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'Chief village in a nation of villages': history, race and authority in Tanzania's Dodoma plan

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ABSTRACT: This article explores how notions of African authenticity informed urban planning in post-colonial Africa. It examines an attempt by Tanzania's ruling party to build a new national capital in the sparsely populated region of Dodoma. Paradoxically, Dodoma's planners sought to build a modern African city based on the social principles of the traditional African village. This vision of African village authenticity legitimized Tanzania's ruling party by linking its authority to a purely African, rather than colonial, past. At the same time, it allowed politicians to criminalize urban poverty by attributing it to racial betrayal rather than broader structural failures.

Recent Africanist scholarship has been critical of the category 'African cities'. Calling for a more global perspective, Garth Myers and Martin Murray have urged scholars to look beyond geographic boundaries, both of cities and of the African continent, to examine the 'relational networks within which cities in Africa are inextricably embedded'.[1] Similarly, Jennifer Robinson has argued that dominant narratives of development presume a dichotomy between advanced cities in the global north and lagging cities in Africa and the global south, obscuring not only the diversity of innovative urbanisms worldwide, but also the multiple dynamics present *within* individual cities.[2] These critiques by scholars of contemporary urban Africa resonate with the recent turn toward the transnational in the discipline of history. Arguing that there is nothing distinctively African about cities in Africa, Laurent Fourchard suggests that it is more historically accurate to analyse the ways in which cities located

[1] G. Myers and M.J. Murray, 'Introduction: situating contemporary cities in Africa', in G. Myers and M.J. Murray (eds.), *Cities in Contemporary Africa* (New York, 2006), 13.
[2] J. Robinson, *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development* (London and New York, 2006).

on the continent have been nodes in various kinds of global circuits.[3] To take for granted 'African cities' as an object of historical knowledge is to risk reifying racial and geographical boundaries by adopting them as categories of historical analysis.

Yet it is not only professional scholars that have, in the past, searched for distinctively African forms of modern urbanism. That colonial urban planning in Africa shaped and was shaped by colonial racial categories is well known.[4] Less examined is the role of ideas about racial authenticity in urban planning and the regulation of urban space in post-colonial Africa. As part of the broader directive of national sovereignty and pan-Africanist liberation, many urban planners, architects, public intellectuals and politicians sought to envision an urbanism that was modern, distinctively African and anti-colonial. This article examines the work of notions of African authenticity in the articulation of authority and urban citizenship in post-colonial Tanzania through an examination of the plan for Dodoma: the new national capital city. It argues that in the second half of the twentieth century, in Tanzania and beyond, public debates about what it means to be authentically African have been inextricably intertwined with the question of how to govern Africa's rapidly expanding cities.

In 1972, Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere announced a plan to shift the national capital from Dar es Salaam, a populous and cosmopolitan city located on the country's Indian Ocean coast, to the arid and sparsely populated region of Dodoma in the centre of the country, where a new capital would be built from the ground up. For much of Dar es Salaam's history, its residents had prided themselves for living in a city that was a cultural crossroads in the Indian Ocean world, yet in the 1970s, in the wake of decolonization and in the midst of a global movement for pan-African renaissance, African nationalist intellectuals reframed coastal urbanism in a more negative light, as the physical manifestation of foreign domination in Africa. Supporters of the Dodoma plan promised a decolonized, authentically African modern city. Boosters described a new capital that would derive its architectural styles from pre-colonial African aesthetic principles, evoking in its inhabitants a sense of connection with their shared heritage. The master plan laid out houses and streets in such a way as to make the surrounding cultivated hills visible from the downtown: a constant reminder to residents of their rural origins and their continued reliance on agricultural labour. Housing developments were

[3] L. Fourchard, 'Between world history and state formation: new perspectives on Africa's cities', *Journal of African History*, 52 (2011), 226.

[4] See, for example, G. Wright, 'Tradition in the service of modernity: architecture and urbanism in French colonial policy', in F. Cooper and A.L. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997); M. Echenberg, *Black Death, White Medicine: Bubonic Plague and the Politics of Public Health in Colonial Senegal, 1914–1945* (Portsmouth, NH, 2001); J.R. Brennan and A. Burton, 'The emerging metropolis: Dar es Salaam, c. 1862–2000', in J.R. Brennan, A. Burton and Y.K. Lawi (eds.), Dar es Salaam: Histories from an Emerging African Metropolis (Dar es Salaam, *2007); G. Myers, Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa* (Syracuse, 2003).

to be organized in blocks of 10 family units surrounding a communal garden plot, recreating the collectivist ethos of a 'traditional' African village. Dodoma's design used modernist architecture in the international brutalist style to communicate what ruling party intellectuals argued were the universal African principles of egalitarianism, frugality and simplicity. Dodoma would not become another stratified and polyglot city bearing the marks of a violent world history, but rather, in Nyerere's words, 'the chief village in a nation of villages' (Figure 1).[5]

The new capital was not built according to plan. Logistical, financial and political obstacles beleaguered the project from the start, and Dodoma has been widely recognized as an urban planning failure. Yet the aim of this article is not to assess the relative success or failure of Dodoma as a city, but rather to investigate the history of the Dodoma plan as an act of political imagination. Why did it make sense to think about a modern capital city as a traditional African village?

In 1970s Tanzania, the vision of the 'chief village' performed two crucial kinds of political work. First, it allowed the Tanzania African National Union (TANU), Tanzania's ruling party, to legitimize its authority by reconciling the apparently contradictory political directives of scientific socialist modernity and African cultural authenticity. Second, it legitimized state harassment and criminalization of urban populations by recasting urban ills as problems of racial and cultural inauthenticity, rather than as evidence of broader economic or state failures.

The village, Africa and Tanzania's place in the world: a historical perspective

Tanzania was one of many post-colonial nations that saw in modernist architecture and urban planning the liberating possibility of a new urban aesthetic that would mark a decisive break with the injustices of the colonial past. This directive was reflected in monumental state-sponsored building projects and the construction of new national capitals in the global south during the years between decolonization and the era of structural adjustment.[6] As Holston has argued in his anthropological study of Brasilia, modernist architecture and urban planning appealed to many political leaders in the middle decades of the twentieth century because it resonated with the directive of decolonization, espousing 'an aesthetic of erasure and reinscription … in which governments, regardless of persuasion, seek to rewrite national histories'.[7] Other post-colonial centrally planned cities designed in this spirit of modernization and newness pursued by newly sovereign nations include Chandigargh

[5] Project Planning Associates Limited, *National Capital Master Plan, Dodoma, Tanzania* (The Associates, 1976).
[6] J. Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia* (Chicago, 1989), 5.
[7] *Ibid*., 5.

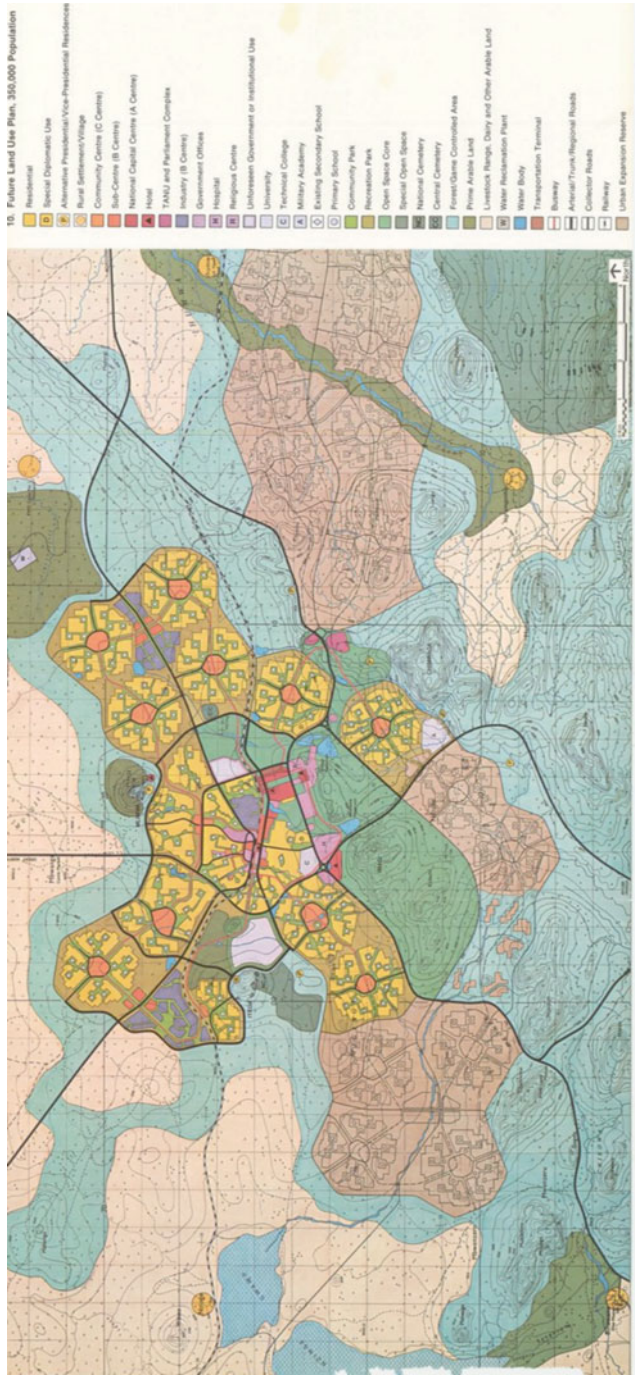

Figure 1: (Colour online) Layout of Dodoma, from the Dodoma Master Plan

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in India, Abuja in Nigeria, Lilongwe in Malawi and Yamoussoukro in Cote D'Ivoire.[8] These new centrally planned cities, located away from older urban centres of commerce, would offer an alternative path to counter Malthusian narratives of rapid and unplanned urban growth that were beginning to circulate in international development debates and population projections. For some post-colonial urban planners, including those who promoted and planned the cities of Abuja and Chandigargh, modernist urban aesthetics offered the potential to do away with ethnic or religious signifiers in the built environment, in hopes that such divisions would not threaten national unity, particularly in the wake of such traumatic events as the partition of India and later, the civil war in Nigeria.

Boosters' promise to make Dodoma the 'chief village in a nation of villages' took shape in the context of Tanzania's programme of *Ujamaa*, or African socialism (1967–85), which had as its central policy platform the organization of the population into collective rural villages.[9] Proponents of villagization cited both practical and philosophical considerations. Leaders of TANU, the political party that successfully fought for national independence and went on to become Tanzania's ruling party, argued that organizing the population into discrete villages would make the provision of government services to rural populations more efficient and boost agricultural productivity, moving Tanzania towards economic and political autonomy. Yet supporters of villagization made an historical argument as well: by embracing the village as the unit of modern life, Tanzanians would revitalize an African tradition that remained intact in rural areas despite centuries of foreign incursion and influence.[10] For Nyerere and his contemporaries, a new capital at Dodoma was part of a more general move to create a visual and narrative break with built historical legacies of the slave trade, colonialism and Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism, and replace those urban legacies with a national modernizing trajectory that could be directly traced to pre-colonial black Africa. More than a story about the African past, the image of the pre-colonial African village was a continually evolving argument about Africa's place in the world.

Despite an ideological commitment to a political modernity that was rooted in a purely African pre-colonial past, the specific attributes ascribed to the African village were based on a vision of Africa that had taken shape and become meaningful in precisely the global colonial order that

[8] V. Prakash, *Chandigargh's Le Corbusier: The Struggle for Modernity in Postcolonial India* (Seattle, 2002); L. Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (New York, 2008); D. Immerwahr, 'The politics of architecture and urbanism in post-colonial Lagos, 1960–1986', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 19 (2007), 165–86. On the planned capital of Lilongwe, Malawi, see Myers, *Verandahs of Power*, 135–58.

[9] F. Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002), 176–80.

[10] On the role of 'tradition' in Tanzania's national culture programme, see K. Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago, 2002), 157–95; and A. Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender and Modern Style in 1960s Dar Es Salaam* (Durham, NC, 2011), 37–59.

Nyerere and his political allies sought to dismantle. Over time, and across seemingly incompatible political agendas, the characteristics attributed to the African village were consistent. The traditional African village was small, egalitarian, racially homogeneous, self-contained, economically self-sufficient and isolated from the world beyond the African continent. Paradoxically, it was in a distinctly global historical context – shaped by the abolition of slavery, colonial conquest and decolonization – that the local, traditional, small-scale village emerged as the image of authentic Africa.

The image of the village as the generic unit of life in pre-colonial Africa resonated with imperial visions of Africa in the late nineteenth century, as European governments, colonial offices and African diaspora intellectuals sought to transform a world order organized around slavery to one organized on the principles of free labour. As Andrew Zimmerman demonstrates, in the post-abolition years, a transnational network of educators, colonial administrators, social scientists and philanthropists envisioned a new racial world order that identified certain racial groups as especially suited to physical agrarian labour. The social science that emerged out of these interactions addressed an underlying concern: how to ensure the production of raw materials in a global economy without slavery.[11] This line of thinking overlapped with the ideas of influential diaspora intellectuals; most notably Booker T. Washington, who sought to link manual labour and self-reliance with a philosophy of African race pride in the context of the Jim Crow American south.[12] Washington's educational philosophy was especially influential in East Africa, as both missionary and government educators sought to instill in African students a respect for agricultural labour and skills that were relevant to what colonizers hoped would be their position in colonial society as productive farmers.[13] In both the context of the Jim Crow south and post-abolition colonial Africa, the African village resonated with a political programme that linked notions of race with a world order in which peoples of African descent would be producers of raw agricultural materials, while the cities would be reserved for the commercial enterprises of elites, many of whom were non-African.

Yet in the East African context, the conflation of African racial uplift with agricultural labour in self-contained villages mapped unevenly onto a region with a deep and cosmopolitan urban history. Inhabitants of East

[11] A. Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton, 2010), especially 20–65.

[12] K. King, *Pan-Africanism and Education: A Study of Race Philanthropy and Education in the Southern States of America and East Africa* (Oxford, 1971).

[13] Several historians have noted the influence of Booker T. Washington and Tuskegeeism in East Africa: for example, R. Loimeier, *Between Social Skills and Marketable Skills: The Politics of Islamic Education in Twentieth-Century Zanzibar* (Brill, 2009), 247–54; J. Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington, 2011), 80–2; J.R. Brennan, *Taifa: Africa, India and the Making of Nation and Race in Tanzania* (Athens, OH, 2011), 122–6.

African cities had long participated in networks of trade, Islam and culture that extended far beyond the boundaries of the African continent.[14] The image of the generic African village took on connotations distinctive to the historical dynamics of the East African coast. In the post-abolition moment, colonizers, mission-educated elites, chiefs and others involved in the colonial project retold this history of Indian Ocean world urbanism through a stark racial dichotomy of Arab slave traders and African slaves, visualized spatially as a divide between the Islamic coastal cities and African inland villages from whence slaves were presumably taken. A growing cadre of public intellectuals, many of them educated at Christian mission schools, sought to articulate visions of African modernity that were distinctly separate from the modernity of the coastal Swahili cities, and especially from Islamic urbanism.[15] In this context, the purely African village became a spatial alternative to the perceived racial betrayals and historical predations of cosmopolitan Swahili cities.

The African village took on additional significance in the years between the two world wars, as young people began to migrate in increasing numbers to cities. Colonial governments restricted African claims to urban property and opportunities by fostering a migratory labour system and classifying Africans in cities as temporary workers. This was reflected in urban segregation schemes aimed at preventing Africans – and particularly African women and children – from residing permanently in cities.[16] Through low wages, restrictions on African access to credit and financial products, and restrictions on mobility, the architects of colonial states defined Africans as rural and urban Africans as temporary migrant workers. It was not just colonial officials who perceived the prospect of Africans living in cities as a threat. Urban migrants had the potential to destabilize the interests of rural parents, elders and chiefs, who struggled to maintain control over the incomes, labour and sexuality of youth at a time when urban wage labour increasingly offered young people alternative paths to adulthood and economic autonomy.[17] At the same

[14] J. Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley, 2008).

[15] K. Bromber examines how negotiations over modernity, and the attempts of the colonial state to articulate a non-Islamic modernity, played out in Swahili newspapers in the essay 'Ustaarabu: a conceptual change in Tanganyikan newspaper discourse in the 1920s', in R. Seesemann and R. Loimeier (eds.), *The Global Worlds of the Swahili* (Berlin, 2006), 67–82.

[16] See, for example, F. Cooper, *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa* (New Haven, 1987); J. Parpart, 'Wicked women and respectable ladies: reconfiguring gender on the Zambian copperbelt, 1936–64', in D. Hodgson and S. McCurdy (eds.), *'Wicked' Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa* (Portsmouth, NH, 2001), 274–92.

[17] See G. Thomas Burgess and A. Burton, 'Introduction', in A. Burton and H. Charton-Bigot (eds.), *Generations Past: Youth in East African History* (Athens, OH, 2010), 6–13; and E. Callaci, 'Dancehall politics: mobility, sexuality, and spectacles of racial respectability in late colonial Tanganyika, 1930s–1961', *Journal of African History*, 52 (2011), 371–2. For an analysis of struggles of elder men to maintain control over male youth, see J. Willis, *Potent Brews: A Social History of Alcohol in East Africa* (Oxford, 2002), 50–60.

time, members of older established urban African communities also saw young migrants as a threat, as they sought to defend their own positions of privilege and political authority in the city.[18] The idyllic village was an answer to a set of concerns that colonial officials and anthropologists labelled 'detribalization' and that Swahili-speakers labelled *uhuni*, or 'hooliganism': a word that, in its Swahili derivation, connoted aimless mobility.

Romantic images of the African rural village largely faded from public political discourse in the 1950s with the mobilization of an anti-colonial movement launched from Dar es Salaam. TANU members strived to link the grievances of urban dwellers with a nationalist vision. From its earliest days, TANU's core supporters were residents of Dar es Salaam – including the unemployed and marginally employed young urban male migrants and urban Muslim women – who demanded better working conditions and infrastructure, and access to real estate, trading licences and urban leisure spaces. Channelling these demands into a vision of national sovereignty, urban TANU activists promised to decolonize the city by opening its resources and opportunities up to its African inhabitants.[19]

Within a few years after independence, however, TANU intellectuals sought to scale back the valorization of black aspirations to urban modernity as Dar es Salaam swelled with migrants from the countryside and grew at a rate that far outpaced urban planning and infrastructure. Many of the social benefits an earlier generation had associated with collective African uplift would be reframed by members of the ruling party as the signs of a 'colonized mentality' that strained the capacities of a resource-poor state.[20] TANU's relationship to the economic expectations of urban residents had changed: in the years of anti-colonial struggle, TANU activists rallied behind economic demands of urban dwellers, and by the 1970s, they were in a position of having to scale them back. It was in this context that Nyerere would introduce his central policy platform of villagization, in the 1967 Arusha Declaration, and a plan for the Dodoma 'chief village in a nation of villages' in 1972.

Just as earlier visions of the African village had been shaped and informed by international debates about labour, race and empire in the global context of post-abolition and colonial conquest, so too was the

[18] A. Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* (Oxford, 2005), 73–6.

[19] S. Geiger, *TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955–1965* (Portsmouth, NH, 1995); J. Brennan, 'Youth, the TANU Youth League and managed vigilantism in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania', *Africa*, 76 (2006), 221–46. For an analysis of claims to urban real estate based on race, see J.R. Brennan, 'Between segregation and gentrification: Africans, Indians and the struggle for housing in Dar Es Salaam, 1920–1950', in Brennan, Burton and Lawi (eds.), *Dar Es Salaam*.

[20] On the desire for cement houses, see J. Nyerere, 'The Arusha declaration ten years after' (Government Printer, 1977), 29–31. On TANU's changing relationship with labour unions, see A. Burton, 'Raw youth, school-leavers and the emergence of structural unemployment in late-colonial urban Tanganyika', *Journal of African History*, 47 (2006), 385.

village embraced anew and transformed in several overlapping global historical contexts in the 1960s. Like Nyerere, mostly political leaders of African decolonization, including Nelson Mandela,[21] Ahmed Sekou Touré[22] and Modibo Keita,[23] saw rural villages as repositories of authentic indigenous cultures, the site of an organically anti-colonial politics, and as the wellspring of national citizenship values. Labour was central to this vision, for as leaders of poor nations emerging from the economic devastation of colonial rule, many believed that the labour of peasants would make up for a lack of material wealth, industrial infrastructure and skilled manpower. The argument that a productive countryside would serve the aims of national liberation circulated widely in Africa. Frantz Fanon, in his classic text *The Wretched of the Earth*, argued that urban elites lacked revolutionary zeal because of their structural position as beneficiaries of the colonial economy. 'In an underdeveloped country', he wrote, 'the leading members of the party ought to abandon the capital city as if it had the plague. They ought, with few exceptions, to live in the country districts.'[24] For Fanon and others, liberation from colonial economies and racial hierarchies required the rejection of colonial cities, which were the spatial manifestation of a colonial world order.

At the same time, the image of the African village resonated with a global political project of third world solidarity that emphasized agricultural production as a source of economic autonomy from the industrial global north in the era of the cold war.[25] The vision of the African village as a site of cultural and economic production was consistent with a global vision embraced by many Tanzanian leaders and their socialist allies in other parts of the global south, especially China. From the early 1960s, the Chinese state had been positioning itself as a major development partner to African nations, a relationship that had been publicized through Zhou en Lai's diplomatic journey across the continent in 1963–64 and the subsequent flow of aid to a number of African nations. Chinese

[21] J. Hyslop, 'Gandhi, Mandela and the African modern', in A. Mbembe and S. Nuttall (eds.), *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis* (Durham, NC, 2008), 119–36.

[22] Ahmed Sekou Touré, for example, wrote 'The surroundings determine the individual: that is why the peasant in our villages has more authentically African characteristics than the lawyer or doctor in the big towns. In fact the former, who preserves more or less intact his personality and the nature of his culture, is more sensitive to the real needs of Africa.' This passage appears in 'The political leader considered as the representative of a culture', paper presented at the Second Congress of Negro writers and Artists, Rome, 1959, in J.A. Langley (ed.) *Ideologies of Liberation in Black Africa, 1856–1970* (London, 1979).

[23] D. Gary-Tounkara, 'Quand les migrants demandent la route, Modibo Keita rétoque: "Retournez à La Terre!": Les "Baragnini" et la désertion du "chantier national" (1958–1968)', *Mande Studies*, 5 (2003), 49–64.

[24] F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York, 1963), 185. In addition to being disseminated in English in East Africa, this text appeared in at least two Swahili translations: Franz (*sic*) Fanon, *Viumbe Waliolaaniwa*, trans. G. Ruhumbika and C. Maganga (Dar es Salaam, 1978), and *Mafukara ya Ulimwengu*, trans. A.Y. Abeid (1977).

[25] For an analysis of Tanzania's *Ujamaa* programme in the broader context of the third world political imagination, see V. Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York, 2008), 191–203.

and African leaders emphasized their shared historical experiences of western oppression and underdevelopment, and their primarily rural populations.[26] The vision of a shared political and economic destiny is captured in the words of the Chinese military leader Lin Biao who said in 1965, said: 'Taking the entire globe, if North America and Western Europe can be called "the cities of the world", then Asia, Africa and Latin America constitute "the rural areas of the world".'[27] The many Tanzanian and Zanzibari political leaders, intellectuals and students who travelled to China and met Chinese delegations in Tanzania during the 1960s saw China's agricultural modernization scheme as a path toward the future that bypassed colonial modernization trajectories.[28] Nyerere found that China's approach to development resonated with his own rural focus, allowing him to project his vision of villagization as part of a larger political vision in which the rural global south would become independent of the global north.

Yet Nyerere's vision for Tanzania differed from the Chinese model. Unlike Mao Zedong or Frantz Fanon, who had little use for 'tradition', Nyerere based his vision of a socialist future on the image of a recoverable African past. While his upbringing in rural western Tanganyika undoubtedly informed his vision of rural life, as a cosmopolitan intellectual, Nyerere would have encountered the idea of the village as a source of political culture in a number of settings. Having attended mission schools in colonial East Africa, he had been exposed to the Tusekgeeist educational ideals of agrarian self-help, and as a participant in a political community committed to ideals of pan-Africanism and Third World solidarity in the era of decolonization and the cold war, Nyerere would encounter the image of the village again, finding a new context in which to imbue the village with anti-colonial connotations.

The village vision was also made to perform political work within Tanzania's national public sphere. Tanzanian public intellectuals' embrace of the traditional African rural village as the epitome of authentic African culture coincided with rapid urbanization. Dar es Salaam grew throughout the 1950s and 1960s, reaching a growth rate of 9.7 per cent per year during the *Ujamaa* era.[29] While at first Nyerere believed that Tanzanians would embrace villagization voluntarily, by 1973, in the face of widespread resistance, Nyerere declared villagization compulsory, leading to, in many cases, violent confrontations as peasants and farmers were forced to move into collective villages. Meanwhile, migrants arrived in a city in dire

[26] D. Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* (Oxford and New York, 2009).
[27] G.T. Yu, *Africa's China Policy: A Study of Tanzania* (New York, 1975).
[28] G.T. Burgess, 'Mao in Zanzibar: nationalism, discipline and the (de)construction of Afro-Asian solidarities', in C. Lee (ed.), *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives* (Durham, NC, 2010), 196–234.
[29] R. Stren, M. Halfani and J. Malombe, 'Coping with urbanization and urban policy', in J. Barkan (ed.), *Beyond Capitalism vs. Socialism in Kenya and Tanzania* (Boulder, 1994).

economic straits, made worse by the global oil shocks of 1973. As of 1975, 65 per cent of Dar es Salaam's residents were squatters, with limited access to basic needs like water and electricity. The demolition of squatter settlements and the repatriation of unemployed urban dwellers to rural areas, both highly unpopular policies of the colonial era, were reintroduced in Tanzanian cities by the post-colonial government within a few years following independence.[30] In this urban context, the image of the rural African village was portrayed by the state as the idyllic African foil of the unruly and contested foreign city.

Neither an accurate recreation of pre-colonial Africa, nor an entirely high-modern external imposition, the Dodoma plan was the product of multiple intellectual genealogies, including a global history of racial thought that linked African authenticity and uplift with specific modes of social organization encapsulated in the image of 'the village'. While reproducing attributes of the nineteenth-century vision of 'the village' – its isolation from the world beyond the African continent, its racial homogeneity and its communal and egalitarian character – Nyerere and his contemporaries transformed its political connotation from that of the paternalistic exclusion from a global economic order to an African declaration of African autonomy and sovereignty.

Envisioning the 'chief village in a nation of villages': possibilities and constraints

In spite of fantasies of a new capital that could be built from the ground up, Dodoma would be constructed on a site that had long staged power struggles between indigenous inhabitants, European colonial states and African nationalist politicians and bureaucrats. Tanzania's central plateau has historically been home to the Wagogo: a stateless semi-pastoralist people whose mobility throughout the dry and sparsely populated region followed erratic rainfall patterns in the region. The old Dodoma town had been built as a small administrative centre along the Central Tanganyika railway line during German colonial rule. A town of a few thousand inhabitants, Dodoma consisted of a few colonial government buildings; a market area where African, Indian and Arab traders operated small businesses; and several mosques and churches serving the local community.

Dodoma was an important site in TANU's relationship to the central regions of Tanzania. In 1933, Dodoma became the site of one of first branches of the African Association – the organization that would provide the institutional framework that later became TANU – outside Dar es Salaam. More an institution of cosmopolitan political elites than of local

[30] A. Burton, 'The haven of peace purged: tackling the undesirable and unproductive poor in Dar Es Salaam, *c*. 1950s–1980s', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 40 (2007), 138.

political figures, the Dodoma branch of the African Association consisted of civil servants and traders.[31] After independence, the TANU governing apparatus extended its reach into the surrounding countryside with the nation's first intensive attempt at villagization. In an ambitious campaign called Operation Dodoma, Nyerere's government relocated the sparsely populated and mobile Wagogo into nucleated village settlements between 1971 and 1975.[32]

Boosters portrayed the new Dodoma capital as a synechdoche of the Tanzanian nation. George Kahama, director general of the newly formed Capital Development Authority (CDA), portrayed the new capital at Dodoma as synonymous with nation-building. He explained: 'The creation of our capital is more than an exercise in town planning and regional development. It is an integral, and central, part of the national construction, which began on 9 December 1961. It is part of the process which is steadily transforming our country into a modern, well-managed nation.'[33] In its details, the Dodoma plan – at least in theory – shared much of Tanzania's broader nation-building platform. As part of the directive of national unity, differences of ethnicity and region were intentionally downplayed or silenced in favour of a more abstract idea about universal African village life. As stated in the Dodoma Master Plan, 'The housing areas must be designed to create relatively small discrete communities which represent the village way of life, as opposed to the vast urban residential tracts which have little meaning to Tanzanian society.'[34] The chief village in the nation of villages would be informed by authentic African traditions, but it could not resemble any specific place or time in pre-colonial Africa. Instead, it would embody traditional African principles and values in abstract form.

The Dodoma vision embodied the aim of self-sufficiency, or *kujjitegemea*, that Tanzanian leaders promoted as one of the core values of the post-colonial nation. CDA officials proposed that Dodoma be constructed of tiles and bricks made with the red clay of the region so that the city would not only be made from local materials but would literally appear to rise organically out of the surrounding landscape.[35] One of the first major investments of the CDA was in a tile- and brick-making factory. Though the initial outlay for equipment seemed prohibitively expensive, CDA officials argued that it would save money in the long term by making it unnecessary to import building materials. The new city would also

[31] J. Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge, 1979), 412–13.
[32] G. Thiele, 'State intervention and commodity production in Ugogo: a historical perspective', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 54 (1984), 92–3, and L. Schneider, 'Freedom and unfreedom in rural development: Julius Nyerere, Ujamaa vijijini, and villagization', *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, 38 (2004), 369–70.
[33] Tanzania CDA, 'Foundations for Dodoma, Capital Development Authority Report and Accounts, 1975–76', 1975–76.
[34] Project Planning Associates Limited, *National Capital Master Plan*, 15.
[35] *Ibid*., and Tanzania CDA, 'Capital Development Authority annual report and accounts, 1978–1981', 1981.

be linked with a broader programme of regional development fuelled by factories dispersed throughout local small towns and agricultural schemes including apiaries, fruit nurseries and a vineyard.[36]

Perhaps most central to the Dodoma vision was the idea that the CDA and its allies could construct a landscape that would inculcate in its inhabitants the behaviours and values of African socialism as envisioned by TANU. As they moved through the town, Dodoma's inhabitants were to have 'a constant awareness of a place and identity with the land'.[37] One report stated:

> The urban villages are the foundation of a man-centred city. They offer an environment where the values of family and village life may be preserved, and where traditions of sharing, co-operation and consideration for others may endure. A major theme in their construction will be the grouping of homes to form TANU ten-cell units for the promotion of mutual self-help activities and collective decision making.[38]

In this way, the CDA's planners sought to connect concrete urban forms and behaviours with the authority structure of the ruling party, concretized in the ten-cell units (Figure 2). Project Planning Associates reproduced the primacy of TANU in its Master Plan for Dodoma: 'The TANU way of involving each and every person in neighbourhood activity, at the most local level, is provided for in the Capital's settlement pattern to give a positive thrust towards the finer collective and social instincts, in contrast with those new urban communities which have physical patterns that reinforce counterproductive social activity and struggle.' The CDA intended that inhabitants of Dodoma would also associate this new urban consciousness with loyalty to the ruling party. TANU's headquarters would stand on top of the Hombolo Ridge, the highest point in town and visible from all points within the city.[39]

Of course, Dodoma was not a blank slate onto which urban planners and political ideologies could invent a new city from scratch. One of the challenges would be to incorporate the existing city centre into the new socialist vision through an urban renewal programme consisting of a combination of demolitions, upgrading and new construction. In addition to improving infrastructure and regulating housing and market stalls so that they were uniform and brought under the authority of the CDA, the new Dodoma plan placed emphasis on the separation of residential from commercial and community service spaces. This would be achieved over time through demolishing old structures and repurposing and upgrading old urban sites. Additionally, some of the town's older roads would be sealed off as cul de sacs to promote the separation of different urban

[36] '10 years of CDA', 1983; P. Makomu, 'Dodoma to get brick plant', *Daily News*, 4 Feb. 1974.
[37] Project Planning Associates Limited, *National Capital Master Plan*, 69.
[38] Tanzania CDA, 'Blueprint for Dodoma: Capital Development Authority report and accounts/2/1974–75', 1974–75, 15.
[39] Project Planning Associates Limited, *National Capital Master Plan*, 33.

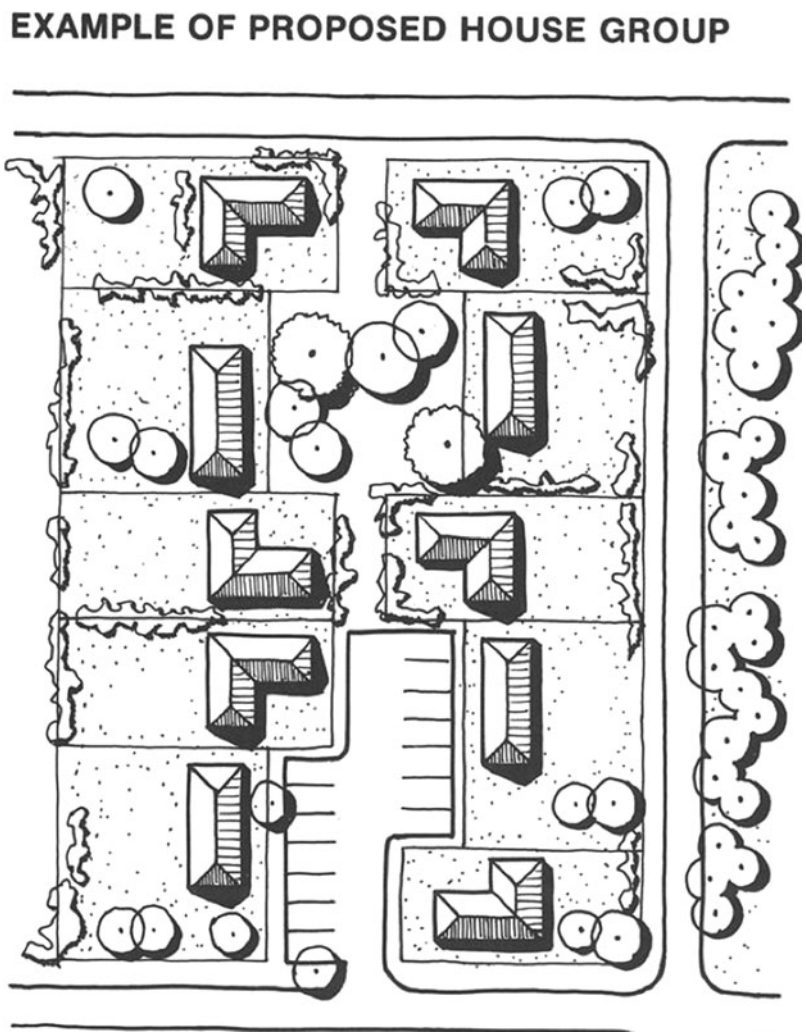

Figure 2: Layout of the ten-cell village unit, from the Dodoma Master Plan

functions and to encourage traffic flows along public transit lines between the three discrete zones for commerce, residence and community functions. Finally, the Dodoma plan emphasized that each residential area should be organized around a collective garden, in contrast with the old Dodoma's denser urban layout. While in the old Dodoma, most residential buildings covered about 80 per cent of each plot, in the new Dodoma, houses would cover 50 per cent of each plot, allowing for more garden space, and decreasing urban density.[40]

[40] *Ibid.*, ch. 6.

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From its earliest days, boosters of the Dodoma vision and the urban planners hired to design the new capital found themselves at odds with government officials who would be called upon to approve and finance the plan. Joseph Nyerere, deputy minister of National Culture and Youth and brother to the president, had attempted to pass a proposal to move the capital to Dodoma as a motion in parliament as early as 1965, yet it had been soundly rejected by MPs who saw the plan as impractical and expensive. Knowing that such a proposal was unlikely to gain the support of elected representatives in parliament, Julius Nyerere strategically transferred the decision about the national capital from parliament to a TANU referendum instead. It was only after a year-long public campaign that Nyerere won the support of a majority of TANU branches and created the CDA in order to oversee the relocation and construction of the national capital. The CDA hired the Toronto-based firm Project Planning Associates and in 1976, after the firm spent three years between Dodoma and Toronto conducting land surveys and consulting with both the CDA and the United Nations Environmental Programme, they produced a Master Plan for the new capital. Nyerere gave the plan his enthusiastic endorsement. Yet jubilation over the proposed new capital was far from universal, and at every step along the way, the CDA struggled to secure necessary funding for the project.[41] Members of parliament remained critical of the plan, and their contributions fell far short of what the CDA requested.[42]

Nyerere had portrayed the Dodoma capital transfer as a decision reached by consensus, yet the early disagreements between the Dodoma's boosters within TANU and Tanzanian members of parliament continued to beleaguer construction plans. Acting CDA Director General M. Kagya pointed out in his 1978–81 annual report that the Tanzanian government had granted the CDA little more than one third of what had been projected in the budget of the first Five Year Plan.[43] Reluctance on the part of parliament, along with the global recession; rising petroleum prices; and the devastating effects of the war with Idi Amin's Uganda, rendered many aspects of the Dodoma plan unrealizable. The brick and tile factories never operated at full capacity and planners struggled to bring sufficient water to the arid central region. By 1988, three years after Nyerere stepped down from office, the CDA had hired an international consulting agency, under agreement with the UN Center for Human Settlements, to chart a new path for Dodoma. The report concluded that the original 1976 plan was no longer economically viable and recommended that earlier aims for a co-operative-based urban economy be replaced with forms of privatization. In a reversal of earlier rhetoric about the inherently communal nature of

[41] N.O.E. Nkya, 'Policy implementation process: a case-study of the implementation of Tanzania's policy to transfer its national capital from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma', Institute of Social Studies, the Hague, MA thesis, 1981, 84–9.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] Tanzania CDA, 'Capital Development Authority annual report and accounts, 1978–1981', 1981.

Africans, the new plan cited an inherent 'deep desire of Tanzanians to own their own homes'.[44]

Tanzania had neither the money nor the technical expertise to produce its own 'chief village', and so the capital development scheme was financed by numerous foreign donors; given technical assistance from Denmark, India, Australia, West Germany, Mexico, Italy, Indonesia and Austria; and designed by Canadian urban planners.[45] In this way, the construction of the Dodoma vision belied the very image of African isolation and self-sufficiency that it promoted as its central message.

Despite its boasts of populism, the plan's implementation met resistance from the first days of construction, when over 450 families who resided at the site refused to move and make way for the new city, and the military was deployed to remove them forcibly.[46] In subsequent decades, frequent conflicts occurred between squatters and the CDA as squatters attempted to gain access to city resources and the city authorities repeatedly responded by evicting them. Even government officials resisted the move, and most ministries never shifted operations from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma.[47] Despite estimates that the population would reach 400,000 by 1990, as of 1980, the CDA estimated Dodoma's population at 106,000. As Garth Myers points out, the vast majority of urban growth in Dodoma has been in informal settlements: one of the urban trends Dodoma had been specifically designed to avoid.[48]

Dodoma failed to become the 'chief village in a nation of villages' that Nyerere had envisioned in 1972. Yet I suggest that the significance of Dodoma as an episode in urban history lies not only in its material manifestations, but also in the broader political context in which such an urban vision could make political sense in the first place. The Dodoma plan, its promotion by the CDA and public debates about the plan reveal the attempts of a cadre of influential TANU leaders to articulate a new kind of relationship with Tanzania's urban population.

Village virtue and urban delinquency in the *Ujamaa* city

The decision to build the new capital was contested not only among political elites, but also in the public sphere. In 1973, a lively debate appeared in the pages of the English language *Daily News*, in which members of the public critiqued the plan for being economically irresponsible and unjust. One of these editorials expressed outrage at

[44] Cameron McNamara Pty Ltd, 'Strategic plan for the development of the national capital Dodoma, Tanzania: a review of the national capital Master Plan', 1988.
[45] Tanzania CDA, *Dodoma: Moving the Capital to the Heart of the Country* (no date).
[46] Nkya, 'Policy implementation process', 62–3.
[47] J. Lugalla, *Crisis, Urbanization, and Urban Poverty in Tanzania: A Study of Urban Poverty and Survival Politics* (Lanham, 1995), 33–9.
[48] Cameron McNamara Pty Ltd, 'Strategic plan'; G. Myers, *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice* (London, 2011), 65–9.

the construction of large and expensive monuments to national progress alongside sprawling shantytowns in the nation's cities.[49] The letter writer cited both the Dodoma plan and the recently constructed Kariakoo market – a large brutalist structure in Dar es Salaam which had been completed earlier that year – as particularly egregious examples of government waste, vanity and hypocrisy (Figure 3). The Kariakoo market had been presented to the public as a symbol of a traditional rural village market, where traders in pre-colonial Africa had met to trade their wares. The letter draws attention to the irony of a government celebrating the rural village through massive investments in symbolic monuments to village life, while meanwhile, thousands of peasants fled terrible conditions in the countryside in order to live in neglected squatter settlements. Yet these contrasts – of burgeoning urban shantytowns alongside monumental celebrations of village virtue – were not as contradictory as they appeared to the anonymous writer.

The Dodoma plan and the images and narratives used to promote it to the public reveal TANU's broader strategy to deploy the rhetoric of racial authenticity as a tool of social control in the context of rapid urbanization. As education rates increased in the years following independence from colonial rule, so too did youth aspirations for salaried jobs in cities, and access to urban cash economies became increasingly important to the fulfilment of adult gender roles. The disruptive effects of *Ujamaa* villagization campaigns in the 1970s further pressed rural people to pursue urban livelihoods. Youth migration to the city was widely regarded as a national crisis and as the largest obstacle to African socialism. Social scientists convened conferences with the goal of understanding why people migrated from the countryside to the city despite high levels of urban unemployment, while officials in the ministries of youth and culture proposed various strategies for making rural life more attractive to young people, largely through cultural programmes.[50]

Nyerere portrayed the transfer of the capital from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma as an act of African liberation from historic foreign domination, and members of the public took on these same arguments about history when debating the plan. In a statement typifying how many supporters deployed these historical narratives, a commenter from Dar es Salaam wrote:

> Through history it may be remembered that Dar es Salaam was first established by the Arabs. The reasons being for centralization of slave trade, ideal harbour and suitable climate to them. So, Dar es Salaam meant everything to the Arabs.

[49] 'The other side of Dar es Salaam', *Daily News*, 25 Nov. 1973.

[50] This question was debated in the press. For example, Theobald Mushi, in an essay 'What are the people called Kupe?', *Daily News*, 8 Feb. 1973, called for 'intensive political education and moral persuasion' of youth. Another editorial called for the creation of model villages outside of Dar to teach the urban unemployed to work, before sending them back to villages; see 'Dar villages to teach loiterers how to work', *Daily News*, 24 Jul. 1976.

Figure 3: Promotional image of the Kariakoo market, courtesy of *Mzalendo*, 7 Dec. 1975

Similarly, the German colonialists knew why they chose Bagamoyo for capital. And likewise the British imperialists should remember why they chose Dar es Salaam for the same purpose. It is high time that we, as a proud independent nation, also know why we should pick Dodoma for our capital.[51]

In these public discussions, Dodoma came to embody an authentic African future that could be traced to Africa's past, rather than to a modernizing trajectory imposed from without.

The flip side of these messages of historic liberation was a political language that divided the population into those who were authentic African citizens, and those who, as representatives of urban foreignness, were not. TANU's struggle to control urban growth often took the form of open conflict through the forcible repatriation of unemployed urban dwellers to rural areas and the demolition of squatter settlements.[52] These urban interventions replicated much hated colonial era policies, yet the post-colonial iteration contained new ideological elements. To be a squatter or to be unemployed was not only to be criminal, but also to be racially inauthentic and a national outsider.

TANU's communication apparatus conveyed these narratives to a mass audience through newspapers, books and pamphlets written in simple Swahili and distributed through a vast network of schools, party headquarters and community centres throughout the country.[53] The plotlines of state-sponsored novellas and parables were generic and anti-urban: rural youth go to the city because of their greed for wealth and elegance, fall into a life of crime and poverty and are redeemed when they return to a rural village.[54] Other versions of the story end in tragedy in the city, with jilted lovers becoming pregnant, physically decrepit and alone; unforgiven by their families, and without social networks to rely on.[55]

As moral parables, these stories linked urban life with narratives of racial betrayal. Abdul Baka's 1972 novella *Salome*, published by the parastatal Tanzania Publishing House, tells the story of a naïve village girl who abandons her family to follow her well-heeled friend Rosa into the city of Dar es Salaam, where she hopes to find a life more glamorous than the one in her rural village. Salome spends her time out at the nightclubs and bars, where Arab and Asian men finance her extravagant lifestyle. As in many of the novellas in this genre, Baka projects the contrast between village virtue and urban migrant delinquency into larger historical narratives

[51] F. Ngenyuko, 'Let's move to Dodoma now', *Daily News*, 14 Oct. 1972, 9.
[52] Local TANU authorities began the arrest and repatriation of hawkers and squatters in the new Dodoma. R. Malya, 'Curbing youth influx into town', *Daily News*, 14 May 1975.
[53] On the adult education revolution in Tanzania, see W. Bgoya, 'Books and reading in Tanzania', in *Studies on Books and Reading* (UNESCO, 1984).
[54] For example, A. Baka, *Salome* (Dar es Salaam, 1972); N. Balisidya, *Shida* (Nairobi, 1975); S.K. Msuya, *Mazungumzo Ya Usiku* (Dar es Salaam, 1978).
[55] Examples include M. Mvungi, *Hana Hatia* (Dar es Salaam, 1975); N. Ngahyoma, *Huka* (Dar es Salaam, 1973); K. Mnzava, *Usiku Wa Mbalamwezi* (Dar es Salaam, 1979); E. Mbogo, *Giza Limeingia* (Dar es Salaam, 1980); B.R. Nchimbi, *Penzi La Dawa* (Dar es Salaam, 1974).

about foreign incursion and racial betrayal in Africa. In one of the early scenes in *Salome*, Salome and her girlfriends take a day trip up the coast with the wealthy Asian Karimu Walji in his expensive car. In a scene meant to invoke the historic irony of their racial betrayal, the drunk and rowdy group stops to visit the old sites of the Indian Ocean slave trade at Bagamoyo. Later in the novella, the author explains that it was the proclivity of Arab slavetraders for laziness that contributed a lack of work ethic among urban youth in the coastal areas. Ever greedy for more urban pleasures, Salome becomes a prostitute and a drunkard, and begins to waste away physically and emotionally. The redemption of *Salome*'s title character occurs when she marries a man from her village and returns to their home village in western Tanzania.[56]

This broader narrative of African village authenticity became an interpretive grid through which to read the city and criminalize Tanzania's urban populations. Reporters for TANU-owned media outlets applied this lens to journalistic reporting on Dar es Salaam. In an article in 1975 for the TANU-owned newspaper *Nchi Yetu*, Chiku Abdallah described Dar es Salaam as a city filled with beggars, prostitutes, hooligans and gangsters. She writes: 'They are at the bus stands, the markets, in various streets, the post office near the parking lot, outside the cinemas and dancehalls and in the alleyways, all of them have one task in common: to live off the sweat of others.'[57] Abdallah explains that these urban undesirables had come to the city despite meaningful work, prosperity and communal African values in the rural *Ujamaa* villages. By contrasting communal African village life with morally degenerate urban life, TANU ideologues criminalized urban dwellers by casting them as culturally inauthentic.

Yet TANU's anti-urban vision, as captured by writers like Abdallah, was not the only perspective that captured the public imagination. In popular slang of the 1970s, Dar es Salaam residents made 'Dodoma' the nickname of the Kisutu neighbourhood: a redlight district near the port that was a centre of black market trade. Over the years, Kisutu had been targeted by both colonial and post-colonial regimes for squatter demolitions and repatriation raids.[58] In this wry act of naming, Dar es Salaam's residents proposed an alternative urban vision that valorized the everyday creativity and survival of residents of an embattled city as the most viable vision for the future.

Conclusion

The Dodoma vision and the debates surrounding it offer a lens into the contradictory work of the idea of authenticity. In discussions surrounding the planning of Tanzania's new capital city, narratives of African history

[56] A. Baka, *Salome* (Dar es Salaam, 1972).
[57] A. Chiku, 'Maisha Gani Haya Jijini Dar Es Salaam?', *Nchi Yetu*, Apr. 1975.
[58] 'Kukimbia Deni la Pombe', *Ngurumo*, 30 Sep. 1970.

and authenticity were not only matters of philosophy and culture, but were also part of an interpretive logic through which to make sense of everyday urban life and governance. *Ujamaa*'s central metaphor of the African village – a metaphor that had multiple global intellectual genealogies – became meaningful in new ways in the context of decolonization, pan-African Renaissance and socialism, simultaneously informing visions of liberation and practices of urban social control. African authenticity was a language that allowed those who used it to recognize some claims as socially legitimate, while denying others as illegitimate.

In this way, TANU leaders' projection of the African village as a model of modernity during a time of unprecedented urban growth was neither ironic nor contradictory, but rather strategic. With the image of the authentic African village, most dramatically realized in the Dodoma plan, the CDA and its allies in TANU promoted a political logic in which responsibility for urban inequality and poverty would fall squarely on the shoulders of urban Africans whose rightful place was in the village. The celebration of African village authenticity was not only an exhortation to Tanzanians to 'know yourself' but also a rebuke to 'know your place'.