

The Suburban Frontier

The suburban frontier that was established on Dar es Salaam's northern and western edges by colonial and postcolonial state planning schemes took on a life of its own in the 1980s and 1990s. The period of *mageuzi* (reforms) instigated by new president Ali Hassan Mwinyi, which saw Tanzania take steps towards economic and political liberalization, had profound implications for land use on the suburban frontier. Mwinyi negotiated the country's first Structural Adjustment Package with the IMF in 1986 and led the country to its first multiparty democratic election in 1995, which was won by CCM. Formerly proscribed "capitalist activities" such as landlordism, multiple salaries, shareholding, and directorships of private companies were openly tolerated after the Leadership Code was abandoned in 1991. The 1923 Land Ordinance of the colonial era was replaced by the Land Acts of 1999. The new land laws did not resolve the legal ambiguity in which most of Dar es Salaam's residents occupied land, but they did introduce significant changes, most notably the legal recognition that bare land could be bought and sold in its own right. More generally, *mageuzi* ushered in a period of economic, political, social, and cultural change that forms the context for what follows in this book.¹ While it is often noted that this was a period during which Tanzania's elite—the *vigogo* ("tree trunks")—took advantage of liberalization and enriched themselves through real estate investment, import-export activities, and the privatization of parastatals,² the middle classes were at the forefront of more subtle economic and social transformations. The scale of land transactions accelerated, imported consumer goods from bottled beer to everyday plastic homeware items to building materials and cars became available to those who could afford them, and new lifestyle trends such as baby showers and school graduation parties became increasingly popular (chapters 3 to 6). This was the age of *Mzee Ruksa* (Mr. Permission,

meaning “things are now permitted”), as President Ali Hassan Mwinyi became known. With *mageuzi* there was, at least until the election of John Magufuli to the presidency in 2015, more conspicuous consumption and visible wealth compared to the recent past, evidenced by the imported cars that choked the city’s streets, the imported goods on display in the small number of supermarkets, the gradual inflation in the size and cost of wedding celebrations, and the number of aspirational new houses that sprang up on the suburban frontier. Property and income generation projects no longer had to be concealed as they had been during the socialist period,³ although the impulse not to reveal too much about one’s assets remained. Yet while *mageuzi* signaled substantial changes, the period from the late 1980s was also characterized by continuities, most notably evident in the coloniality of space that continued to pervade land administration and land tenure.

Urban planning and land administration continued to be understaffed and underresourced,⁴ and authority over the allocation of land continued to be a site of intense struggle between the central government and city administrations. In 1989 the Ministry of Lands issued a directive attempting to delineate the division of responsibilities between the ministry, regions, and districts, but it was hugely unpopular with local authorities and largely ignored. It required the formal advertisement of all available plots, the submission of applications for all allocations, and the filing of regular reports with the ministry. In Dar es Salaam the directive limited the City Council’s responsibilities for plot allocation to high-density plots outside of the Sites and Services schemes. All other land in the city was to be allocated by the ministry. This was an attempt by ministry officials to claw back control over the most lucrative land allocations, but Dar es Salaam City Council officials continued to allocate land regardless. Chaos ensued as urban officials offered plots without the ministry’s approval, the ministry withheld land title documents, official urban planning committees never met, and land deemed ineligible for urban planning such as open spaces, land reserved for public services, catchments, and conservation areas was allocated to individuals.⁵

Conducting background research for the new national land policy in the early 1990s, Issa Shivji collected detailed evidence of widespread malpractice in land administration, including the ad hoc allocation of plots by officials at all levels, double allocation, and the creation of additional plots in planning schemes.⁶ Land allocation was opaque and dominated by social networks. As one Dar es Salaam city councilor who had served on a plot allocation committee commented, “Plots are allocated by *wakubwa*; we (the committee members) are often only asked to endorse allocations. After all, even without the committee endorsement, land offers are nonetheless granted. . . . It is not a question of ‘first come first served’ . . . now one has to know who and how.”⁷ More recent planning schemes seem to have suffered similar fates. For example, the 20,000 Plots Project that was launched in 2002 with the aim of providing clusters of planned plots across the city for self-builders and property investment firms ended up providing housing solutions for

the salaried and the well-connected, but did little to address the city's acute housing needs.⁸ By 2003 an estimated 80 percent of the city's housing stock was located outside of formally planned state schemes in unplanned settlements.⁹ While the quality of housing in unplanned settlements varied, all residents shared insecure legal status. They were trapped in the gray space created by the colonial bifurcation of land rights between the native/rural/customary and the nonnative/urban/statutory that continued to provide the framework for the interpretation and practice of Tanzanian land law.¹⁰

The new land legislation maintained several features of colonial land law and administration: the alienation of all land vested in the president on behalf of the people; the centralization of power over land in the Commissioner for Lands in the Ministry of Lands Housing and Human Settlements Development (MLHHSD); and the bifurcation of land tenure that distinguished granted rights of occupancy from deemed rights of occupancy.¹¹ This bifurcation was now mapped onto two new land categories: village land, which accounted for 70 percent of land in the country and was mostly held under customary rights of occupancy; and general land, which accounted for 2 percent of national land, mostly urban and estate land, and which could be held with granted rights of occupancy. A third category, reserved land (28 percent of national land) included all land set aside for forest reserves, national parks, public utilities and roads, hazardous land, and land designated under the Town and Country Planning Act.¹² One significant change was the legal recognition of customary rights of occupancy on village land as equal to granted rights.¹³ Yet the distinction between customary and granted rights of occupancy remained, as did their primary association with rural and urban land respectively. The colonial bifurcation of land tenure thus remained a foundation of postcolonial land law and central to land administration practices. It has created significant problems for the large number of Dar es Salaam's residents who have acquired land on the suburban frontier, a zone that confounds the neat administrative and legal bifurcation of space into urban/secure tenure and rural/customary tenure.

THE COLONIALITY OF SPACE ON THE SUBURBAN FRONTIER

Dar es Salaam is surrounded by rural hinterland to the north, west, and south, with which it has been deeply entwined since its establishment as the capital city of the German colony. During the German and British colonial periods, the area under urban administration remained very small compared to the city's present dimensions, extending inland from the harbor along a five-mile, north-south radius by the time of independence in 1961. The Dar es Salaam District was much larger than the township, and until 1938 encompassed both the township and its hinterland as far north as Kunduchi, as far west as Ruvu, and as far south as Kisiju.

In 1938 the hinterland was separated from the township to form Temeke District; it was joined together with the township again to form Uzaramo District in 1942, which was renamed Kisarawe District in 1949. In the same year Dar es Salaam township was made a municipality, and in 1950 Dar es Salaam was made its own district (corresponding with the municipal boundaries). In 1960 the native administrations closest to the city—Kunduchi (where Salasala is located), Kigamboni, and Mbagalla—became part of the municipality under the Dar es Salaam District Office (map 6).¹⁴ As is evident from the administrative bundling and unbundling of the township with its hinterland during both the German and British colonial administrations, the two were always treated differently. The bifurcation of land tenure that resulted from colonial racial ideologies about who could own what property in which location under what tenure also gave colonial authorities ample room to reconfigure the urban hinterland to suit their needs. One such example was the creation of a nine-and-a-half-mile-wide “zone of control” around Dar es Salaam township in the 1950s, which was to be preserved for planned satellite towns, villages, or agricultural use.¹⁵ The principle that the colonial government could simply repurpose land held under customary tenure for planning purposes was subsequently backed up in law by the Town and Country Planning Act of 1956, which empowered government to declare any land as a “planning area,” at which point existing customary rights would be extinguished. This established a precedent for insecure tenure in the city’s former hinterland that has lived on into the postcolonial period.

Yet the city itself has always refused to be fully contained within the legal categories and administrative boundaries defined for it by colonial and postcolonial officials. This is most evident when it comes to land, as different land uses and practices of land tenure have long coexisted within the urban area. Colonial and postcolonial authorities found the constant churn of people between the township and the surrounding rural areas vexing. In fact, people were circulating between them as economic circumstances and farming rhythms dictated; or “going to ground,” as Brownell notes.¹⁶ As the township grew it encroached on surrounding rural areas. At independence the township contained villages in which residents held customary rights, as well as plantations and sisal estates, many of which were held as freehold land and were squatted by caretakers. They were mostly tolerated by the authorities, not least because of the power that had been enshrined in law to reclaim such land for planning purposes at any point in the future. Urban and industrial activities also spilled beyond the city boundary.¹⁷ Since gaining city status at independence in 1961, Dar es Salaam has continued to outgrow its boundaries. In 1961 the city reached north to Msasani, west to Magomeni, and south to Temeke (map 6). By 1978 the city boundary was extended further into the periurban fringes where agricultural and residential land uses coexisted, incorporating Tegeta in the north, Mbezi Luis and Pugu in the west, and Rangi Tatu in the south. Dar es Salaam Region extended further still into



MAP 6. Dar es Salaam District and Municipality, and the Wakiliate of Kunduchi to the north, where present-day Salasala is located (in between Kunduchi and Goba). Drawn by Mina Moshkeri 2023, based on Molohan (1959).

the rural hinterland incorporating Bunju in the north, Kibamba in the west, and Kipara and Bandarini in the south, all of which were designated for agricultural use in the 1978 Master Plan. When the City Council was dissolved in 1974, the city was divided into three districts (Ilala, Kinondoni, and Temeke). The districts were subdivided into urban and rural wards; in Kinondoni the northern-most wards of Bunju, Goba, Kibamba, Kunduchi (where Salasala is located), and Mbweni were all categorized as rural in the 1978 and 1988 censuses. In 1988 the city officially contained fifty-two villages that had a combined population of 172,000 people (13 percent of the city's total population),¹⁸ most of whom either were deemed to have customary rights or had evolved quasi-customary practices of land allocation and occupation, discussed below. However, the existing modes of land tenure were rendered deeply insecure with the publication in 1990 of the Town and Country Planning (Areas Ripe for Development) Order, which designated many of these villages as "planning areas" for the future expansion of formally planned urban space.¹⁹ A further announcement by the Ministry of Lands in 1992 declared *all* periurban areas in Dar es Salaam to be planning areas. This meant that no further development should occur without planning consent. The designation of a "planning area" indicated that the land would be compulsorily alienated by the government in the future, compensation would be paid to sitting occupiers, town plans would be drawn up, and the land surveyed, parceled, and allocated. Four decades later this had not yet happened on a significant scale. Rather, these areas—most of which became part of the suburban frontier in the 1980s and 1990s—were developed organically by urban residents who acquired land and built houses themselves, regardless of any putative government plans.

The declaration of the land on which people came to build as planning areas in the early 1990s rendered it a legal gray zone. Land rights in the city's former rural hinterland, most of which was governed according to customary law by native administrations during the colonial period, continue to be ambiguous in Tanzanian law. Although customary rights were given statutory recognition in the new land legislation, in practice land administrators in urban areas reproduced the colonality of space by treating customary rights as inferior to granted rights of occupancy. The British colonial administration had been of the firm opinion that "in a township all the land should be 'alienated' from tribal tenure,"²⁰ and Tanzanian land administrators in the postcolonial period appear to have been of the same view.²¹ The designation of rural or periurban land as a planning area effectively overrode existing rights to land under customary tenure. Customary rights would be quashed on receipt of compensation by the state; alienated land-owners could then apply for a plot in the subsequent new planning scheme and obtain a formal leasehold (granted right of occupancy). The principle that urban land should be transformed from customary tenure to formal leasehold was paramount. Yet, the relevant legislation (the Town and Country Planning Ordinance, Cap. 378) did not lay this principle down in law; moreover, in the Dar es Salaam

case the government has never made any compensation payments to those whose land was gazetted by government notice in 1990 and 1992. No systematic cadastral records exist to prove to whom payments should be made, and there has never been a budget from which to make such payments.²² This has rendered the legal basis on which most people who have accessed land informally in these formerly rural and periurban areas outside of the original township highly precarious. When tested in court in the 1980s, a number of judges upheld the view that customary rights could indeed be extinguished in declared planning areas without the payment of compensation, but the Court of Appeal took the opposite view on several occasions.²³ As we shall see in chapter 3, what has transpired in this legal gray zone is a generalized feeling of insecurity of tenure for those who hold quasi-customary tenure on formerly customary land. The majority of the city live with the coloniality of space on a daily basis.

DISPOSSESSION, COMMODIFICATION, AND ENCLOSURE ON THE SUBURBAN FRONTIER

The expansion of the city into its periurban and rural hinterlands that had begun during the colonial period picked up pace in the 1970s with a number of government campaigns designed to keep unproductive urbanites out of urban areas. Among the most significant was Operation Pwani, the regional villagization directive in Dar es Salaam, which required people living in scattered farmsteads across the rural part of the region to move to designated *ujamaa* villages starting in 1973. In Kunduchi and the surrounding area, farmers were corralled into the *ujamaa* villages of Mtongani and Tegeta.²⁴ Various other relocation exercises were aimed at repatriating unemployed urbanites considered to be dangerous, idle, or both. Operation *Kila Mtu Afanye Kazi* ("every able-bodied person must work") in the mid-1970s and the Human Resources Deployment Act of 1983 (known as *Nguvu Kazi*, or "hard work") both expelled urban dwellers to periurban areas to farm, usually with little success.²⁵ People were also directed to the city's periurban and rural edges to farm during the *Kilimo cha Kufa na Kupona* ("Farming for survival") campaign launched in response to the city's food crisis following the 1973–74 drought. Conducting research in Bunju at Dar es Salaam's northern edge in the 1970s, Marja-Liisa Swantz noted that the allocation of land as part of these directives was completely ad hoc, with no records of who owned what land or what parcels were being allocated to urbanites.²⁶ Some of the land being parceled out was on nationalized estates and plantations, but some of it was farmland that had belonged to the Zaramo before they had been forced to move to *ujamaa* villages.

These government relocation exercises stimulated demand for land in the periurban and rural hinterland, and with it the long, slow dispossession of the Zaramo of their former farmland. Transacting land between individuals was not unheard

of before the 1970s. As noted in chapter 1, during the German period some Africans claimed Arab identity in order to claim ownership of land which they then sold;²⁷ “nonnative” investors also began acquiring land during the British period. In the 1930s and 1940s peripheral land within the township boundary was being subdivided and sold without freehold or leasehold tenure. It was also being accumulated beyond the township boundary, as in the case of the *liwali* (local leader) in the periurban village of Rangi Tatu who was buying land from the surrounding Zaramo who were unable to pay their poll tax.²⁸ Later in the 1970s land acquisition was also facilitated by payments in kind, as was the case in rural Goba, where newcomers were allocated land in exchange for harvested crops, cloth or local drinks, or token cash payments.²⁹

Nevertheless, cash transactions for land before the 1970s were not widespread. Land surrounding Dar es Salaam was relatively abundant and the main population, the Zaramo, lived in scattered farms and practiced shifting cultivation.³⁰ This changed with *ujamaa* and the government campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s, which divorced the Zaramo living on the city’s periurban fringe from their land and ushered in urbanites who were allocated or were willing to pay token amounts of money to access land on which to cultivate. At this time land itself still could not be sold; transactions referred instead to the “improvements” (buildings and trees such as mango, cashew, and coconut) on a piece of land. Yet over time such practices can morph into a common understanding that the land itself is part of the transaction.³¹ Such was the rapidity of the commodification of land in Dar es Salaam that by the late 1980s land in the city’s periurban and rural areas was in demand as urbanites sought small pieces of land on the city outskirts on which to produce food.³² In her study of livelihoods in the inner-city neighborhoods of Manzese and Buguruni, Aili Mari Tripp found that by the late 1980s the majority of residents had acquired farm plots averaging 1.2 hectares in the periurban and rural edges of the city.³³ Among Manzese residents she found that farms had been gifted by relatives or friends (36 percent), purchased (23 percent), inherited (15 percent), or simply claimed in one’s original village within the city boundaries (23 percent). By the late 1990s it was quite common to see locally made roadside signs advertising farms for sale in Dar es Salaam’s outskirts, even though the selling of land did not become legal until the new land laws came into effect in 2001.

Many Zaramo were dispossessed by the market. It has been suggested that Zaramo sold their land for a number of reasons: to raise money for socially significant rituals and rites of passage; to take advantage of the attractive lump sums that buyers were offering; and as a result of frustration at the profound disturbance to customary tenure that resulted from *ujamaa*, various other resettlement operations, and the government designation of the land as a planning area in the early 1990s.³⁴ By the 1990s distress sales had become more common, with Zaramo selling their land “because of poverty, *njaa*” (“hunger”).³⁵ The long-term impact has been the dispossession of the majority of the Zaramo

from their land over three or four decades. Many stayed in the former *ujamaa* villages such as Mtongani and Tegeta as they grew into substantial satellite towns, where they formed “a landless working class,” or they shifted away from Dar es Salaam altogether.³⁶

This was the period when the suburban frontier began to push north into the city’s formerly rural and periurban fringes. The commodification of land was further stimulated as economic liberalization policies were rolled out from the early 1990s, including the National Land Policy of 1995, which set the framework for land acquisition and occupation; the revocation of the Leadership Code, which permitted civil servants and politicians to engage in “capitalist activities”; and the promotion of private sector investment. The volume of land transactions increased and prices began to rise. Demand was driven not just by government imperatives to farm the city’s edges, but also by government urban planning schemes such as the Sites and Services projects of the 1970s and 1980s that pushed the suburban frontier into the neighborhoods of Mbezi Beach and Kijitonyama in Kinondoni and drove demand for adjacent land around Kunduchi, Mwenge, and Mbezi Luis. The price of land varied substantially, with higher prices commanded by land that was proximate to formal planning areas, arterial roads, and the coast. Land prices were subsequently higher in the north and west of the city compared to the south and southwest, which saw very little infrastructure investment until the 2010s. In the early 1990s the price of an acre-sized plot ranged from TSh15,000 (US\$50) inland in the then poorly connected village of Goba to TSh500,000 (US\$1,679) in places closer to the sea and good roads such as at Salasala junction, Ununio, and Tegeta. In Mtongani and Kunduchi, smaller plots of land would transact for TSh1–2.5 million (US\$3,359–US\$8,397) because of proximity to the ocean and to the Mbezi Beach planned area where the market value of high-density plots was over TSh3 million (US\$10,077).³⁷ By the early 2000s Wilbard Kombe found that the price of periurban land under rapid transformation was not only rising across the city, but that the average size of parcels being sold was shrinking as people subdivided their land and sold pieces off.³⁸ A quarter of an acre was more expensive thirty kilometers to the north in Bunju or twenty-five kilometers to the west in Mbezi Luis (TSh600,000–TSh1.5 million [US\$621–US\$1,552], depending on proximity to an arterial road), while land was cheaper in Rangi Tatu and Nyan-tira, fifteen kilometers to the southwest of the city center (TSh300,000–500,000 [US\$310–US\$517]). In Goba, near to Salasala, demand was so high that people reported that the average price for the average plot of land had increased from two to three dollars per acre in the 1980s to around US\$1,000 for a third of an acre in 2010.³⁹

Demand for land was coming from both rural and urban migrants. The latter group had moved from a rural area to stay with kin or acquaintances in the inner city, or who had lived in the inner city for some time before seeking their own parcel of land further out that would be large enough on which to build a house

and conduct small-scale income-generating activities such as growing vegetables, animal husbandry, or running a small business such as hairdressing, tailoring, a small bar, or a retail shop. Being able to grow at least part of the food required for household consumption was particularly important in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. In the 1980s and 1990s periurban land was still relatively abundant and could be cheaply acquired, depending on where in the city it was located. Some areas filled up with people who had previously been neighbors in the inner city as word of mouth spread about opportunities further out. This happened in Mbezi Luis, which lay fifteen kilometers further west along the Morogoro Road from the inner-city settlement of Tandale from which many of its residents moved. These preexisting social networks facilitated land access for the poor; people who knew each other were less likely to charge exorbitant prices for land, and vendors were more likely to accept favorable terms of payment for buyers over longer time frames.⁴⁰ Similarly, Daniel Msangi found that relatively poor newcomers had been able to access land in the periurban area of Goba, but that over the 1990s market transactions became the dominant mode of accessing land rather than through inheritance or grants from friends and relatives, and land prices increased substantially.⁴¹

By the 1990s the suburban frontier was taking shape as the periurban and rural zones of Dar es Salaam were undergoing significant change. Former Zaramo farmland, which could be thirty to forty acres in size,⁴² was increasingly carved up and sold to individuals who treated the land as private property. Plot sizes were smaller—on average 4.1 acres—and land was being used for a greater variety of activities. Periurban economic activities included farming, casual labor, land sales, rental housing, trading and services in small towns, land mining, and fodder production.⁴³ Farming was still the dominant land use in the 1990s, but instead of supporting shifting cultivation land was now treated as private property and used more intensively. Land had become a commodity necessary for supporting income generation activities and small businesses. Land was sought for small-scale agriculture or market gardening, residential and rental houses, small business activities such as warehousing, grain milling, car workshops, tailoring, ironworking or timber, or small retail spaces for basic groceries, fruit and vegetables, or bars. These activities were often combined so that a plot could contain a residential house, a rental room, a small garden, and a bar or retail shop facing the path.⁴⁴ Land was also being hoarded by speculators, limiting the supply of land to the market and further pushing up prices.⁴⁵

The formerly rural hinterland became a zone of enclosure and investment once again, as it had been during the Zanzibari-Omani and colonial periods. By the 1990s a large proportion of newcomers seeking land on the suburban frontier were relatively well-off people in business, politics, and the civil service.⁴⁶ Civil servants, in particular, had stable incomes (TSh50,000 average monthly salaries) and monthly transport and housing allowances (both worth TSh100,000 each); they

constituted about two-thirds of new house-builders on the suburban frontier in the late 1990s.⁴⁷ It became common to see walls or barbed-wire fences constructed around plots.⁴⁸ But the advance of the suburban frontier into the periurban fringe is not a smooth story of incremental property ownership and prosperity, and there was much inequality. Davis Mwamfupe distinguished between a small number of capitalist farmers with large private farms (twenty to fifty acres) growing food for the markets in Dar es Salaam and for export; “hobby farmers” employed in the city in the public and private sectors who had bought between five and ten acres of periurban land, which they farmed as an investment; “city-based food producers” employed in the city in less well-paid jobs, who produced food for household consumption on their plots of one to three acres; “periurban food producers,” who were usually indigenous full-time farmers with one to five acres; and the “land poor,” who were indigenous or migrant farmers who had sold off parcels of their land to recent newcomers, who produced food on less than an acre for household consumption.⁴⁹ The inequalities between these groups continued to grow. A decade later in Mbezi Luis, twenty-five kilometers west along the Morogoro Road, Aldo Lupala found that average incomes of new arrivals were four times the minimum urban salaries in the public and private sectors.⁵⁰ He also found that 80 percent of the residents of Mbezi Luis lived on less than a dollar a day, as the commercial and self-employment opportunities of the growing neighborhood attracted people to work as petty traders and vendors, in bars and restaurants, and shops and services such as car repair. The area rapidly became a residential and commercial neighborhood in which livelihoods depended on urban employment, more localized off-farm jobs, casual labor, and self-employment. Those who had sold their land to in-coming farmers would have been among those flocking to these growing suburban centers in search of work.

Land purchased by newcomers was held under “quasi-customary” tenure, which refers to rights to customarily held land that has been transacted for cash to someone who is not indigenous to an area. The market transaction expunges the land from customary tenure, so that the land can subsequently be used, subdivided, sold, or gifted by the new owner without recourse to the wider social group.⁵¹ “Quasi-customary” tenure as practiced around Dar es Salaam has emerged to fill the gray space created by the colonial and postcolonial bifurcation of land tenure. It is widely recognized and accepted on the ground, including at the lowest level of dispute resolution in the legal system (the ward tribunal, discussed in chapter 3). But it is not a legally recognized form of land tenure with attendant rights enshrined in law.

The administration of land in the periurban zones of Dar es Salaam is in practice devolved to the lowest level of urban administration, made up of the subward chairperson and the *wajumbe*.⁵² Yet these local leaders have no statutory role or power in relation to land administration, and there is little communication between them and municipal land administrators. They were not given town planning

drawings that were drafted for their neighborhoods after they were declared planning areas in the early 1990s. Instead, subward chairpersons and *wajumbe* permit and witness land transactions in their areas, often for a small personal fee and a 10 percent fee paid to the subward office. This self-organized process of land management at the community level has a long history, and largely worked until the 2000s.⁵³ From the 1960s branch and ten-cell leaders of the ruling party, who were usually also community leaders in their neighborhoods, oversaw land transactions despite such activity being contrary to party policy and both statutory and customary law. As demand for land and the volume of transactions increased in the 1980s, some leaders in periurban areas developed their own paperwork to record the details of transacting parties though they were not required to do so by law and the information was never collated centrally. By the 1990s it was increasingly common for land transactions to be witnessed by local leaders and for the transacting parties to exchange sale agreements recording party and witness names and the location, size, boundaries, and price of the plot. Transactions relied on local technology such as pacing or using a rope to measure parcels and marking boundaries with physical features or poles fashioned from trees or bushes. Security of tenure derived from being recognized by one's neighbors as having used a piece of land for some time. The governance of land more widely in the community relied on what Wilbard Kombe and Volker Kreibich call "social regulation," in which neighbors recognize each other's claims and negotiate basic urban planning principles such as leaving sufficient space between plots for pathways and accepting the legitimacy of subward leaders, who act as arbitrators in case of disputes. By the late 1990s Kombe and Kreibich noted that public and communal land uses were coming under increasing strain, as local leaders condoned sales of land and building projects that blocked paths or were located on slopes or hazard lands. They also noted that social regulation was breaking down in more densely settled places closer to the city center and coming under greater strain as prices and demand for land on the suburban frontier continued to rise.⁵⁴

OPENING UP THE SUBURBAN FRONTIER: SALASALA

The longest established residents of Salasala today trace their arrival to the 1970s and 1980s. Before that time, the farmers who had practiced shifting cultivation, living and farming the land in scattered farmsteads, were mostly indigenous Zaramo, though in-migration during the British period brought Matumbi, Ndengereko, and Rufiji to the area. These farmers were moved to the *ujamaa* villages of Tegeta and Mtongani during the *ujamaa* campaign of 1973 and 1974. The 1978 census recorded the population of Kunduchi Pwani, an area that included Salasala, at just 1,419, while the population figures for nearby Tegeta (5,323) and Mtongani (3,270) reflected the relative size of the *ujamaa* villages by that time.⁵⁵ *Ujamaa* precipitated the long and slow dispossession of the Zaramo, who were separated

from their former farmland in and around Salasala. When the food crisis struck after the 1973–74 drought, village administrations in Dar es Salaam's periurban and rural areas allocated land to newcomers to farm, often with no recourse to establishing who already owned, claimed, used, or had been removed from what land.⁵⁶ The same happened during the campaigns of the 1980s to encourage urbanites to farm in the city's periurban and rural hinterlands. Thereafter, as demand for periurban and rural land increased throughout the 1990s, those Zaramo who still owned land began to parcel it and sell it themselves. In addition to Zaramo farms, the former sisal estates in and around Salasala were also allocated to newcomers from the city. Many of the long-term present-day landowners in Salasala thus obtained land relatively cheaply through cash transactions with the previous farmers, or they were allocated former farmland or sisal estate land by the village administration in Mtongani several kilometers away. One Salasala resident said of the allocations, "they [government] even gave you a hoe and a bush knife for free." There was no systematic record-keeping of land allocations or transactions. Tenure was customary for those Zaramo who remained, based on customary law. For the new farmers tenure was quasi-customary. One *balози* in Kilimahewa subward who had obtained land in Salasala in 1977 described the process of acquiring and enclosing land:⁵⁷

At that time we lived in Kinondoni . . . they were calling people working in town and giving them land to farm out here. It was the *Kufa na Kupona* campaign . . . this place was a Greek sisal farm. It was huge. But with nationalization people were given large areas. You just went to the Mtongani village government,⁵⁸ you went with a policeman to this place, and you chose your land. You decided how much. My father took four acres. One woman here took a large area. You put your markers down and you said "This is my land." Others were going to Kinyerezi, to Wazo.⁵⁹

Those who acquired land in and around Salasala in the 1970s and 1980s described their experience as one of opening up a frontier. At the time the area was considered a wild landscape that needed to be tamed and made productive by the newcomers. The land was mostly described as *pori* (wilderness or scrub) inhabited by wild animals, though some of it had previously been cleared and cultivated by the Zaramo, who had tended coconut and cashew trees. The newcomers grew food crops such as paddy rice, maize, sorghum, cassava, and fruits such as oranges, pineapples, and bananas, they tended coconut and cashew trees, and they reared livestock such as chickens, goats, and cattle. Few of these farmers envisaged Salasala as a place in which to live. It was far from the city, with poor transport links and no services. Houses were few and far between and constructed with local materials of mud, poles, and thatch. Whether relatively wealthy or not, those who acquired land in Salasala in the 1970s and early 1980s considered it their farmland, to which they commuted on an intermittent basis while they continued to live and work elsewhere in the city. The better-off among them hired laborers to work on

their land, including the former Zaramo farmers if they had stayed nearby on a small plot of land, or local laborers, some of whom would have been dispossessed local farmers or former sisal estate workers.

Yet it was not only commuter-farmers who were drawn to Salasala, and the population of the area doubled between the 1978 and 1988 censuses.⁶⁰ Parts of the area were densely settled in the interstices of other long-standing land uses in this part of northern Kinondoni: plantations and quarries. The original village of Salasala accommodated workers at the former Kunduchi Sisal Estate, a remnant of a German-era plantation that was sold to Arab, Greek, and Indian investors during the British colonial period and then nationalized in the 1970s. The section in Salasala was owned by Greek investors from 1936 to 1971. A small whitewashed Greek church, built in 1945, still stands next to the Bagamoyo Road at the Salasala turnoff on a small section of land that the investors were permitted to keep after nationalization.⁶¹ The original village is now a small area known as Salasala RTD, so-called for its proximity to the Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam site, a large open area the size of several football pitches carved out of the former sisal estate that was set aside for a broadcasting station and masts after nationalization. At the site's southeastern corner lies RTD, a densely built area of small houses that constituted the original village next to the sisal estate, at the heart of which is an old mosque. People who had arrived in the 1980s recalled that at that time the area surrounding Salasala RTD was sparsely populated by small-scale farmers, but that the settlement began to grow from the late 1980s as more people arrived looking for somewhere to build a house and maybe to produce some food. Another high-density settlement in Salasala grew at the Kunduchi quarry site, a small section of which falls in Salasala and the rest in Mtongani, now a large informal settlement nestled between the Bagamoyo Road and Kunduchi village. Only a small section, the JKT Quarry in Salasala,⁶² remains active: the rest of the Salasala part of the quarry has been claimed for residential use. As large mining companies wound up their activities in the quarries in the 1990s, small-scale miners entered the quarries to mine and to build homes. Kinondoni Municipal Council subsequently drew up plans to redevelop the former quarry site on the Mtongani side for landfill and administrative purposes, and in 1999 the council tried to evict the *wavamizi* (invaders)—so-called because they were occupying hazardous public land belonging to government. This was resisted by residents who took their case to the primary courts and won a temporary injunction against their eviction, which was later overturned by the High Court. Their case was bolstered in 2006 when the then prime minister Edward Lowassa ordered the closure of the remaining mining operations at Kunduchi and a review of the decision to evict the invaders.⁶³ As one Salasala resident noted of Lowassa's support for the invaders, "You know you can't get rid of these people—they will say 'we won't vote for you.'" Most of the former Kunduchi Quarry site is now filled with small houses. On the Salasala side, the former quarry wall drops down precipitously behind the row of small shops referred

to as *Mabanda Mengi* (“many shacks”) that line the tarmac road that serves as the entrance to Salasala. The small houses packed closely together in the former quarry are invisible from the road. The area has become more densely populated since the mid-2000s, as people looking for somewhere to build and make a livelihood invaded the site and made a living crushing stones to sell as building materials by the roadside. Land inside the quarry and at RTD transacted for cash, often witnessed by a representative from the *serikali ya mtaa*, despite the ambiguity of the residents’ tenure rights.

Until the mid-1990s Salasala was characterized by low-density farming, a strip of industry along the Bagamoyo Road that had been zoned in the 1978 Master Plan, and a few low-income informal settlements. Farm sizes were still relatively large, ranging from over ten hectares to less than one; the majority of farms were between one and two hectares in size.⁶⁴ This began to change in the late 1990s as more people acquired land and built houses in Salasala. Most of them had been living elsewhere in the city where land was more expensive or simply unavailable for house-building and small-scale income generation activities. The homes they built in Salasala were small and the plots open to the pathways through the settlement, though some used trees, hedges, and shrubs to mark their plot boundary. People constructed single-storey square or rectangular houses, using concrete blocks, plain iron roofing sheets, and mesh windows, configured with sitting rooms and one or two bedrooms, outside kitchens, and bathrooms.⁶⁵ They used what outside space they had for vegetable patches, poultry, goats, pigs, and zero-grazed cattle. At this time, the only all-weather road and bus service was to be found on the Bagamoyo Road, the nearest primary school and dispensary was some distance away in Mtongani, Tegeta, or Kunduchi, and the nearest secondary school was seven kilometers away in Makongo.⁶⁶ Electricity, water, and sanitation, where they existed, were privately installed or accessed (for a fee) from better-off neighbors who dug wells or paid for an electricity connection;⁶⁷ young people earned a living transporting jerry cans of water to residents by bicycle. The transformation of Salasala into a desirable residential location on the suburban frontier picked up pace in the early 2000s with two significant developments: a resettlement scheme that planted a small planned neighborhood in the middle of the Salasala farmland, and the construction of two tarmac roads connecting parts of Salasala directly to the Bagamoyo Road and the rest of the city.

Any visitor to Salasala today will note that some parts of the settlement are easily reachable by tarmac road. Salasala is flanked to the east by the six-lane tarmac road that runs north from the city center to Bagamoyo, making the adjacent neighborhoods prime commuter areas relatively accessible from the rest of the city. There are two small tarmac roads that wind through the area, neither of which was the outcome of a municipal urban planning layout; rather, they were by-products of industrial infrastructure development in the city. Both roads stop abruptly after a few kilometers in the middle of the settlement: one of

Kilimahewa's neighborhoods is known locally as *Mwisho la Rami* ("end of the tarmac"). The first road was constructed in 2003–4 and connects the main Bagamoyo Road to the Independent Power Tanzania Ltd (IPTL) plant,⁶⁸ now nestled among housing plots in Kilimahewa. The second was built in the mid-2000s as part of a resettlement project to relocate urban residents displaced by the construction of a gas pipeline by Songas, a public utility power company with funding from the World Bank for infrastructure and power development. The new pipeline connected the Songo Songo Island gas fields located two hundred kilometers offshore south of Dar es Salaam to the Ubungu Power Plant in the city, the IPTL power plant in Kilimahewa and the Wazo Hill Cement Factory in Tegeta. To mitigate the displacement of urban residents the World Bank project planned two resettlement sites at Salasala and Kinyerezi to accommodate 183 households. At the time both sites were peripheral to the city and lacking amenities such as roads, water, and electricity. The resettlement project in Salasala consisted of a small island of several hundred planned plots arranged around a road layout in the middle of the existing farmland several kilometers from the Bagamoyo Road. The plots were surveyed and laid out according to formal planning regulations and made available with granted rights of occupancy. A water storage tank connected to the city's main water supply was also provided, though it was not operational until local residents established a community organization to run it in 2009. Some existing landowners who owned large plots of farmland under quasi-customary tenure at the resettlement site were required to subdivide their land to provide residential plots for the resettlement scheme. They were compensated for the land they surrendered to the project and were offered their own residential plots in the process. Nevertheless few—if any—of the families displaced by the Songas pipeline were resident on their reallocated plots in Salasala a decade later. As one resident who had built a large house in the resettlement area commented by way of explanation, "The original resettlers were small farmers with small huts . . . and the resettlement plots had requirements to develop the plot within three years." Given that planning regulations were rarely followed up by municipal planning officials, it was more likely that the displaced families did not want to move to the resettlement site, preferring to sell the land in Salasala and stay in their neighborhood close to their existing networks, livelihoods, and transport links.

The relative remoteness of Salasala did not remain the case for long. In planting a sliver of a planned urban neighborhood with security of tenure and a tarmac road in an area where demand for land on which to build residential housing was growing, the unintended consequence of the resettlement scheme was to push the suburban frontier out to Salasala, creating a small area of high-value property that stoked demand and land prices in the surrounding area. The population of Salasala grew from 9,707 people in 2002 to 33,448 by the 2012 census, by which time Salasala had become sufficiently densely populated to justify dividing it into two *mitaa* (Salasala and Kilimahewa).⁶⁹ Keen to overcome their distance from government

services, residents contributed to building offices for the *mtaa* government at Salasala and Kilimahewa. In the resettlement area a community water association was set up by residents to manage the water facilities that had been provided by the World Bank as part of the resettlement scheme. The original thirty-four members took on the burden of the cost of pumping the water from the city's main water supply to the community tank by collecting connection and user fees. By 2016 the water scheme employed fifteen staff and had expanded beyond its intended capacity to serve 283 households, supplying water (intermittently) to 485 customers.⁷⁰ The few schools in the area were joined by new government and private providers, and private dispensaries opened up. New churches and mosques were built.

As Salasala became more desirable as a residential neighborhood, existing landowners turned to building their own houses on their former farmland and subdividing their plots to sell pieces off to newcomers. Simple brokers' signs, often displaying just a name, telephone number, and the word *dalali* (broker) or *viwanja* (plots), were nailed to trees or stuck in the ground at junctions to advertise available land. As we will see in chapter 4, many of those who came after the mid-2000s built an entirely new landscape characterized by distinctive, good-quality houses largely hidden behind tall concrete block perimeter walls. But they were not the only ones attracted to Salasala: many poorer urbanites were also drawn to the possibilities that a growing peripheral residential area offered for relatively low rents and livelihood opportunities. As well as the opportunities for small-scale mining and aggregates business offered by what was left of the quarries, incremental house-building provided opportunities for day laborers, as well as a market for services such as food vending and motorcycle taxis. Some of them were able to build small concrete block houses on tiny patches of land that did not afford space to cultivate anything, but most of those who provided this labor and these services did not join the local building class; instead they rented from them.

. . .

Over a century of colonialism, state socialism, urban crisis, and economic liberalization, Dar es Salaam's suburban frontier has shifted slowly northwards from the first European suburb at Oysterbay. The original suburb was a material and imaginative frontier that symbolized the coloniality of space during the British colonial period: an exclusive, carefully planned, and relatively well-resourced oasis of good-quality housing, urban services, and secure tenure, built to suit imported European suburban aesthetics and separated from the rest of the township where very little housing or public services was provided for the majority African population. By the end of the colonial period a small African elite had benefited from the handful of housing schemes belatedly developed by the colonial state to the north of the city center near to Oysterbay; after independence the bureaucratic bourgeoisie extended their control over these and the new government housing schemes developed close by.⁷¹ A nascent suburban frontier coalesced in and

around these government housing schemes that created highly sought-after urban neighborhoods—most of which became home to those in the higher echelons of government—that offered security of tenure and the promise of public services in a city with woeful access to both. Dar es Salaam was not an isolated case. As if to prove Frantz Fanon right in his warning about the national bourgeoisie, the relationship between state-created property and class formation has been noted in other colonial and postcolonial contexts—across capitalist, socialist, and Marxist-Leninist regimes.⁷² In colonial Bulawayo, West argues that demands for housing fit for educated Africans was key to middle-class formation there, while Mabo-gunje and Sumich describe a similar process to that in Dar es Salaam in which senior civil servants were overrepresented in the possession of public land and housing resources in the immediate postindependence period in Nigeria and in the post-civil war period in Mozambique. More recently there has been renewed interest in a new generation of state- and private-funded housing developments in Addis Ababa, Luanda, Maputo, and Nairobi, which provide opportunities for the accumulation of economic, political, and cultural capital for urban middle classes, contractors, and government officials alike.⁷³ To date, there have been fewer such developments in Dar es Salaam, leaving the middle class to fend for themselves in the urban peripheries.⁷⁴

The shift northwards to the present suburban frontier, on which Salasala is located, was a slow process set in motion by the government campaigns of the 1970s to collectivize farming and to encourage urbanites to farm at the city's edge, which divorced Zaramo and other cultivators from their farmland and ushered in city dwellers to produce food. The unintended consequences of those campaigns became clear as the suburban frontier took shape in the following decades. The sweeping changes that followed *mageuzi* and the micro effects of the Salasala resettlement scheme ignited the land market in Dar es Salaam's former rural hinterland. The liberalization of land was key to middle-class formation. Transactions in land in and around Salasala increased as Zaramo farmers and settlers who had arrived in the 1970s and 1980s parceled out and sold off pieces of their farmland to newcomers in search of a plot on which to build a house. The suburban frontier was transformed from *pori* to a zone of possibility where land could be occupied, bought, hoarded, or invested in. It was also a zone of ambiguity where land rights were unclear, government urban planning was nonexistent, and public services were absent. How did this suburban frontier become a space of middle-class formation? The rest of the book turns to answer this question.