
Lifestyle

In 2016 a large modern private-hire hall opened in Salasala. Three storeys high and painted dark pink, it could accommodate up to three hundred guests for events such as confirmations, weddings, and send-off and kitchen parties. A year later Salasala got its first juice bar and a gym, both of which opened on the main tarmac road through the *mtaa*; and by 2018 a smart new Catholic Church had been built by the local congregation. This was the frontier of domestic investment in the city, not only for those looking for land on which to build a house and a life, but also for those looking to capitalize on the opportunities that the suburban frontier presented. The inner suburbs of Sinza, Mikocheni, and Mbezi Beach, where land was far more expensive, were already densely built and had already been colonized with malls, bars, supermarkets, private schools, and private-hire halls: Salasala and other parts of northern Kinondoni were the future.

In her ethnography of professionals living in Dar es Salaam's inner suburbs in the mid-1990s, Anne Lewinson noted that much celebratory activity, such as weddings, baptisms, and confirmations, was home-based but publicly accessible.¹ Send-off parties for brides-to-be in *uswahilini* would be organized and celebrated in homes that were not walled off from the public path; attendees would spill into the street, and music and celebrations would be heard in the surrounding neighborhood. The event was as much about community building and the sharing of prosperity and life events with kin and neighbors as it was about celebrating one family's success at marrying a daughter. For those who could, such events were also an opportunity to demonstrate wealth and status in a newly liberalizing polity—the size of the celebration, the nature of the facilities (additional chairs, awnings, music), and the quality and quantity of guests, food, and drink all indexed the status of the celebrating family. Weddings were the most common events held in

and around homes, but Lewinson noticed that confirmations and first birthdays were also conspicuously celebrated among those who could afford to do so: a particularly lavish first birthday party conducted within the gardens of the walled compound of a wealthy family in the city's then periurban fringe was exceptional in the mid-1990s. Fast-forward to the present, and two things are notable about contemporary suburban lifecycle and other events: a wider range of events now warrant conspicuous celebration, and those celebrations have become increasingly privatized, withdrawing into the walled plot or an invite-only event in a private space.

This chapter examines the lifestyles that are taking shape in the new homes and businesses populating the suburban frontier that are aimed at middle-class leisure and lifecycle events. The chapter begins with a discussion of homes as places of class reproduction through forms of labor, self-improvement, leisure, and new ways of celebrating lifecycle events. I then turn to three new significant sites dotted across the suburban frontier where the middle classes congregate—the private-hire hall, the private English-medium primary school, and the bar. Middle-class boundary work—the lifestyles, values, and aspirations through which social boundaries are maintained—starts in the home but goes beyond it, embedding itself in the city's wider fabric.² Starting with everyday activities in and around the home, the chapter follows the middle classes out of their houses and into the private-hire halls, private schools, and modern bars that are so central to middle-class distinction. These are spaces of consumption, leisure, learning, and bodily transformation where the services and consumer goods on offer are aimed at meeting new middle-class tastes and desires. Middle-class life in Dar es Salaam radiates out from the home to include the private nursery, the private school, the boarding school, the office, the mall, the supermarket, the outdoor bar, the private-hire wedding hall, the gym, and the hair and beauty salon, all of which are scattered across the city's northern suburbs yet nevertheless function as a kind of middle-class ecosystem held together by the private cars used to navigate between them. This is not so much an enclave of middle-class exclusivity as an archipelago of middle-class sites and services stretched across the suburban frontier.

DOMESTIC LIFESTYLES: LABOR, LEISURE, AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Middle-class homes are sites of both productive and socially reproductive labor. During my time in Dar es Salaam, parents cared for elderly relatives who had come to stay with them to access better health care in the city; they managed their domestic workers and helped their children with homework; they dealt with the rat problem or the electricity meter, prepared evening meals, and caught up with their obligations to multiple WhatsApp groups. They also managed their multiple income streams from the home, sometimes in lieu of waged work but often to

compensate for low salaries: they ran livestock projects such as chickens or stall-fed cattle, sold milk or other produce to neighbors, took orders for cakes to be made for special events, ran small shops or managed rental rooms on the plot, or even managed small factories producing vibrated bricks or small consumer goods. Investments away from the home also needed to be attended to via mobile phone calls to in situ workers or caretakers. Agricultural investments in rural home regions or the neighboring districts to Dar es Salaam such as Kibaha and Bagamoyo were common. Vegetable gardening and livestock keeping supplemented the household food stores or could be distributed to neighbors and kin, but for some families home-based businesses constituted an important part of the household income. Smaller plots could accommodate one or two zero-grazed cattle that provided milk for consumption and for sale; larger plots had space to allow more cattle to graze. Producing chickens, which were in high demand among local bars and hotels, was also a popular activity, with specialist huts housing up to fifteen hundred *kuku wa kisasa* (modern chickens) squeezed into plots.³

Josephine and Michael's lifestyle was a good example of this domestic multitasking. They lived in an attractive, modest bungalow enclosed within high concrete block walls in Salasala. Josephine rued the fact that they had no garden space to speak of, since the house took up most of the plot, and what space was left between the house and the sliding gate was occupied by their two cars. They both had good jobs in the formal sector, Josephine with an international mining company and Michael with the Open University of Tanzania, but they also maintained several businesses to provide them with the additional income that they needed in order to pay their children's private boarding school fees. Josephine had been running a small hardware shop in Kariakoo in the city center, but she closed it down in 2016 as she found it a strain to work full-time in a demanding job while running a business that she could only physically attend to on Saturdays. Thereafter she turned her attention to agricultural production on the ten acres of land she had bought in Kibaha, where she hired a few seasonal laborers to produce vegetables. During the planting, growing, and harvesting seasons, she would drive there every Saturday to supervise the laborers. To irrigate the land she had had a one-hundred-meter well dug that used a pump powered by a generator, but she had found it expensive to run and was subsequently considering installing TANESCO power to the land instead. She also needed to do more market research, as the local hotels and supermarkets she had first sold to in Dar es Salaam wanted a more predictable supply than she could offer. Her husband, Michael, was more interested in property. He was currently supervising from afar the construction of a small apartment block for rental in the northern town in which he had grown up.

Middle-class suburban lifestyles and investment strategies were reliant on the labor of others. Domestic workers were routinely employed in middle-class households as live-in workers (usually housed in small rooms constructed specifically for domestic laborers outside in the compound rather than in the house)

or drop-in laborers who lived nearby and came to the house on specified days. Lower-middle-class households were more likely to engage such labor sporadically. Household labor was gendered. Female domestic workers did cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, and caring for older relatives and preschool children in the family home, while men were employed for the purposes of security, maintenance, vegetable gardening, and livestock keeping. Women were commonly paid between £7 and £20 a month, depending on the employer's budget and inclination based on their assessment of the worker's skills and ease of replacement. Domestic workers could be recruited locally, especially if they were not required to "live in," but it was more common to seek someone recommended by family or friends with connections to rural areas that were considered to produce reliable domestic or agricultural workers.

Such practices often relied on stereotypes about particular ethnic groups. Salma, a mid-ranking civil servant, had recruited her domestic worker from Bukoba. She explained that "the local people [in Dar es Salaam] are not good. One of my husband's workmates was going home to Bukoba so we asked him to look out for someone suitable." On the other hand Rosemary, a routine office worker in a government office, paid one of her poorer neighbors to help her with the housework rather than bring someone from her home area of Kilimanjaro. She explained, "Chagga girls are not interested in this kind of work. To come to the city and look after children for TSh50,000 a month? They would rather stay in the village and drink *pombe* than do this work for that amount of money. Many Chagga are educated, they have a plan . . . this is not the kind of work they want to do."⁴ Zacharia lamented that his domestic worker, whom he had also brought to Dar es Salaam from a rural area, did not speak English. He and his wife were considering sending their children to an English-medium preschool, where they felt they would be more likely to start to pick up useful skills. Male domestic workers were sought from agriculturally productive rural areas. Their duties included tending the garden, preparing soil for planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, tending livestock, milking cows, maintaining water supplies, and doing low-key household maintenance. They were also responsible for security, including opening and closing the gates when people arrived or departed by car.

Middle-classness was thus reproduced in the home through control over the labor of domestic workers and the everyday practices of interacting with, while differentiating oneself from, those domestic workers. Social and cultural distinction was also achieved through other domestic lifestyle practices such as self-improvement, diet and exercise, and leisure.⁵ Middle-class homes provided space for self-improvement: pupils did homework under parental duress, young adults studied for graduate courses to gain professional qualifications, and there was much talk about, and some effort to actualize, bodily improvement through diet and exercise. Helen, a graduate in her early twenties, lived with her parents in Salasala and had managed to secure a temporary job in a national bank after graduation from

university with a bachelor's degree. She worked in the city center, getting a lift in the mornings from Salasala in her brother's car. They would routinely leave at six in the morning and be in town by seven thirty. Several nights a week Helen went to evening class at the end of the working day. She was studying for an accounting qualification with the aim of securing a permanent post at the bank. She would regularly come home late, around ten o'clock, after the rest of the family had eaten, and be up again at five the next morning to commute to work. She also developed a routine of getting up in the middle of the night to study as exam time approached.

Many members of middle-class households expressed desire to lose weight, eat healthily, and do more exercise. Some men preferred to exercise at the gym. For the upper-middle classes there were several in the city's international hotels and in the original *uzunguni* neighborhoods of Masaki and Oysterbay. Others preferred to use one of the new suburban gyms located in mall developments in Mikocheni or Mbezi Beach as they drove home from work. Picking up on local demand, the first gym in Salasala opened in July 2017. Other men, and some women, preferred to go for a run closer to home on weekends. As we shall see, some men were members of social groups that organized collective exercise classes on Saturday mornings, and in 2020 two new suburban running groups were established (Salasala Hills Runners and Goba Roads Runners). Many middle-class married women with families struggled to find time for exercise, often talking about it but finding it harder to put plans into action. Several women complained that, since they had moved to their new houses in Salasala from inner suburbs closer to the city center, commuting took so much of their time that it simply was not feasible to go out for a walk or anything else once they got home in the evenings, as it was too late and too dark, and therefore not safe. The fact that most married women also cooked or supervised the evening meal (if it had been cooked by a domestic worker) made exercise in the evening even more difficult.

Both men and women took an interest in eating healthy foods for health and body shape reasons. People were aware of the rise of hypertension and consumption-related health problems in Tanzania,⁶ often through personal experience or the experience of a friend or family member. What this translated to in practice varied widely. Josephine, for example, liked to eat her main meal at work during the day and have "something light" at night when she returned home, as she did not want to go to bed on a full stomach. She had an impressive modern kitchen in her home, with shiny black work surfaces and kitchen cupboard doors, but as she herself admitted, she rarely used it. Most of the cooking was done by the female domestic worker who cooked in the small modern kitchen that had been installed next to her sleeping room in the out-building adjacent to the main house. Many women tried to avoid fried foods, although it was a common way of cooking meat or fish quickly for the family evening meal when they returned home at night. Women struggled with these issues and debated with each other as to what they could do. Advice circulated on WhatsApp groups, such as threads purporting to advise "30 uses of apple cider vinegar for weight loss," even though apple cider vinegar was not

available in Tanzania at the time. Driving through the suburbs to a family baptism one Sunday afternoon with Clara, her sister, and her niece, they agreed that the problem was *lifestyle*: you had to change your lifestyle. This meant changing your diet and trying to do more exercise. There was a time, Clara said, when she and her sister would try to walk together in the evenings. But, she lamented, “how can we have time for that, now?” As a business owner and a mother, she was often busy with the business or family matters until late at night. Her sister added in solidarity, “It’s difficult to lose weight, but easy to put it on.” We all agreed. They discussed the different diets they had been trying, such as cutting out meat, starch, or sugar. One family member had lost weight rapidly on the “cabbage soup” diet (but then put it back on). Clara’s sister told us about one man she knew who had cut out beer and only drank wine instead, in an effort to lose weight. Then she told us about how she had managed to lose weight over four months in the previous year by not eating any starch. But on a trip back to her village, “everyone was eating [starch] and I was not eating; they said ‘why are you not eating?’ And so I ate the [starchy] food, and it seemed as if my body was craving it!”

Homes were also sites for relaxation and leisure. Large flat-screen, stand-alone, or wall-mounted televisions were the centerpiece of many sitting rooms, powered by subscriptions to DStv, a South African satellite service providing access to local channels such as ITV and Channel 10, international channels such as Al Jazeera, BBC World News, channels showing Hindi films, sport, and African channels such as East African Television, music channels, Nigerian movie and Pentecostal channels. These were bundled into packages that cost upwards of US\$8 a month and that could be renewed from a mobile money account on a mobile phone. Weekday late afternoons saw children, dropped at home by their private school bus or other organized transport, make the most of the fact that they had control over the television for a while. If the television package was live and the electricity was on, the most popular pastime was watching international kids’ channels such as Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon or playing computer games. In the evenings, older family members switched between local news, BBC World or CNN, Nigerian Pentecostal or American Christian channels, or *Isidingo*, an English-language South African soap opera. At other times of the day when family members were not around, domestic workers might take the opportunity to watch Hindi films or locally made Swahili dramas, two genres hardly ever chosen by members of the family.

DOMESTIC CELEBRATIONS, GATES, AND CAKES

One Sunday afternoon I was invited to Rosemary and Thomas’s house in a densely settled lower-middle-class suburban neighborhood on the edge of Salasala to celebrate the baptism of their second daughter. After the service at their local Catholic church, they held a celebration at their modest three-bedroom house for Thomas’s relatives and some of their neighbors. When I arrived at mid-afternoon the celebration was in full swing. Guests were finishing their buffet lunch, which

consisted of high-status celebratory foods such as pilau, rice, beef stew, chicken, plantain, and watermelon. Thomas's female relatives arranged themselves on the modern low-backed sofas set against the walls around a large coffee table in the living room, facing the wall-mounted television that was playing English-language cartoons on Nickelodeon. They were not watching the television, but rather were talking among themselves as they passed the baby around. Thomas and his male relatives sat outside on the floor of the veranda drinking bottled beer. Rosemary and her domestic worker Mama Anna—a neighbor who helped Rosemary out with cooking, cleaning, and childcare three days a week—moved around inside the house, Mama Anna clearing plates and bringing bottled sodas and beers while Rosemary fussed over the baby, took photos on her smartphone, and sat to talk to her guests. Thomas and his brother went off on foot to the local *duka* (shop) to buy more bottled drinks. The front door of the house was open, as was the gate to the plot, and throughout the afternoon neighbors and children drifted in and out and were fed by Mama Anna from the buffet laid out on a table pushed up against another wall. The openness of the celebration to neighbors was striking in comparison to other events I had attended in wealthier households, where only family and close friends were invited and the gates to the plot were firmly closed.

The baptism cake was brought out at the end of the afternoon. It was a modest cake, a single layer of plain sponge covered in red icing with white decorative piping, presented on a round silver cake tray. I commended Rosemary on the cake, and she explained that she made her own cakes because she had her own oven, but that she had asked a friend to decorate this one as she wasn't very good at it herself. The cake was cut by the parents and slices handed out to everyone present. I noticed that Rosemary did not eat the icing. "It's too much sugar," she said by way of explanation, "I'm trying to lose weight." In fact it was quite common for people to avoid eating cake icing, as it was widely considered to be too sweet. People would take slices of sponge, leaving a heap of stiff icing collapsed in the middle of the cake tray like a deflated balloon.

Large, elaborate cakes have increasingly become a mark of distinction for all manner of celebrations in middle-class households. I encountered them, and their cutting and consumption, as set pieces at celebrations held in homes and private-hire halls to mark baptisms, birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and school graduations. After a decade of liberalization, Anne Lewinson noted that "an elaborately decorated multi-level cake had become common at elite weddings."⁷ Since then the cake trend has continued to grow, making its way into smaller home-based celebrations and not only for the elite. Home-based celebrations are usually marked by smaller cakes than those common at large events such as weddings, but the cakes are rarely made at home, since home baking and cake decorating are skills that are not widely practiced by either domestic workers or most middle-class women, partly because they require specialized equipment (ovens, mixers, tins, piping equipment) that are neither widely owned nor used, even in middle-class

kitchens. Instead, cakes are new commodities that index new tastes and definitions of sophistication. Decorated cakes with personalized messages are commonly commissioned from one of the growing number of bakeries and specialist cake-making businesses in the city. In 2018 a customer could expect to pay around US\$20 for a large round simply decorated sponge cake. More elaborate cakes, such as graduation cakes topped with mortar boards and scrolls made out of sugar icing, ranged from US\$35 to US\$75. However, in recent years the cake economy has sparked interest among women and girls more widely, with middle-class women entrepreneurs turning to cake-making as a home-based business, and school girls enrolling in cake-making classes at suburban baking businesses during school holidays.

Cakes are symbolic in several ways. They have become a marker of new patterns of consumption associated with events that might not have commanded such a ritual in the past such as birthdays, anniversaries, and retirements. The size of the cake and the splendor of its decoration reflects the social status and good taste of its commissioner. The fact that the decoration is rarely consumed further underscores the boundary work that cake performs in distinguishing the middle classes from the poor, as an expensive, very sweet and refined foodstuff that has little nutritional value, confected for aesthetic rather than eating pleasure. The sharing of cake has become a new way of affirming social relations, particularly among kin, taking the place of a whole roasted animal at events. At household events centered on the family such as birthdays and baptisms, and at larger extended family events such as weddings, cakes are prominently displayed and filmed being cut before small pieces are skewered with cocktail sticks and fed by the celebrants to their guests who are called to the cake in order of seniority.

SUBURBAN LIFESTYLES AND ARCHIPELAGIC SPACE

The suburbs came alive on weekends as people poured their energy into house-building or improvements, home-based businesses, and social activities. Weekends were the time for checking on one's building project, for supervising the delivery of timber or sand for a home extension or improvement, for driving into town to pick up a spare part or for food shopping in the markets and suburban supermarkets, or for checking on one's *duka* in the suburb or in Kariakoo, the main commercial hub in central Dar es Salaam. Suburban hair and beauty salons were full of women having their hair and nails done for the week ahead. Women attended rotating savings and credit group meetings. For Christians, Sunday mornings were for attending church and being seen there in one's best clothes. Children attended Bible study classes after the service. Weekends were also the time for middle-class married couples, or groups of men, to socialize with friends and associates in suburban bars that served bottled beer and roasted meat, and showed international football matches on large (or small) television screens. Some

places were so popular that those who wanted to eat roasted meat on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon had to get there early or be prepared to wait for hours. New businesses have opened in the suburbs in order to meet the growing demand for consumer and lifestyle goods such as hair and nail products and services, freshly baked bread and cakes, and imported wine and spirits, while new bars and open-air garden restaurants, juice bars, and private-hire halls dot the landscape. One of the newest garden bar-and-restaurants in Salasala boasted a swimming pool for use by patrons. These new businesses, facilities, and activities were nodes in archipelagic space, spread across homes and sites throughout the city's suburban frontier that could only be efficiently navigated by private transport.

New supermarkets selling imported goods were popular with the middle classes. The supermarket landscape in Dar es Salaam has drastically expanded from the four small supermarkets that existed in the city before liberalization, and there are now many to choose from, located in large and small mall developments in *uzunguni* and its adjacent neighborhoods (Mikocheni, Mbezi Beach), at the large Mlimani City shopping mall near the University of Dar es Salaam, and at growing satellite centers on the city's periphery such as Tegeta. Kibo Commercial Complex was one such peripheral mall in Tegeta. Several storeys high and towering above its neighbors, it was built in a striking architectural style with an unusually shaped façade covered in shiny silver-gray cladding. Kibo offered a modern retail experience compared to the small local shops that surrounded it. Set back from the road and surrounded by ample car parking, here customers could park in a dedicated space, enter the large brightly lit mall, and browse all manner of imported consumer goods directly on the shelves, unlike the local *duka* model in which a small range of items displayed behind a counter was passed to customers, sometimes through a grille, by a worker.⁸ Indeed, middle class practice at such local shops was often to be served in their car or to send a junior passenger to the window to complete the transaction for them. In the early 2010s not all of the units in the Kibo Commercial Complex were occupied, but it already contained two branches of local banks, several nail and hair accessory shops, an imported clothes shop, a mobile phone shop, and an anchor supermarket; later additions included a café and a nightclub. This was where Salma drove at weekends to get her nails done, and where she and her husband did their shopping for processed food items (fresh food was bought at the local market). Salma had considered opening a beauty supplies shop in the Complex where she could sell wigs, fake hair, make-up, and nail art products, but she thought the rent too high. Zacharia preferred to use a smaller supermarket in Mbezi Beach. It was further away from Salasala than Tegeta, but he felt it had more goods there at a better price. He regularly bought imported food items like yogurt and juice, and personal grooming products such as imported body spray.

Weekends were also the time for the celebration of established lifecycle events such as baptisms and weddings,⁹ as well as new rituals such as school graduations.



FIGURE 9. Kibo shopping center, Tegeta. Photo by author, September 2012.

Although many of these events were organized around long-standing rituals that took place in recently built places of worship in the suburbs, the associated celebrations have undergone significant inflation in terms of their size and cost. Many of these celebrations are held in the new suburban gardens, bars, and hotels. In the rest of the chapter we turn to examine three key sites of middle-class practice: the wedding hall, the primary school graduation, and the bar.

WEDDING CULTURE AND THE PRIVATE-HIRE HALL

As we sat on the sofa looking through her wedding photo album in her living room in Salasala, Rosemary narrated the key events captured in the photographs. The first images were posed photographs of Rosemary before her send-off party. She was professionally made-up and wearing an elaborate white and silver dress. The photographs were taken by a professional photographer in a hair and beauty salon specializing in wedding beauty, inside which was a stage on which the bride could be photographed posing on a chaise lounge in front of a decorative mantelpiece surrounded by plastic flowers. Rosemary's send-off event was held that evening in a private-hire hall in Dar es Salaam. Two hundred guests were invited, including a large number of rural kin who had hired a bus to transport them from Kilimanjaro to Dar es Salaam for the wedding events. The proceedings were overseen by a professional master of ceremonies (MC). The photographs of the event showed Rosemary and her mother sitting in front of a decorated stage. Each image

recorded a different group of guests standing with the bride and her mother with the gifts they had brought: her family, the groom's family, the wedding committee, the send-off committee. As Rosemary noted, it was common practice to tell people what you wanted to receive at your send-off, and the photographs showed Rosemary sitting behind a growing pile of pots, pans, and kanga.¹⁰ There was also a photograph showing Rosemary being given away by her father to her father-in-law. The images of the wedding day itself showed Rosemary in an elaborate white dress with long train, flanked by six bridesmaids dressed in identical long red dresses. The church wedding was followed by a beach photo shoot at Oyster-bay in the original *uzunguni*, and then a reception at a suburban private-hire hall to which three hundred guests were invited.

Weddings are important social, cultural, and economic events and a regular feature of middle-class social life. They sit at the apex of a wedding culture in which weddings, their planning, and peripheral events seep into the everyday. People experience wedding culture in numerous ways: as members of organizing committees that require numerous meetings and WhatsApp messages; as remote participants receiving photos and videos via WhatsApp of a live wedding in another city that they can't attend; as bridesmaids, spending a whole Saturday going to another suburb to get measured for the dresses; or simply watching the popular documentary-style television series *Harusi Yetu* ("Our Wedding"), each episode of which follows a different couple through the stages of the wedding process. Middle-class wedding culture is pervasive, but it is also spatialized. Weddings and their associated parties provide rich fodder for the *ukumbi* economy, private-hire halls that are dotted across the city.

The ubiquity of middle-class wedding culture has been driven by wedding inflation, in which the number of events associated with an average middle-class wedding, as well as the size, spectacle, and cost of these events, has increased substantially.¹¹ The list of events that are now commonly organized as part of a typical wedding in a middle-class family includes the kitchen party, *begi* (bag) party, send-off party, wedding ceremony, wedding reception, and family/wedding organizers' postparty. For Christian weddings taking place in a church, the ceremony and reception take place on the same day (usually a Saturday). In Muslim families the ceremony often takes place at a mosque or at home on the Friday preceding the formal wedding reception, which creates an additional event to those listed above. The kitchen party and *begi* party are the most recent additions to middle-class wedding culture. They are prewedding parties exclusively for women and men respectively, although kitchen parties are far more common than their male equivalent. Karen Tranberg Hansen described attending kitchen parties organized in the home by and for women of wealthier households in Lusaka in the mid-1990s, during which the bride-to-be would be instructed on how to keep her future husband satisfied, and was presented with a series of gifts "for the kitchen."¹² In Dar es Salaam Lewinson described the kitchen party as a new ritual for the bride-to-be,

her female kin, colleagues, and friends.¹³ Tanzanian kitchen parties resembled those in Lusaka, being women-only parties during which marital advice and gifts were presented to the woman getting married. The Dar es Salaam events have since become more elaborate, taking place in private-hire halls rather than homes and requiring contributions from attendees. Separate from the kitchen party and more of an established tradition is the send-off party, organized by the bride's family before the wedding in order to bid her farewell before she joins her husband's family. In the mid-1990s in *uswahilini* send-off parties were held in and around the family home on the Friday night before the Saturday wedding.¹⁴ They are now routinely held in private-hire halls for those families wishing to distinguish themselves from *uswahilini* culture. Many of these wedding events—kitchen party, *begi* party, send-off, wedding reception—as well as peripheral activities such as preparing the bride—are now private events held in private-hire halls or commissioned from specialist providers such as the wedding hair, beauty, and photography salon. These businesses were increasingly prominent on the suburban landscape, as middle-class residents not only formed the base of their clientele but also invested in such businesses themselves.

Wedding inflation is also discernible in the scale and spectacle associated with contemporary middle-class weddings. Lewinson's descriptions of the weddings of her professional interlocutors who lived in *uswahilini* in the mid-1990s highlight the distinct urbanity of these events, which brought the different rural marriage traditions of brides and grooms together with emerging city practices to carve out a distinctive Dar es Salaam wedding tradition. Viewed from the present, her descriptions offer an insight into the inflationary practices that characterize contemporary middle-class weddings. For example, the typical reception hall setup in the mid-1990s provided dressed tables for the wedding party and the families of the bride and groom. All other guests were arranged on plain chairs facing the high table, and the hall was simply decorated with kanga. In contrast, at an average middle-class wedding in the 2010s, all guests were seated at dressed tables and chairs and the entire hall was bedecked with fabric and fairy lights in the wedding colors (the color scheme for the event chosen by the wedding committee). Food and drink, the MC, entertainment, and wedding photography were now commissioned from a growing market of specialist providers. Food, for example, was no longer prepared by the female kin of the groom, but was paid for as part of the hire hall's catering service. In the mid-1990s a key marker of distinction at Christian weddings was the presentation and sharing of a whole roasted goat or a small decorated wedding cake. Whichever was presented, the wedding couple would ceremonially cut and feed mouthfuls of it to their parents-in-law, symbolizing their willingness to join with their new family.¹⁵ Contemporary weddings may contain both meat and cake traditions and their symbolic joining of two families through marriage. However, as with other celebration cakes, wedding cakes have become bigger and more elaborate affairs,

purchased from professional bakers and consisting of multiple tiers decorated in the wedding scheme colors.

The grander scale of contemporary weddings is reflected in their cost. Contributions to weddings among Dar es Salaam professionals in the mid-1990s were in the range of TSh5,000 for women and TSh10,000 for men.¹⁶ By the mid-2010s average contributions had greatly increased. As Salma noted matter-of-factly, her cousin's kitchen party had accommodated 150 guests and invitations had required a contribution of TSh200,000 (US\$90). The send-off party for the same nuptials accommodated 300 people, each of whom had contributed TSh100,000 (US\$45), and the minimum contribution for the wedding itself was TSh50,000 (US\$22). In fact, Salma pointed out, it was routinely possible to spend up to 15 million shillings (US\$6,730) on a wedding. Her sister's reception for 200 people in one of the new suburban private-hire halls had cost TSh2.2 million (US\$987) for the hall hire and decoration alone. Food per head had cost an additional TSh15,000 (US\$6.7), which, she pointed out, was far better value than the up-market beach hotels that charged US\$50 per person. Other costs included the MC and DJ, possibly other entertainers, the videographer and photographer, the clothes for the bride's and groom's attendants, car hire, drinks including champagne and spirits, and the cake. As the mother of a recently married young bank professional, who had invited 500 people to his wedding, argued, "It's a once-in-a-lifetime thing, so you want to hold a big party."¹⁷

THE ENGLISH-MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL

In the mid-2010s, Wazo Ward had five government primary schools and three government secondary schools serving a population of around ninety thousand.¹⁸ They were generally underresourced and lacking sufficient teachers. Middle-class residents did not send their children to these schools. Instead, they enrolled their children at one of the growing number of private English-medium primary schools that have become significant nodes in the archipelago of goods and services patronized by the suburban middle classes in northern Kinondoni. These new primary schools were central to parents' strategies to reproduce middle-classness in their children. Good-quality primary schools—as judged by pupils' performance in national exams—were the first step towards a selective private secondary school, tertiary education, good social networks, and lucrative employment. They have also become places where new rituals of middle-class distinction have developed. The primary school graduation ceremony is a case in point, bringing parents and students together as a community of shared interest to celebrate the school and its pupils' achievements and to ensure its future success through collective fundraising. Primary school graduations have become increasingly common, and are even held at some nurseries. School graduations were not exclusive to private schools, but I was told that the graduations held at government schools were far less

lavish affairs. In the same way that middle-class wedding culture had become more commercialized and exclusive, primary school graduations had also become an occasion for marking social distinction.

One Saturday in August 2017 I was invited to attend the primary school graduation of Clara's son. As the chair of the committee for gifts, she had been busy preparing for weeks, attending after-work meetings and WhatsApp exchanges with other parents. The event was organized in the same way as a wedding, with parents forming a series of committees to take responsibility for various elements of the event (food, decorations, gifts, costumes). Each family contributed TSh250,000 (US\$112) for the event, which was to be held in the school's walled grounds. The school that Clara's son, Joseph, attended was one of a cluster of private English-medium primary schools located in Mbezi Beach, an established planned middle-class suburb in Kinondoni not far from Salasala. It catered to pre- and primary-school children, some of whom boarded at the school and some of whom were brought in from the surrounding suburbs, including Salasala, by a fleet of yellow school buses. The school occupied a large plot of land, most of which was empty ground currently used for sports; but the school expected to expand in the future and was holding on to this prime spot.

On the day of the graduation, the school courtyard was set up as if for a wedding, with a raised platform and high table in one corner, and facing it, lots of plastic chairs arranged in rows under awnings to keep the sun off the seated children and parents. As we arrived mid-morning I noted that few parents were present, though by early afternoon most of the chairs were taken. The graduands—Grade Seven students who had completed their exams—entered the school courtyard in their school uniforms, dancing in formation to loud bongo flava music, and took their seats in front of the platform, where various dignitaries were seated flanking the headmistress. One of the teachers, taking the role of MC, opened the proceedings and invited the headmistress to the podium. She had a long list of special guests to welcome, including the district education secretary, the ward education secretary, and various other officers from local government and neighboring private secondary schools, including some of the country's best, although none of these invitees were yet present.

We sat through various speeches. The headmistress gave a speech documenting the history of the school, which was established in 2007, and its performance in national examinations. She noted that they had risen up in the national rankings, positioned most recently in the eighties out of over eight thousand schools nationwide, with most students achieving A or B grades. There was much cheering at this news. The headmistress then proceeded to give the results for the last three years, including where the school was ranked and the percentage of students gaining grades A, B, or C.

The Grade Six and Seven students were then invited to perform their goodbyes to each other. They performed rehearsed dances to a number of contemporary

hits, both Tanzanian and international (Diamond Platnumz, R. Kelly). One performance had boys and girls wearing kanga; in another spoken word performance, Grade Seven students recited a four-verse poem in English praising the school and the teachers. There then followed a speech by the chair of the School Committee, the theme of which was the rejection of *tamaa* (desire, temptation). He entreated the pupils to follow the example of those who never gave up and eventually succeeded such as Henry Ford, who, he noted, took a long time to make his business successful, and Bill Gates, who dropped out of Harvard but became a successful businessman. He invited the students to ask their parents how they had succeeded. His message was a distillation of the values of aspiration, self-control, and hard work.

It was then time to celebrate the students. Each pupil was called to the stage and presented with a school mug (bought by the gifts committee) and a certificate. This was followed by the prize-giving, in which students were presented with prizes for the best performance in each of the academic subjects, sports, and overall performance. Gifts were then presented to the teachers. After this came the most important part of the day: the fundraising. As two of my companions murmured, this was the whole point of school graduation ceremonies. This one was led by a parent, who explained that the purpose of the fundraising was to improve the security of the school by completing the brick wall that currently ran partly around the open grounds next to the school buildings. Completing the wall would also, of course, secure that ground's enclosure and the school's claim to it. TSh18,000,000 (US\$8,076) had already been raised; the goal in today's fundraising was to reach a target of TSh30,000,000 (US\$13,460). Despite the fact that there were only around one hundred parents and family members present, the parent fundraiser did indeed manage this, cajoling other parents over ninety minutes to part with their money for the good of the school. Parent after parent stood up to pledge to the roving microphone five million, one million, or 500,000 shillings. Later in the car on the way home, there was some weariness among my companions about the fundraising. As one relative opined, the school fees are already five million shillings a year, and they ask for more money?

After the fundraising the head boy and head girl cut the impressive graduation cake. This was a confected masterpiece: a sponge cake one meter long and half a meter wide, covered in thick white sugar icing and decorated with the school motto piped in the school's colors, a tablet bearing the names of all the graduating students in piping, and a large book and a mortar board. Once this was done, at around three in the afternoon, all of the guests were invited to the self-service buffet lunch, a huge feast that consisted of high-status foods including pilau, chicken, beef, cooked bananas, potatoes, salads, avocados, watermelon, and cake. After people had eaten, they began drifting home at around four o'clock. Some parents had planned private parties in their homes directly after the school ceremony. At Clara's house the family and some uncles, aunts, and cousins were in attendance for a small family gathering to mark Joseph's achievements. Clara's domestic



FIGURE 10. A secondary school graduation cake. Photo by author, August 2017.

worker, who had been working at the house throughout the day while we attended the graduation ceremony, had prepared a large amount of celebratory food. There was also a special graduation cake, commissioned from a local bakery, replete with personalized inscription and sugar icing mortar board.

The private English-medium primary school graduation ceremony provides a new space for the practice of middle-class distinction. Familiar tropes of Tanzanian middle-classness are evident: in the discourse that success is a matter of self-control and hard work, and in the public celebration of the school's achievements in national exams. The new forms of middle-class boundary work practiced at the graduation ceremony—such as the consumption of the professionally baked graduation cake and the presence of headteachers from high-performing secondary schools—locates the private English-medium primary school as a significant node in the archipelago of middle-class sites and services on the suburban frontier.

THE BAR AND THE MEN'S SOCIAL GROUP

On a typical Saturday morning between nine and ten, a dozen members of Wazo Social Group (WSG) could be found doing a step aerobics class on the covered concrete patio of Wazo Bar in full view of the tarmac road that ran through Kilimahewa.¹⁹ WSG hired a personal trainer from one of the upscale hotels in the city center to run the weekly class for them. This was a social group for middle-class

men who lived in the neighborhood and who knew each other through extended family and hometown ties, school and professional networks, and neighborly connections. Members were mostly married and were aged between their late thirties and sixties. They worked in the public and private sectors and included among their members civil servants, businessmen, accountants, engineers, export/importers, management consultants, and financial officers. They had all built a house in the neighborhood. Once the exercise class was over, the plastic tables and chairs were pulled back onto the bar's concrete floor, and sodas, beers, and meat soup were served from the bar's kitchen. Some members peeled off to run errands or go to the office while others made plans for the afternoon's socializing. This took place at a bar in another nearby neighborhood, and on this particular day WSG members had been invited by the members of Kunduchi Social Group (KSG) to join them to celebrate the latter's first anniversary as an organized entity. WSG and KSG were two of a series of interconnected men's social groups that included Wazo North Social Group and Morogoro Old Boys, which was a northern Kinondoni branch of the alumni group of a nationally renowned government secondary school. As one man who was a member of both WSG and KSG explained, "We are all friends, neighbors, business partners, relatives . . . All the members of the groups are interlinked."

At the bar that afternoon, KSG members were wearing KSG T-shirts, sitting at clusters of outdoor tables, and socializing with WSG members and girlfriends. The group members drank beer, took turns DJing on the bar's sound system, and talked. Beyond the concrete slab of the bar, the group members' four-by-four-wheel-drive cars were lined up.

WSG was a men's social network, a club, an investment vehicle, a registered company, and an NGO. It was established in 2012 at a time when more houses were being built and inhabited in the neighborhood around Kilimahewa. At that time the area was relatively insecure. There was no local police post (the nearest were in Mtongani, Kawe, Wazo, and Tegeta) and the newly built houses were interspersed with large areas of land covered in trees and grasses. Security was therefore the group members' first priority. As the WSG chairman explained, this was a new area where "80 percent of the people are new residents. We realized we needed something, because we could not depend on government, and security was our first concern. This was a new settlement, and it was vital . . . We made this a calm area, and it even encouraged some people to come back—they had left because of robberies."²⁰ The focus on security also partly explained the all-male membership. As the chairman explained, in 2012 the area suffered threats from bandits who came to steal during the day when homeowners were at work, apparently even kidnapping servants and killing some homeowners. Local businesses were also routinely targeted. As we saw in chapter 3, the first members of WSG took it upon themselves to patrol their streets at night in their cars and to check who passed along their roads and paths.

The group started in 2011 with around twenty members and had grown to around sixty-five members by 2016, when they applied for NGO status. At first the joining fee was TSh250,000 (US\$161) plus a monthly contribution of TSh20,000 (US\$13). They then raised the joining fee to TSh500,000 (US\$313), and by 2016 it was TSh1,000,000 (US\$459). As the chairman explained, they raised the entrance fee to reflect the group's investments and to limit membership to those they deemed had something to offer, or as another member explained, to prevent the group from growing too large and making discipline and coordination difficult. Membership applicants had to have two current members to act as guarantors, and their application forms were passed to a membership committee who decided "whether the person is going to be valuable to us, whether they are credible."²¹ The group also contributed to members' wedding and burial obligations, as is common among social groups in Tanzania.

WSG had developed good relations with the local government office in Kilimahewa, having helped to construct the office buildings "because we need an office to resemble the houses in the area."²² As another member noted, "We have to help our local government. It's not their fault that they have no money. Say there is one million shillings for a project . . . so it comes to the Regional Commissioner, and then there is this and this and this . . . and when it comes to Salasala there is 200,000 shillings left! We have to help them." The group had hired a caterpillar to level an open sports ground in the neighborhood, repaired roads, and planted over three thousand trees in the streets around members' houses for environmental protection and beautification purposes. In so doing, they had improved their immediate environment but could also claim legitimacy by working with local government in order to support the community. Other activities were more tightly focused on the area of Kilimahewa, in which many group members had built their houses rather than spread across the whole neighborhood. As noted in chapter 4, road repairs, particularly after the rainy season, were necessary if people were to continue to be able to drive their cars on local untarmacked roads. As one member noted, WSG members contributed to hire a road grader because "if we wait for government to do it they will never come."²³ The graders were paid to repair the roads on which members lived, rather than the entire neighborhood. Another member opined, "We were damaging our cars." Yet the focus on the broader community was a recurrent theme in members' descriptions of the group's work. A third member pointed out, "We want our grandchildren to find roads here. We want a government secondary school because we are a community group, we have to support the community. Those children, if they are successful enough and if they become big, they will be the future members of WSG . . . and we want there to be a hospital. Yes, we use Aga Khan but in your area you have to make sure these things are there."²⁴

In 2015 WSG and its members acquired two hundred acres of agricultural land in Bagamoyo Region, sixty-five miles to the northwest of Kilimahewa. The

long-term plan was to develop the land for agricultural and residential development. As the chairman explained:

Someone was selling a small parcel of land [in Bagamoyo], and our Financial and Economic Committee said “Why don’t we buy that land?” The seller was selling quickly for an emergency. We discussed on WhatsApp—why don’t we go large? Someone said “I know someone who is selling land along the river” . . . so the members agreed, this was an opportunity. We used the group’s money to buy the land and members are paying back, for twenty, ten, five, three acres; and there is eighty acres reserved for the group. It’s an economic project, for the group and for individuals . . . It’s about economies of scale . . . We hired a farmworker. You know Dar es Salaam is growing very fast. In twenty years’ time this place will be full and we will be *wazee* [elders]. So we are going to go and live that side. But for now, we use the land as investment *mashamba* [farms]. One member is developing a business plan for modern farming, we will do it together. We have an SUA [Sokoine University of Agriculture] graduate who is looking at the soils. We got our [land] titles two weeks ago. We will have godowns there to keep our produce. The land is along the river so we will have irrigation, we’re not depending on rain.²⁵

Other members enthusiastically explained their vision for the WSG land in Bagamoyo; one anticipated the residential development would include a shopping center and a nursery as well as individuals’ houses: “It will be a WSG village!”²⁶ Another pointed out, “We have a lot of expertise in the group . . . we have a vision!”

. . .

In private homes and new exclusive social amenities, a distinctive middle-class lifestyle has been taking shape on Dar es Salaam’s suburban frontier. Ideas about how and what to build, how to use one’s time and money, how to improve the self, how to manage daily life, how to celebrate existing and new lifecycle events, and with whom, are being established in the new neighborhoods and businesses that have been built by and for the middle classes. Liberalization may have benefited the elite,²⁷ but it has also provided myriad smaller opportunities for the middle classes to invest in land, housing, and new businesses on the suburban frontier that enable their material and cultural reproduction. Yet what is emerging is not quite a middle-class enclave. Middle-class investments and lifestyle practices have produced an archipelago of sites and services across the suburbs, many of which are porous rather than rigidly exclusive.²⁸ Homes are attended to by domestic workers and sometimes by neighbors, weddings include kin of different social classes, and the bars frequented by WSG are open to the public. What makes these nodes in archipelagic space exclusive is rather the economic and cultural capital necessary to successfully navigate them.