were evicted from rental housing to make way for more affluent Asian tenants. The African tenants moved to peri-urban locations, small settlements or vibandas (shacks) built by African landlords in their backyards. The roadside houses tended to be of better quality, while the labyrinthine backyard dwellings were largely hidden from view.

During this period, wealthy Asians were classified in the same category as Europeans. But Africans who settled in the Asian and European designated zones had mixed reactions to this categorisation. Some of them avoided the areas while others opted to persistently settle in the zones, although they were denied Rights of Occupancy and more often than not faced threats of eviction from the colonial authorities. To ensure they maintained their presence in the town, Africans started to develop shanty settlements in the core of the town. Present day areas like Hanna Nasif and Vingunguti were the notable informal settlements that started to emerge shortly after the Second World War. At the same time, African areas such as Kariakoo and, later, Ilala and Gerezani were rapidly emerging. They were partially occupied by temporary (Makuti) Swahili-styled buildings lined up in the streets. They became a nucleus on which unplanned and subserviced developments took place and through which African identities were maintained in the town.[7]

[7] TNA DC. 4/11/C/T'MUTI: Right of occupancy.

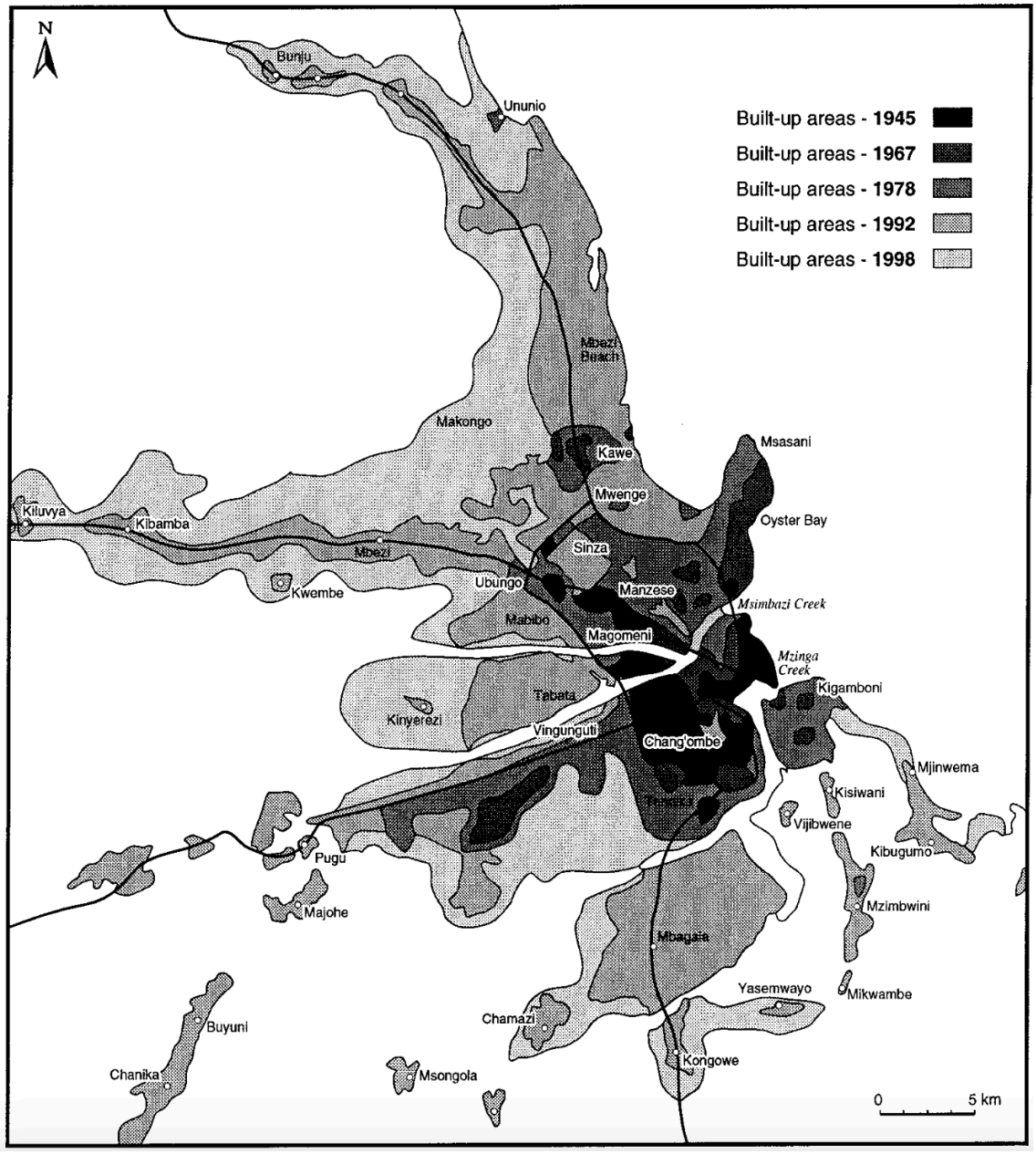

Figure 1: Growth of Dar es Salaam, 1945 – 1998. Source: Briggs/Mwamfupe 2000: 803.

Settlements were densely populated due to limited space within the urban area. The majority of Africans were forced out of the city and into the shanty towns and suburbs, where land and housing were more affordable. There, the fact that the areas were free from government building restrictions allowed Africans to build houses in their own convenient style and materials, mostly haphazardly. After the Second World War, difficult economic conditions in the territory presented challenges to all sectors.[8] In the housing sector, Dar es Salaam faced an

[8] Tanganyika Standard, 13 April 1946.

acute shortage of building materials which, among other things, caused high prices for the materials that made it difficult for Africans to build their houses according to government regulations.

While the poor could not afford the cost of building materials, those with money faced the challenge of the unavailability of the materials they wanted because these were in short supply between the 1940s and 1950s. As a result, low and middle-income Asians and Africans could not afford to build at higher prices (Tanganyika Territory 1952: 25). The shortage prevented the government from implementing the set housing standards at this time. Government, in a sorry economic state, lacked the moral authority to restrict low-quality housing in the town. It further allowed more private capital to address the shortage of housing. Low-income individuals used the chance to build houses within their income limits. Consequently, informal housing sprouted as Swahili-mud-made houses penetrated the planned areas beyond the major African township of Kariakoo. Years after independence, such structures were still evident in Upanga and Kisutu-Mnazi Mmoja areas. They survived government demolition practices until the 1990s when they were replaced with modern storeyed structures as economic liberalisation gathered pace.[9]

Informality and survival in the urban setting

The colonial government saw the development of informal settlements in Dar es Salaam as a violation of building and land-use laws and procedures. Nevertheless, the violation resulted from a lack of alternative means to develop housing and belong to the urban area. At the same time, state laws provided some loopholes that indirectly supported informalities. The 1923 Land Ordinance Act, for example, had loopholes that were exploited by local people for their benefit. By the Act, local people lost their complete land tenure rights, only retaining the right to customary land tenancy under the auspices of freehold rights. The Act required the state to respect community laws and customs in the acquisition of land (Tanganyika Territory 1923). Although the law was not widely enforced in favour of the local people, it permitted them to occupy land for their personal benefit. They were also able to pass the land on to eligible heirs or dispose of it as they chose. Even so, due to the weak financial position of Africans, customary land tenure was a source of informality. It allowed for land fragmentation, low-quality habitats and settlements to develop haphazardly in areas where local

[9] TNA DC. 4/11/C/T'MUTI, 'Right of occupancy'.

people's land rights were respected. In such areas, within and on the outskirts of the town, colonial authorities had little concern for controlling the informality.[10]

Relaxation of housing rules and standards after the Second World War influenced the development of what was looked at as informal settlements. Following this period, the number of houses not meeting the required standards increased in African areas, and the demolition of existing poorly built structures stopped, even when they were overcrowded.[11] Taking this laxity as an opportunity, informal housing spread into the African planned areas, especially in the localities of Kariakoo and areas adjacent to the European and Asian quarters like Hana Nasif. It was a difficult period for the British colonial officials, who, along with the shortage of funds to provide essential services such as roads and water, encountered a shortage of surveyors.[12] Shortage of surveying personnel complicated the planning exercise and made the town vulnerable to uncontrollable informal settlements. Similarly, the local people used the opportunity to build houses in unplanned areas, where land was not only cheap, but the government could not collect land rent from them. Overall, this clearly demonstrates the lack of control that colonial authorities had over the housing sector.

Racial zoning of Dar es Salaam was a disguised blessing for African town dwellers. Zoning was a legal recognition of African spatial distribution in the town and allowed them to build houses within their means. Although the state invested capital in housing in Dar es Salaam (Iliffe 1979: 387-390), the investment did little for the African zone. African areas like Kariakoo, and later, Gerezani, and Ilala, were planned, yet, they were not developed to the same level as the European and Asian zones. In contrast to European and Asian areas, the African areas had narrow, dusty, unsurfaced and ill-lit streets with poor sanitation systems and water service supplies (Brennan/ Burton 2007: 33). Housing largely remained poor, mainly Swahili mud-made, throughout the colonial period.

As we argue here, mud houses indicated a survival strategy and an innovative mechanism to belong to an urban space. Although government regulations prohibited such development by legal provisions, a shortage of housing facilities in a growing town made such structures unavoidable developments. The unmonitored development of housing continued throughout the war period. It was in the last decade of British colonialism that improvements in the African areas started, particularly from the 1950s. This was probably not by choice, but

[10] TNA 27/8, 'Township and minor settlement development scheme station: Uzaramo Dar es Salaam'.
[11] Ibid.
[12] TNA 27/19, 'Townships and minor settlement – African housing scheme' and TNA 27/19/154, 'The commissioner for development and housing in Dar es Salaam'.

by necessity, as the three zones (Europeans, Asians and Africans) began to integrate. During this time, noticeable developments indicated that European and Asian populations were expanding rapidly into the African areas, notably Kariakoo, making it necessary to redevelop and reorganise these areas.[13]

Along with expanding the 'living room' for the Asian and European populations, the strategic position of Kariakoo in the heart of the town resulted in competition for its space. Competition for space in the area started among the Africans themselves as it was an African zone before the 1950s. When the area became highly populated, it attracted business interest and people with capital rushed into this area. Wealthy Africans had a greater advantage in occupying plots along the streets where they established commercial houses. Usually, they were single-storey houses that lined the streets. Ground floors were always for business (shops), while the upper floors were for residential purposes. Behind the streets were the hidden and poorly constructed houses and shanty African neighbourhoods of the low-income and poor families. Since the colonial government was unconcerned by such developments, low-income families took advantage of the opportunity to settle in the town.[14]

The sprawling informality raised concerns among government authorities regarding the planning of the municipality. Overcrowded African areas were given priority because of the underlying belief that Africans could not organize themselves well in the required styles. The municipality ensured the phasing out of low-quality buildings that featured in African areas and encouraged construction of standard housing. Unfortunately, the phasing-out exercise was not received by residents as a technical matter but rather as a racial process of removing Africans in favour of business creation for Asians and Europeans. The European and Asian commercial classes would help establish business stores in the African zones. Stores would supply the middle-income and low-income people and save the European commercial quarters from overcrowding by such groups. One of the building conditions was that anyone who wanted to build a house in specified business areas should at least build a three-storey house. This condition did not favour middle-income Africans and therefore they became targets of the phasing-out exercise.[15]

Rights of Occupancy for the lands and buildings owned by poor Africans who were unable to develop them were transferred to wealthy Europeans, Asians,

[13] TNA 540/11/80/KAR, 'Land rent reorganisation Kariakoo plots'.
[14] Ibid.
[15] TNA 27/7, Municipal council of Dar es Salaam, 'Minutes of the meeting'.

wealthy Africans and associations.[16] Africans with capital refurbished their buildings or replaced them with modern ones to fit the set standards. It was a requirement that flats should accommodate commercial and residential purposes. Poor Africans in highly rated plots or buildings sold them at reasonable prices before their rights of occupancy were revoked. They then purchased low-value houses within the town, including Kariakoo itself, mostly along Kichwele Street (now Uhuru Street) which was exclusively reserved for African settlement.[17] Others looked to the outskirts of the town for cheaper land and housing.

Figure 2: African houses in Kariakoo, ca.1950/1960s. Source: Tanzania Information Services as cited in Brennan/ Burton 2007: 55.

For most people, Dar es Salaam has never been an easy place to live. Survival strategies were often necessary to circumvent government regulations. By circumventing regulations, Africans co-created urban experiences as active participants with a distinct identity, as described by Usuanlele and Oduntan (2018) about colonial Nairobi. Living in the township meant more than just

[16] TNA 11/80/KAR, 'Land rent reorganisation Kariakoo plots'.
[17] Ibid.

owning a decent house or living in planned areas. Urban growth provided opportunities that in turn stimulated urban resilience of people who came to the township from other areas of the territory. These people adopted practical strategies to retain housing and make their urban lives more meaningful. Some built houses for themselves or to rent, while others decided to sell their land and/or poor houses and seek alternative accommodation in typically African neighbourhoods such as Temeke and Ukonga. In such areas, the government offered land and housing rent exemptions or charged less than the Dar es Salaam Municipality.[18] Exemption from paying land rent was a major relief for Africans, who would otherwise have been required to pay it annually.

In the 1950s, the colonial government implemented a plan to establish small settlements for the African population throughout the country, including both rural and urban areas. The exercise in Dar es Salaam was unique due to the cosmopolitan nature of the city and the clear racial divisions that existed. A letter from the City Engineer to the City's African Affairs Officer stated: "I take it you will arrange to allocate these? Could we hope for a better type of building that must of course comply with the Medical Officer of Health requirements?"[19] The word 'these' in the letter referred to the plots of land being made available to the African population. The main focus of the letter was on meeting the standards set for construction of the houses, with the ability of the Africans to buy and build such houses being of secondary importance. While the planning process had little impact on low-income residents, applications for plots were accepted and allocated on an annual basis to those able to develop them. One of the land officer's advertisements read as follows:

> "Applications are invited for Rights of Occupancy for trading purposes over certain plots in the "Temeke" high-density residential area, Dar es Salaam. Each plot will average about 4,950 square feet; the annual rent payable to Government will be shs.100/- per plot; a premium equivalent to five years' rent and a minimum building covenant of shs.10, 000/- will be imposed. The Rights of Occupancy will be 55 years, and will include the usual conditions relative to the payment of survey, Land Office and Registration fees and stamp duty, submission of building plans etc."[20]

Living conditions at the time were difficult for the average person and the unemployed. Although they may have wanted to live in modern and stylish

[18] TNA 11/24, 'Exemption of natives from payment of ground rent'.
[19] TNA 570/11/44, Municipal Engineer to Municipal African Affairs Officer, 22 November 1950.
[20] TNA 570/11/44, 'Temeke area Dar es Salaam'.

urban housing, income inequality prevented many from obtaining land and building permits. As a means of survival, moving to the outskirts was the most viable option. This was a common trend among low-income residents, as noted by the District Commissioner in 1951: "I am continually receiving enquiries, particularly from the less-wealthy individual who welcomes the idea of being able to acquire a plot of his own at reasonable terms on which to build".[21] Building on land with flexible terms allowed people with lower incomes to build within their economic means.

The role of the private sector in housing development in colonial Dar es Salaam

In the post-war period, the government invested in the housing sector with limited financial resources, and also welcomed the involvement of the private sector. Wealthy and middle-income Africans seized the opportunity and bought land in planned areas of Kariakoo, Ilala, Gerezani and Magomeni, and in strategic unplanned areas of Keko, Buguruni and Mikocheni. In the unplanned areas, they built low quality rental houses to accommodate low-income and unemployed migrants who came to Dar es Salaam in search of a better life. The increased availability of housing allowed more migrants to settle in the city, leading to the expansion of informal settlements within the city and its peri-urban centres. As a result, land and house rentals increased and land marketing expanded.[22]

As poor landowners continued to sell their land to wealthy African and Indian real estate developers, the centre of Dar es Salaam expanded outwards. In whatever way, as the population grew, there was insufficient housing to accommodate the new arrivals and the internally expanding population. Again, the few housings that were available were unattractive to low-income migrants as they were reasonably expensive. As a result, there was a growing demand for informal housing in the city. To address the housing shortage, the Dar es Salaam City Council relaxed housing standards and recognised the importance of encouraging private capital to invest in housing.[23] As wealthy Africans took advantage of the invitation, Dar es Salaam produced what John Iliffe called

[21] TNA 570/11/44, 'Chang'ombe area – Dar es Salaam', 1 March 1951.

[22] Poor landowners sold their land to the rich to start a new life elsewhere in town or on the outskirts. Selling houses or land was always a way of dealing with the inability of the poor to meet the housing standards set by the colonial government. It helped them escape eviction for informality at a profit. The money raised helped them acquire cheaper land on the outskirts of the city, build new houses and raise capital for economic livelihoods.

[23] Tanganyika Standard, 13 April 1946.

African capitalism in housing (Iliffe 1979: 386-387) featured by the emergency of African landlords. J. A. K. Leslie, a retired colonial officer, observed a surge in African investment in housing and found that by the late 1950s the number of African landlords had risen to 8,000, or 19 per cent of the city's population – up from 3,000 in 1939 (Leslie 1963: 154-155; Iliffe 1979: 386-387; Brennan 2007: 127-128). Most of their investments were for making quick profit and comprised of single-storey structures made of temporary materials. Owners could live in a few rooms and rent out the rest. In a short time, the drive for profit changed attitudes to housing as investors realised the economic advantage of building permanent rather than temporary structures (Tanganyika Territory 1949: 16). More private capital was then channelled into the development of permanent structures that could accumulate profits over a longer period.

Flexible houses (low quality with temporary materials) dominated both planned and unplanned African neighbourhoods. The economic advantage of these structures was the cheapness of temporary materials. More importantly, they were multi-room houses that could accommodate many tenants. The houses had commercial advantages and could serve as sites for shops, veranda trading and vending.[24] More than this, the houses helped Africans to challenge government restrictions on immigration. Such houses sheltered both legal and illegal Africans. With their many rooms, families attracted people from the hinterland to the city and helped them to settle.

People without residence permits could claim kinship with 'tribesmen' who had permits to survive repatriation. By housing people from different ethnic backgrounds, these houses became known as 'Swahili houses', as KiSwahili, a lingua franca, became the dominant medium of communication to the detriment of vernacular languages from the areas of origin. This was the second connotation of Swahili houses, after the first (explained earlier), which meant locally built (mud-made). Moving to the city for the first time required social networks and knowledge of the KiSwahili language, which united people as brothers and sisters despite their different ethnic backgrounds. This had far-reaching consequences. People from Dar es Salaam and other coastal areas came to be known collectively as Waswahili (Plural), a third connotation of Swahili nomenclature that denoted the cultural mix in urban settlements. To be from Dar es Salaam meant acculturation and a person with little traditional identity. Mswahili (singular) was a person with little or no knowledge of vernacular languages. Similar to what happened in Dar es Salaam, Ese and Ese, in their essay on urbanity and identity in colonial Nairobi, they suggest that informality acted as a

[24] TNA 540/11/80/KAR, 'Land rent reorganisation Kariakoo plots'.

magnet for lower-class urban communities. Social identity, language and Islam were important factors in sustaining urban growth in the African areas of Nairobi's suburbs (Ese/ Ese 2020).

Private housing took advantage of the African commercial centres developed by the colonial government in the small settlements. The commercial centres and sub-settlements began to displace the African population from the city of Dar es Salaam and attracted more housing investors.[25] The new initiatives increased the importance of housing investment in new townships such as Temeke, Chang'ombe, Magomeni and Ukonga. They benefited from lower building standards set by the government compared to Dar es Salaam city, which helped attract more Africans to the centres.[26]

A minimum building covenant of 10,000 shillings was set in the peripheries as opposed to 15,000 shillings in the townships, as well as a longer occupancy right of 55 years as opposed to 33 years in the townships, and the government restricted excessive occupation of land by foreigners.[27] The increased African population in the new areas encouraged private residential and commercial development. Informal housing mushroomed in the planned areas and on the unplanned fringes of the smaller settlements.

The government's establishment of housing schemes for its civil servants in areas such as Chang'ombe and Magomeni encouraged more private investment in housing in the same areas. Government housing was limited in number and designed for bachelors, not families.[28] Workers with families and those who could not find accommodation in government houses had to rent or build their own houses.

The influence of private capital investment in housing polarised Dar es Salaam towards segregated development between racial neighbourhoods and between urban spaces in the municipality and new townships along the municipality. To encourage investment, the government allowed free style housing in the African quarters and the new townships while only Western-style multi-storey buildings were encouraged in the European and Asian quarters (Tanganyika Territory 1958: 19). While the relaxation of building regulations in the African quarters was intended to encourage private capital to provide housing for a growing African population, it compromised standards and allowed the growth of

[25] TNA 540/11/44/3, 'Chang'ombe area', Dar es Salaam, General Notice no. 1631 of 10th November 1940.
[26] Ibid.
[27] TNA 540/11/44, 'Temeke minor settlement', and TNA 540/11/29, 'Land: Alienation of land by non-natives'.
[28] TNA 540/HCB/12, 'Housing committee 'B' correspondence'.

informal housing in the areas. The low-income groups took the opportunity to move to the marginal zones between the city and the peri-urban areas, where they could live a rural life while remaining close to the city (Leslie 1963: 95-96).

Land expropriation in urban areas increased the importance of unplanned neighbourhood settlements on the outskirts of towns. Settlement expansion took place in areas such as Keko, Buguruni, Ilala and Temeke, where land and housing were cheaper and strict building regulations were not observed for those who wanted to own houses. Areas such as Keko, Buguruni, Kigogo, Magomeni and Chang'ombe were closer to the central business district of Kariakoo and the port and were occupied immediately. Areas within walking distance of the business centre attracted large numbers of Africans in search of jobs, cheap housing and transport. Low-income earners, the unemployed and rural-urban migrants were easily connected to these areas as the immigration restriction did not extend to these areas. Shanty towns sprang up in these areas, forming one of the largest overcrowded informal settlements in the inner city (Brennan/ Burton 2007: 753-54; Kironde 2007: 115).

Wealthy and middle-income Africans took advantage of the government's housing loan scheme to invest in housing. The loans were provided to ensure that urban planning was carried out without compromises or excuses between different racial groups. Loans came from the African Urban Housing Fund, which was set up in the 1950s to enable Africans to build standard houses in Dar es Salaam.[29] The loans were used to buy land, build new houses and renovate old ones in the city and in smaller settlements such as Magomeni.[30] The loans enabled Africans to build residential and commercial buildings according to set standards. Africans applied for loans through the officer in charge of the Extra-Provincial District of Dar es Salaam, whose committee decided who was eligible for loans. Preference was given to civil servants and individuals who had stable incomes. The few who were able to obtain loans developed residential areas in the outskirts of the city. As a large number of Africans missed out on the loans, the development of the urban core was indirectly reserved for the other 'classes' of people, Europeans, Asians and some Arabs.[31]

By 1957, the Urban Housing Loan Fund had granted 49 loans, while nearly 140 applications were pending, awaiting the availability of funds (Tanganyika Territory 1958: 19). Loans were not available to all who wanted them and it was

[29] TNA 27/38/A/III, 'Application for loans from African urban housing loan fund'.
[30] TNA 11/44, 'Temeke minor settlement'.
[31] TNA 27/38/A/III, 'Application for loans from African urban housing loan fund'.

therefore difficult to build good standard houses. Using planning as a tool of racial affirmation in the city, housing in the last days of colonial rule in Dar es Salaam was a clear indication of racial binaries. While the Magomeni African area was encouraged to build in the free style, the European and Asian areas were encouraged to build maisonettes (Tanganyika Territory 1958: 19).

The reason for this was the lack of funds to provide for the number of African residents, and the free style of housing, which relaxed building regulations and encouraged more private capital to provide housing for low- and middle-income African residents. The economic productivity of residents was another important consideration in determining the provision of housing and other social services. In 1958, the government decided to support the construction of traditional houses for Africans in high-density areas of Dar es Salaam to sustain an African population for provision of casual labour. The contradiction for the government authorities was between the Town Planning Act, which allowed flexibility in the development of high-density areas, and the Municipal Council, which emphasised compliance with urban development regulations (Tanganyika Territory 1959: 28).

Figure 3: Planned urban centre adjacent to the port, ca. 1950s. Source: The National Archives – UK, Colonial Office (TNA–UK CO), 1069/3/31, 'Dar es Salaam'

A section of Dar es Salaam town facing the port, around 1950s. This was a typical planned government, business and residential street.

Dar es Salaam Municipal Town Planning Committee

Dar es Salaam was a major city in Tanganyika that needed special attention. Politically, it was the capital, socially – it was a rapidly growing cosmopolitan city, and the government needed to take immediate action. In 1945, the total population was 1,000 Europeans, 15,000 Asians and 41,000 Africans. With this number of people, the government began to consider granting the township of Dar es Salaam a municipal status (Tanganyika Territory 1946: 31). To make this a success, a Municipal Committee was formed five years later to oversee all township development in anticipation of the formation of a Municipal Council. The 1946 Annual Report on African Affairs stated that:

> "It is very evident that native affairs in the township need greater attention than they are receiving. It is no reflection on the Township Authority and on the attenuated staff of the Dar es Salaam District Office to emphasize that more guidance is required in the routine of everyday administration; there is need for careful thought and imaginative planning for political development, and in the consideration of further amenities and social services. Circumstances have made it almost impossible to meet these demands during the war period but they are nevertheless present and claim attention". (Tanganyika Territory 1946: 31)

By 1945, the major urban challenges in African areas included lack of housing, inadequate street lighting, poor roads, inadequate police patrols and lack of social amenities such as medical facilities and schools (Tanganyika Territory 1946: 31; Burton 2007: 136-156). Concerned about the welfare of Africans, the colonial government was alarmed at the end of the war and took active measures to address these deteriorating conditions. In the quote above, where the Provincial Commissioner notes, "imaginative planning for political development", he referred to the mandate status of Tanganyika Territory and the responsibilities for Africans that the UN had given to the governing authority (British colonial government) (Tanganyika Territory 1946).

Before the Second World War, the government had planned an African Housing Scheme that was abandoned shortly after the war began. The post-war situation, again accompanied by economic decline, made it difficult to quickly implement

the housing schemes, the establishment of the African Social Welfare Centre and the African Restaurant projects (Tanganyika Territory 1946: 31). These were all racial infrastructures designed to maintain a typical coloured township where different races could obtain services from different outlets. Financial constraints not only affected African affairs but also created problems for government officials. The lack of housing in Dar es Salaam meant that until 1946, officials had to live in discomfort and inconvenience (Kironde 2007: 97-117).

Confronted with the role and needs of urban planning in the 1950s, the government established planning committees at the municipal level to oversee urban development. This was an important tool for monitoring urban development in Dar es Salaam. Among other things, the committee was empowered to oversee modern urban development. In modernising the urban space, the committee considered the demolition of old, temporary houses in favour of new, modern, permanent housing structures. In implementing this plan, the Committee created the conditions for segregated development, as not all people could build modern houses.[32] As a result, the urban core remained for those with capital and the ability to cope with modernity as envisioned by the government authorities. Land in the city centre was by default earmarked for decent commercial and residential development, with housing built in continuous blocks (Kironde 2007: 97-117). Planned plots carried with them ideas of modernity and decent housing for those who could afford them.

Such plots could be leased as they became available and after applicants had applied for them for various purposes. New occupiers were required to design buildings as part of continuous structures with uniformity of composition and utility. In the interests of modernity, new infrastructure such as roads and sanitation were also improved to make the inner circle more comfortable and attractive to middle-class residents. Old and new roads were all considered necessary for the development of the urban areas.[33] All these were done to connect the streets to form a network of the city, which was necessary for easier communication and for improving the transport system and the impressive scenery of the city. The plan also provided for the widening of streets so that the lines of buildings and colonnades could be determined for any future buildings in the street.[34]

Some streets, such as the edge of Katikati Street and west of Band Street, were reserved and cleared for the accommodation of small workshop trades such as

[32] TNA 27/7, Municipal council of Dar es Salaam, 'Minutes of the meeting'.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

tinsmiths, plumbers, joiners and furniture repairers, and small artisans who could not afford to rent industrial plots.[35] Other streets allocated for similar service industries included Arab Street and the Kuni plots in Gerezani Creek. The leases for land in these areas were temporary in the sense that when they expired, the land was returned to other uses as the need arose. Typical of a modern urban area, specific areas were also set aside for petrol stations, public car parks and vehicle repair shops.[36] In the interest of the government, all activities had to fit into these classifications, although on the ground this was not the case because not every resident was able to comply.

For the colonial authorities, 'modern' buildings were a sign of 'civilisation' and would ensure the smooth collection of taxes and help to identify residents. The rules of township development were not to be compromised, although it was felt that the cost of construction was an obstacle to effective implementation.[37] Modernity was measured in colonial terms, and existing old traditional mud houses in the townships signalled backwardness, not something innovative to contest belonging to the city. The good thing about the demolition and redevelopment of temporary structures was that the owners were served with eviction notices to allow them to relocate their lands before new developments started. Both private and government utility buildings were redeveloped into new structures according to acceptable designs and standards set by the municipal committee.[38]

Low-income families lost their plots and had to seek alternative areas to live. The poor, who could not afford to build standard houses in the city, lost land to the government, which was then given to others who could develop it to the required standards. They were advised to leave the city for peri-urban areas such as Tandika, where there was less land hunger. Complying with building regulations meant not leaving land unbuilt beyond an agreed time and building to acceptable standards. In one case, a woman named Mwanabibi Binti Jumbe lost her land on 29 March 1958 because of such demanding regulations.[39] The District Commissioner revoked her occupancy rights and gave it to an unknown person for further development. This case should be regarded as an example of what was happening on a wider scale. It also explains why most property in the urban

[35] TNA 27/7, Municipal council of Dar es Salaam, 'Minutes of the meeting'.
[36] Ibid.
[37] See TNA 27/7, Municipal Engineer to the Town Clerk, 20 November 1951.
[38] Ibid.
[39] TNA DC 11/16, 'Land revocations of rights of occupancy, Kariakoo'.

core of Dar es Salaam is owned by Asian communities or by Africans who were wealthy during the colonial period.

The colonial government designated separate areas for different purposes; industrial, government, public services, commercial and residential – the commercial and residential areas overlapped. Areas such as Pugu Road, Kilwa Road, Gerezani Creek and Kurasini were set aside for industry. In this case, only those with the capital to build factories owned land in this area.[40] Areas like Kariakoo, with streets like Kichwele Road – now Uhuru and Kongo Streets, were reserved for African housing. It was a cheap area where the African population could afford the cost. The modern image of this area was created by the infiltration of Indians from the 1950s who had fled their zones to take advantage of the populous business environment of the African zone.[41] The African areas, not favoured for urban development, were opportunistic for business because of their dense population. This colonial experience shaped urban development for many years after the colonial period.

Magomeni was another area designated for African houses. It was developed by the colonial state from the 1950s, starting with just six experimental houses (Kironde 2007: 108-110). As the housing crisis worsened in the 1950s, the government authorised the construction of communal houses for African government employees in Magomeni. An attempt was made to analyse the needs of the future population in terms of public buildings such as religious buildings, welfare buildings, community buildings – the population growth of the time became a critical issue to be addressed.[42] The demarcation of Magomeni as a colonial extension of the urban area was partly an attempt to accommodate civil servants. Magomeni was close to the city centre, only two kilometres away, and within a walking distance. Civil servants also applied for land and were given priority so that they could live close to the centre.[43] In 2022, the Tanzanian government also launched a modern housing scheme for low and middle-income urban dwellers in this same area, this time not targeting civil servants.[44]

In 1953, Magomeni African Urban Housing completed 1,234 houses for African settlements, a small number yet worth the effort (Tanganyika Territory 1954: 30).

[40] TNA 27/7, VOL. II, Township: Municipal council of Dar es Salaam, 'Minutes of all the meetings (1951) – African Affairs Committee'.
[41] TNA DC. 4/11/C/T'MUTI, 'Land rent – Tandamuti street – Kariakoo'.
[42] TNA 27/7, VOL. II, Township: Municipal council of Dar es Salaam, 'Minutes of all the meetings (1951) – African Affairs Committee', and TNA 27/38/A, 'Township and minor settlement planning'.
[43] TNA 570/11/63, Idi Abdallah to the District Commissioner, Dar es Salaam, 23 March 1958.
[44] This area was retained for low-income earners in the post-colonial period. The government decided to build housing for 644 families living in demolished houses. The project was completed on 23 March 2022. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWnvKOuikXE accessed on 6th July 2022.

Such houses were cheaper than private housing, which was expensive, and attracted many residents. The provincial annual report for 1953 noted that:

> "Elsewhere there was an increase in free-style building, for which there is clearly still a great need: the Magomeni houses are not always suitable for the family privacy required by Moslems. It is estimated that the number of surveyed free-style building plots should reach about 10,000, or double the present number." (Tanganyika Territory 1954:30)

Free-style building was the preferred solution to the city's housing shortage. It aimed to increase the number of houses available to as many city dwellers as possible. Free-style meant that houses were built without following the prescribed urban standards. Government planners provided directions only for roads and accessibility to the structures. A much-needed land survey was carried out in Magomeni in 1953 to provide more land for free-style construction. Recognising that sanitation would be a challenge in such forms of housing, the government arranged for the construction of cheap pit latrines to be made available at a reduced cost affordable to many households (Tanganyika Territory 1954: 37). The provision of services and proximity to the city centre made Magomeni suitable and a major African township outside Dar es Salaam, inviting more people to the area. New housing was motivated by property investors, including a wealthy class of African landlords who bought 150 of the first 500 plots sold in Magomeni at the start of the new African township (Brennan 2007). It was a class of well-placed Africans who took advantage of the opportunities offered by the expanding housing market. In addition to Magomeni, another targeted expansion was the Kigamboni minor settlement. This was a beautiful area, limited by the lack of reliable ferry services, and was conveniently located close to the town centre (Tanganyika Territory 1954: 42).

The Municipal Committee oversaw all development planning for Dar es Salaam. Its shortcomings were that its work focused on areas near and around the mature townships and paid little attention to peripheral areas. For example, it focused on the Upanga Area Development Scheme, which was already showing signs of planned settlement. All the same, its area of operation was the town (the municipality), which was small and sparsely populated compared to the outer circle.[45] The outer circle was under the control and supervision of the Dar es Salaam District Commissioner, whose plans were not centrally integrated with the development of the inner circle. To ensure consistency in planning and land

[45] TNA 27/38/A, 'Township and minor settlement planning'.

use, the City Council worked hand in hand with the Department of Lands and Surveys. The department was responsible for land surveying, distribution and registration in the city.[46]

Conclusion

Urban history in Africa is a rapidly emerging sub-discipline that is also broad in its own right. It focuses on urban encounters, not least the socio-cultural, economic and political factors that shape relations in urban centres. It is an addition to scholarship that more often focused on rural community struggles as if the landscapes of urban areas were immune to the same (Chuhila 2019). This article shows that urban dwellers were not passive; on the contrary, they took advantage of the opportunities available to them to establish their belonging and define their identities. As we demonstrated in this article, planning in colonial Dar es Salaam had far-reaching exclusionary effects, as social and economic classes were also revealed in the nature of settlements. The scrutinized colonial reports revealed the ways housing was used as a racial and economic infrastructure to meet the needs of wealthier residents, while the majority were left to redefine themselves. Despite being marginalised in planning processes, as Usuanlele and Oduntan (2018) have shown, African communities acted as co-creators of urban experiences by forging new ways of belonging to urban spaces.

People with low incomes gradually moved to the outskirts of the city, leaving the inner areas to those with economic power to develop them. Little emphasis was placed on planning for African areas, as it was assumed that Africans would not be able to develop the areas according to planning standards. In the long run, it was assumed that informality would become a common feature of African settlements, making Africans contest their belonging to urban opportunities even if they were forced out by circumstances. Informality was an adaptive mechanism for maintaining urban belonging. Without such houses, Africans would have to return to their areas of origin, which they did not want to do.

We have highlighted how colonial planning in Dar es Salaam tells a story of economic status in a public-private nature. Subsequently, the colonial experience of urban planning and housing in Dar es Salaam has carried over into the post-colonial experience. It is still difficult to separate middle class and low-class residents in the suburban spaces of Dar es Salaam. This is because urban development has not paid much attention to income disparities, and also because most people with income would buy unsurveyed land and build expensive houses of

[46] TNA 27/38/A, 'Township and minor settlement planning'.

their choice where they want (Smiley 2010: 327-342; Mercer 2020: 521-536). This makes it impossible to control the type of neighbourhoods and therefore, in the planners' eyes, urban aesthetics is compromised but on the residents' eyes, everyone can be accommodated in the urban space. Surveyed and titled land is linked to income, because lower-income residents cannot afford to buy and develop it. As a result, low- and middle-income people tend to compete on the unsurveyed areas where both low- and high-quality housing develop side by side despite the challenges they encounter. Contested urbanity thus manifests itself in the ways in which residents negotiate the challenges of urban belonging in order to make their identities visible and maintain their urban presence.

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