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Boundary work: becoming middle class in suburban Dar es Salaam

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Keywords

Suburbs, middle class, boundary work, land, landscape, Dar es Salaam

Abstract

Suburban space provides a useful window onto contemporary class practices in Africa, where it is difficult to identify social classes on the basis of income or occupation. In this paper I argue that the middle classes and the suburbs are mutually constitutive in the Tanzanian city of Dar es Salaam. Using interviews with residents and local government officials in the city's northern suburbs, I discuss the material and representational practices of middle class boundary work in relation to land and landscape. If the middle classes do not presently constitute a coherent political-economic force, they are nevertheless

transforming the city's former northern peri-urban zones into desirable suburban residential neighbourhoods.

Introduction

One of the most striking features of contemporary African urbanism is the increasing size of city footprints created by the spread of residential suburbs into former peri-urban and rural hinterlands. International capital- and state-led speculative 'urban fantasy plans' (Watson 2013, 216 ; Goodfellow 2017), such as the re-designing of Kigali, the construction of satellite cities outside Nairobi, Luanda and Accra, and the extension of cities such as Kinshasa (Cité du Fleuve) and Lagos (Eko Atlantic) are attracting considerable attention. In contrast what motivates this paper is a concern with the less fantastic, more popular mechanisms underpinning urban growth in African cities. The 'peripheral city that is the real city' (Rao, de Boeck and Simone 2010 p28) is developed largely outside of the circuits of international capital by urbanites who buy small plots of land and construct their own houses, mostly using cash and without housing finance (Sheuya 2007, Jenkins 2013, Nielsen 2016). What interests me here are the distinctive suburban neighbourhoods being constructed at Africa's urban edges. In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's largest city, new middle class residential neighbourhoods are coming to life in parts of the city which were used by different social groups as peri-urban farmland just two decades ago. Africa's middle classes are emerging as significant actors in the urban landscape, not only as consumers of up-scale urban development, but also as producers of new suburban neighbourhoods.

Recent research suggests that the historically small middle classes in countries across the Global South (West 2002, Ricardo Lopez and Weinstein 2012) are growing both in absolute terms and in terms of their political, economic, social and cultural influence (Leichty 2003, Fernandes 2006, Fleischer 2010, Melber 2016). In Africa, where we should exercise caution towards the middle class boosterist discourse emanating from the African Development Bank (Ncube et al 2011) and global management consultancy firms (e.g. McKinsey 2010), there is nevertheless a distinct social group that does not fit the established social scientific categories that have dominated the study of the continent ('the poor' and 'the elite'; Mercer 2014, Spronk 2014, Lentz 2015). This social group has become increasingly visible by virtue of their consumption practices rather than

their political behaviours. The middle classes are busy spending money on land, houses, cars, English medium primary schools and on the imported goods that stuff new shopping malls. The most dramatic consequences of their activities have been particularly visible in cities as they move in to Chinese-built suburban housing on the edge of Luanda (Buire 2014, Gastrow 2017, Pitcher 2017) and the gated communities of Maputo, Windhoek and Cape Town (Morange et al 2012), or shop in the South African-financed suburban shopping centres of Lusaka (Miller et al 2008). A middle class suburban future is by no means inevitable, however. Although socio-spatial differentiation is visible in African cities, the expanding peripheries are very much in the making. They are rapidly changing zones characterised by the juxtaposition of social groups, land uses, interests and investors. In Lagos, the recent outward growth of the city has been driven by various actors such as Public Private Partnerships between Chinese investors, the state government and local landowners; state government industrialisation policies; unplanned settlements characterized by piecemeal building; and pentecostal mega-churches (Sawyer 2014, Ukah 2016). In Lusaka, Myers (2015) describes the bifurcation of the city's outward expansion between Chinese-funded gated residential compounds, and unplanned settlements. In Accra, Mabin et al (2013) note that urban expansion is driven both by large-scale planned residential developments as well as unplanned incremental developments, fuelled in large part by remittances from the diaspora (Obeng-Odoom 2010). And in Kinshasa, de Boeck (2011) describes the apparent randomness of the self-built *cités* that extend the city outwards in ways that promise an urban future different from the planned Cité du Fleuve, the 'new Kinshasa' of the future modelled on Dubai. What that urban future will look like is far from settled.

INSERT MAP 1 ABOUT HERE

In this context of expansion and flux the present paper turns to a significant yet hitherto under-examined process shaping the African urban fabric – the increasing congregation of the middle classes in suburban space. I argue that in Dar es Salaam the middle classes and the suburbs are mutually constitutive. Suburbs are not an outcome or an effect of middle class growth, rather suburbs

and the middle classes make each other. I draw on fieldwork conducted between 2012 and 2018 with residents and local government officials in Wazo Ward in Dar es Salaam's northern Kinondoni Municipality (Map 1). This area has become increasingly residential over the last 20 years through the incremental efforts of individual house-builders. Dar es Salaam has had suburbs, defined by single houses in individual plots, sometimes surrounded by a garden or a wall, since at least the 1970s when sites and services schemes were undertaken 10-15km from the city centre in Sinza, Kijitonyama and Mikocheni (Kironde 1991). These places have now undergone low-rise densification and the frontier of suburban growth has subsequently moved further out, including to parts of Wazo Ward where pockets of suburban space characterised by relatively low density housing have sprung up in the city's former rural hinterland. The built environment is now dominated by detached bungalows and villas situated on individual plots, surrounded by gardens and enclosed within walls, built incrementally by individuals who acquire a plot of land and undertake a building project over many years. These new suburbs are dominated by the middle classes, but not (yet) exclusively so.

Spatializing middle class boundary work

If social classes are economically unequal social groups that are defined in relation to one another by shared practices, then class power is tethered to economic power, but it is also socially and culturally reproduced (Weber 1948, Thompson 1963, Bourdieu 1984). As the anthropologist Mark Liechty has put it, "class culture" is a "shared sphere of class practice" (2003, 13) that is "always a work-in-progress" (2003, 4). A practice-based understanding of social class is useful in Africa given the lack of reliable data on occupation or income outside of South Africa (e.g. Seekings and Nattrass 2005). Many people do not derive their livelihood from a single source, but rather rely on a mix of formal work, self-employment and casual labour, combined with other income from kin and friends, the rental of farms and houses, the sale of agricultural produce, or the proceeds of intermittent deals. Attention to social practices might even be necessary in contexts where the explicit language of 'class' is not commonly used, as in Tanzania. The 'middle class' is not a term in wide circulation. I have rarely

heard people describe themselves, or others, as 'middle class', although people do use vernacular terms to refer to the poor, the elite, and groups in-between. One reason for this may have to do with the country's post-independence political culture, which has been influenced by the socialist path taken from the late 1960s until the late 1980s. During that time, accumulation was demonised in political discourse and explicitly linked to class exploitation (Ivaska 2005, Brennan 2012). Economic differentiation existed, but conspicuous consumption was uncommon and evidence of accumulation (such as land and property) was concealed. Echoes of these practices in the present are evident when people habitually downplay their income and assets in order to avoid unwanted attention from the authorities, kin, friends, neighbours, strangers or researchers. From the 1990s there was some loosening of this restraint, most notably among the political elite (Kelsall 2012, Gray 2015), but after the election of John Magufuli to the Presidency in October 2015 there has been a resurrection of key tenets of Julius Nyerere's political philosophy of *ujamaa* and conspicuous consumption is once again politically sensitive. In this context, it is perhaps understandable that people do not readily claim membership of a coherent 'middle class'. And yet, the repetition of certain practices, such as building the right kind of house in the right kind of neighbourhood, nevertheless enables middle classness to emerge.

It is precisely these practices that make the suburban middle classes that I examine here. To do so I use the concept of 'boundary work'. Boundary work has been developed by sociologists building on the work of Weber and Bourdieu, among others, to examine the ways in which social distinctions are reproduced. It is broadly concerned with the bases on which people make judgments about social status, value and worthiness, and it is shaped by cultural and historical structural opportunities. Sociologists and anthropologists have analysed boundary work as a key mechanism through which the middle classes index what they have in common among themselves and in comparison with others in terms of interests, lifestyles, values, aesthetics and socioeconomic position (Lamont 1992, Devine and Savage 2005, Pachucki et al 2007, Lentz 2015).

What has been less explored is the inherently spatial nature of the boundary work performed by social classes. Space, or location, is often invoked metaphorically in discussions of social class, such as the making of class distinctions 'above' and 'below' the middle, or in Bourdieu's discussion of 'social space'. But if we start from the position that the social and the spatial are co-constituted, then we can ask how the spaces invoked in discussions of boundary work are material as much as they are social (Harvey 1973, 2006a, Soja 1989, Lefebvre 1991, Smith and Katz 1993, Massey 1994, Heiman et al 2012). Centner (2010, 2013) for example, has shown how the middle classes' appropriation of suburban space in Buenos Aires and Istanbul enables the accumulation of 'spatial capital', while Jim Duncan and Nancy Duncan's work on the 'landscapes of privilege' in the New York suburb of Bedford shows how class identity is produced "in and through places" (2004, 3). They trace how the Bedford elite's shared aesthetic values around the desirability and distinctiveness of homes and landscapes shaped an exclusionary politics of housing and the permissible uses of public and private space.

Drawing inspiration from these works, what I want to show here is the mutual construction of middle classness and suburban landscapes through specific kinds of boundary work that is both material and representational. I draw attention to two aspects: the practices of demarcating physical boundaries around land, and the practices of demarcating representational boundaries around landscapes. My contention is that it is through these forms of boundary work that Dar es Salaam's middle classes and suburban spaces are being formed. I do not intend to suggest that boundary work is unique to the middle classes, but rather that there is something distinctive about the suburban boundary work in which Dar es Salaam's *middle* classes engage in their attempts to distinguish themselves from both the urban poor, and the very rich. Indeed, research that has been conducted in the city's poorer neighbourhoods provides insight into the rationalities and moralities that shape the boundary work of the urban poor (Lugalla 1995, Moyer 2003, Lewinson 2006, Brennan 2012, Degani 2015). Their disdain for the inflated super-rich who have accumulated unimaginable wealth through questionable means since the onset of liberalization in the mid-1980s

has been captured by the *Chama Cha Mapinduzi*'sⁱ (CCM) recent re-emphasis on the socialist era's rhetoric of self-reliance and hard work. Importantly, the middle classes also distinguish themselves from the elite, many of whom are considered to have overstepped the limit of what is considered acceptable accumulation. Assets such as houses feature prominently in such boundary work. In August 2017, for example, stories circulated about the ill-gotten gains of a top Tanzania Revenue Authority official who was arrested on corruption charges, and who was rumoured to have accumulated over 70 houses.ⁱⁱ Beyond such stories of high-level corruption and accumulation, the boundary work of the elite remains mostly opaque. The elite and the middle class are often conflated in analyses of African societies, commonly bundled into the term 'elites'. But there is an important distinction. In Tanzania the elite or ruling class is a very small group whose power derives disproportionately from the political, as well as the economic, social and cultural spheres. It is made up of overlapping factions of the ruling party, the bureaucracy and the military (Therkildsen and Bourgoignie 2012), which have themselves become unstable following the 2015 election and the reordering of CCM party politics that has since been unfolding. In practice the boundary work of the elite and the upper middle classes can be quite similar, such as in the realm of consumption, but the scale and role of consumption is different. While the elite are likely to consume more, and to be more transnationally mobile than the middle classes, their class position is less dependent on that consumption because of the power that comes with their position in national politics. In addition, many of them own houses in Dar es Salaam's original colonial suburbs of Oyster Bay and Masaki, which carry the hallmarks of wealth, status and comfort. In contrast, what distinguishes the boundary work of the suburban middle classes is partly the effort to mark out their own neighbourhoods as desirable.

Dar es Salaam's suburbs in the making

With 4.4 million people at the last census in 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics 2017), and with a growth rate of 5.6% over the preceding decade, Dar es Salaam is Tanzania's largest and fastest growing city. This growth is evident in the city centre and inner suburbs which have become more densely populated, and also

around the city's outer edges, which have experienced higher population growth rates than the city centre in recent years (Andreasen 2013). This population growth has fuelled the city's extension, almost all of it unplanned, into the former peri-urban and rural hinterlands (Briggs and Mwamfupe 2000, Mercer 2017). The anti-urban policies of both colonial and post-colonial governments has meant that allocation of urban land for formal residential development has fallen woefully short of demand since at least the 1940s (Kironde 2007, Brownell forthcoming). Since all land in Tanzania is ultimately vested in the President, urban land can only be formally held under leasehold which is granted for a specified use and time period (usually 33, 66 or 99 years). Recent estimates suggest that 80% of land in the city is informally occupied (Myers 2011). The 'informal' here is both a residual and a misleading categorisation (*ibid*). It is a residual categorisation because it lumps together the quite different ways that people access and use land outside of the formal system of land planning in which land use, tenure and taxation is supposed to be subject to state regulation. Land referred to as 'informal' includes that which has been invaded and occupied, held or exchanged under customary or quasi-customary tenure (formerly customary but where such laws are no longer followed), and which may be secured with written documents witnessed by the parties to the transaction, neighbours, or lower local government representatives (Kombe and Kreibich 2000, Lupala 2002, Kironde 2006). It is also misleading since nearly all land transactions involve the state in some way, records of transactions are usually kept in lower local government offices, and many land-owners with informally-acquired land have started the process of land formalisation. In addition, although tax due on formally owned land was often avoided, in recent years the state has been collecting taxes regardless of land title status. Taken together, these practices characterise the ways in which the vast majority of people acquire and own land in Dar es Salaam.

Two significant points are immediately relevant. First, most urban land is developed outside of the formal procedures of urban planning, although as I have already suggested, that does not mean that the state, or individuals within in it, do not play a role in shaping urban space. Nevertheless actual land use is usually

at odds with municipal maps: planners and local government officials constantly play catch-up with residents' *de facto* urban planning (Eskemose et al 2015, de Boeck and Baloji 2016). As we shall see, the land market is highly complex and unpredictable as people access and secure land via multiple channels (sellers, family and friends, neighbours, brokers, the street government, the ward council, the municipal government, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements); land transactions are often characterised by mis-selling, double selling, inflated prices and fake documents; and the actions of recalcitrant neighbours, or occupiers, can always thwart carefully laid plans (Ally 2015). Land can always be encroached upon, invaded or subject to a change of use by government.

Second, the incremental growth of the city has produced a relatively mixed spatial distribution of social classes (Brennan and Burton 2007). This is evident in the residential suburbs of northern Kinondoni which have been settled by a diversity of actors over the last century, from plantation agriculture in the colonial period, to farmers and smallholders who claimed or were allocated land after nationalisation in 1963, to more recent arrivals looking to purchase land on which to build a house. In Wazo Ward, residents gained access to their land in a number of ways. Some city dwellers were allocated what was then peri-urban farmland during the *Kilimo cha Kufa na Kupona* ('Agriculture as a Matter of Life and Death')ⁱⁱⁱ campaign of 1974, designed to increase food production for the city (Kombe and Kreibich 2000). Some bought peri-urban farmland in the late 1970s and 1980s from the indigenous Zaramo farmers, who moved further out from the city as a consequence (Owens 2010). Some government workers bought farmland from the government for a nominal fee in the 1970s and 1980s. By the 1990s, as the city continued to grow, these groups of 'suburban pioneers' (Owens 2004, 2010) decided to build homes on their farmland, transforming the peri-urban fringe into residential suburbs (Briggs and Mwamfupe 2000). Land values and land speculation have increased dramatically following the land law reform (the Land Act 1999 and the Village Land Act 1999), which among other things commodified land and stimulated a land market^{iv} in Tanzania (Kombe 2010, Dancer 2015). Land is now accessed in these new suburban spaces

through purchase, inheritance or occupation, and in some areas, through allocation by lower local government leaders (Kironde 2006). Suburban space in Wazo Ward is therefore socially mixed, although many of the earlier farmers have since sold parcels or all of their land and moved on (Msangi 2011).

In an environment in which people use different strategies to lay claim to highly valuable land in a context of scarcity, it is no surprise to learn that land ownership and land use are in flux. Contestation is literally written on to the landscape: spray-painted signs on doors and walls vividly proclaim the intentions of plot owners, brokers, neighbours and municipal planners: '*nyumba hii haiuzwi*' (this house is not for sale), '*bomoa*' (demolish), '*ondoa*' (remove), '*simama*' (stop), or simply, a large red 'X', indicating a structure built in an unauthorized place. The suburbs are a landscape under construction in which house-builders, plot-owners, squatters, neighbours, brokers, politicians, municipal planners and parastatals try to materialize their plans, sometimes in collaboration with each other, and sometimes in conflict with each other. We now turn to look at the practices of boundary work in relation to land and landscape that the middle classes employ to try and secure their social and spatial position in the city.

Boundary work: land

Over the last two decades in Dar es Salaam, as the search for affordable land on which to build a house has pushed more people out to the suburbs, claiming and securing suburban land has become increasingly fraught. Claims to land are never fixed. Middle class boundary work is first and foremost a set of material endeavours, involving the struggle to access land, put up boundaries around it, build a house on it, and gain some form of recognition of those boundaries from the state. While such concerns are universal in African cities, the ways in which different social classes experience them, and the practices that these concerns engender, are distinct. The poor are often simply unable to demarcate the boundaries of their land. They will know in minute detail where their boundaries are, but, lacking the resources to build a concrete wall or to have their land surveyed, they are more likely to rely on natural boundaries such as shrubs and

trees, and customary agreements with neighbours. The elite do not, in general, struggle to claim and demarcate their land and to build on it in the same way as do the middle classes, because they have the financial, social and political resources to secure their assets.

In this context the middle classes go to considerable effort and expense to access land and to secure their claim on it. Land is enclosed: concrete walls around plots are often the first sign that a plot has been sub-divided or sold to a new owner, giving rise to strange landscapes of walled empty spaces. The style of the boundary wall also indexes one's social position. Elaborate concrete walls, constructed with patterned bricks and patterned wrought iron bars, topped with broken glass shards, painted in the latest colours, and finished with solid metal gates, demonstrate individual taste and wealth (or the appearance of it).

INSERT MAP 2 ABOUT HERE

Although much energy is expended seeking formal title, very few manage to succeed because the process is bureaucratic and costly (Briggs 2011). It begins with the survey of the plot during which a municipal surveyor visits the site to survey the plot boundaries. If, according to the municipal planners' maps back at the office, the plot is free of any other planned land use (such as public services or industry) then a plot map is drawn up using computer aided software and an 'offer' of title is issued by the municipal government. Many middle class residents get to this stage but do not then have the resources to pay to convert the 'offer' into 'title' at the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements. Navigating these labyrinthine processes was a common theme in discussions with suburban residents. As David, an employee of the Roman Catholic Church who had built a modest house in a small planned area in Tegeta (see Map 2), explained;

I bought this plot in 1994 and moved to this place in 2006. When I bought the plot the place was bush; there were coconut and cashew trees. This is a planned area. I knew that the plot was safe to buy because my uncle worked at the [factory] nearby, he was a senior accountant and the owner of the piece of land was his secretary. So I was assured that the land was really for sale and it was his to sell....But I don't yet have legal title. It is very expensive and very difficult to get legal title. I have started but I haven't

finished. I have got as far as getting an 'offer'. [CM: Why do you want to have title, if you were sure that this land was for sale?] It is for my security and assurance. And if I don't have title, if government plans for this place change, I might lose my rights to compensation. There is no compensation without title. And it is for the security of my children (David, Tegeta, 7th April 2015).

I had similar discussions with Obeid, a retired agroforestry civil servant who had built on a plot in an area of Wazo zoned for industrial use in the 1979 master plan:^v

I bought this land in 1993, when it was very cheap. It was 140,000/= per acre^{vi} and the plot is 3 acres. It was owned by local Zaramo residents. My salary was only 20-30,000/= per month, so I paid in instalments. I have customary title – a local [informal] certificate from the guy I bought it from, and something also from the chairman of the street government....In 1995 the [1979] master plan showed that from Salasala up to Bunju, on the left hand side of the road, was supposed to be an industrial area [where his plot is]. I wrote to the Minister of Lands requesting title deeds, so that if we had to be moved we would be compensated. They declined. Then I wrote a letter that we wanted to develop a mushroom canning farm [here]....but there was not enough land here for that, so we didn't get the title deed...We are not secure here. The government may try to move us – that's the problem with the Government of Tanzania (Obeid, Wazo, 9th April 2015).

What is clear from these comments is that the desire to shore up one's investment in land is not motivated by a wish to use the land as collateral, as assumed by advocates of land formalisation programmes, but rather by the desire to ensure access to government compensation in the event that one's land is designated for another use. This threat is no legal obscurity: many people recall the *ujamaa vijijini* campaign from the late 1960s to the late 1970s when the Tanzanian government attempted to collectivize agricultural production and required people to move to communal villages. In the contemporary period there are frequent cases covered in the media in which people are forced to vacate their land either to make way for public goods, to provide planned land, because they had built in an unauthorized area, or because their land was sold to investors (see Msangi 2011). This can happen across social classes (although it is less likely to affect the elite). In this context, middle class land-owners are anxious to secure their most significant asset.

One of the consequences of the continual parcelling up and securing of land among the middle classes is that the social heterogeneity of Dar es Salaam's suburbs is coming under strain. As we shall see below, the suburbs are not exclusively middle class spaces, but it is becoming more difficult for the poor to live in them. They are more likely to have accessed their land either through government allocations in the 1970s or, in the present day, through occupation or squatting. They inhabit the suburban interstices in the valleys and disused quarries, near swamps and open ground for infrastructure like gas pipelines and electricity pylons. In some cases they have been there longer than their better-off neighbours.

In places like Kilimahewa (Map 2), middle class boundary work in relation to land can have detrimental consequences for poorer residents. Take the case of Halima, who came to Kilimahewa in 2007 from Mtwara, a region in the south of the country. She lived with her husband, a bus driver, and two children, in a small unfinished house that consisted of three walls and a roof, built at the bottom of a gentle valley. She and her neighbours were surrounded by larger plots. "In this area", she explained, "there are [people who are] Class A and Class B. We are Class D." She went on:

"Prices of land have risen because people who are moving here have money, and they are pushing up prices, not just of land but also of necessities like soap and sugar. I have to walk to Magengeni (an area of small local shops, some distance away) to buy food because prices there are cheaper....[Here] there are no hospitals....no dispensaries....you have to go to Salasala to the private one. There is no water" (Halima, Kilimahewa, 23rd July 2015).

She then pointed to a fence at the end of her plot. The previous year, she explained, her neighbour, who was rumoured to be a manager at Tanzania Breweries, one of the country's largest and most successful privately owned firms, put up this fence around his empty plot. As he did so, he enclosed the footpath at the bottom of the valley that had separated his plot from Halima's. Not only was this an aggressive act that encroached on public space, since access routes for pedestrians, motorbikes and cars is a matter of negotiation between plot-owners, neighbours and the local government in Kilimahewa, but it caused great inconvenience to Halima and her neighbours since it meant a longer walk

to the main road. Halima said that she and her neighbours complained to the Kilimahewa government in vain because, she assumed, the neighbour had simply paid them something. He further failed to demonstrate any kind of neighbourly behaviour by refusing to allow them to use the water pipe installed on his plot (even if for a fee, as is common). “It’s just for the *mlinzi* (guard) and his 12 dogs”, she complained.

Middle class boundary work, then, is first and foremost a set of material practices concerned with accessing and securing one’s claim to a plot of land. Over space and time the repetition of these small-scale practices has generated distinctive residential suburbs characterised by relatively high quality, low density housing to which the middle classes have flocked. Yet middle class distinction requires more than the acquisition of a plot and the building of a house. If the middle classes and the suburbs are co-constituted, how then do suburbs shape the middle classes? To consider this question we now turn to the boundary work of landscape.

Boundary work: landscape

As we have noted, Dar es Salaam’s new suburban landscapes are highly sought after. The possibility of obtaining a plot in a context of land scarcity makes these neighbourhoods attractive, but it does not fully capture their appeal. They are also aesthetically valuable. Drawing on scholarship on the politics of urban aesthetics in the Global South (Holston 1991, Fredericks and Diouf 2014, Ghertner 2015, Gastrow 2017), I argue that building the right kind of house in the right part of the suburb can be understood as a socially meaningful act. This is not just a question of what kind of house an individual has built, although that is important (Mercer 2014, Page and Sunjo 2017). The distinctive aesthetic qualities of suburban landscapes are themselves also central to middle class boundary work. In conversation, middle class suburban residents would frequently and enthusiastically point out the aesthetic value of their neighbourhood. The appreciation of apparently banal qualities such as lower population densities, larger plot sizes, sea breezes, gardens and trees reveals an aesthetic politics of landscape that rehearses colonial ideologies which divided

the city along lines of race and class. In paying attention to the ways in which the city's landscapes are locally understood and represented (Jazeel 2013, Friess and Jazeel 2017), I treat popular narratives of landscape as an everyday, significant, practice of middle class boundary work.

That Dar es Salaam's neighbourhoods are socially differentiated is widely understood, and that difference is often represented through landscape. As Rajabu, an accountant who had built an impressive house in the neighbourhood of Salasala (Map 2), recalled:

“Salasala is pollution free. We were in Upanga [city centre] before. When I woke up the first morning here – ahhh, the change of weather, the fresh air! And when I drove to work, I realized Upanga was stinking. But I hadn't noticed when I lived there! I like to take exercise here – in the mornings I walk 4km to and from the house, to get some fresh air – up to the hills” (Salasala, 12th April 2015).

Similarly, John, a lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, reflected, “why do I like living in Salasala? It's not so congested as other parts of the city...and it's relatively cool. It's hilly and so you get the breeze; and you do not suffer floods” (Dar es Salaam, 31st March 2015). In a coastal tropical city prone to devastating floods during the long rainy season, these are not idle preferences. Breeze is a rare prize and coastal or elevated positions are highly sought-after, as indeed they were for colonial elites (Smiley 2010). Moreover what struck me about Rajabu's and John's responses was that they both framed Salasala in relation to parts of the city from which they wished to distance themselves: Salasala is not one of the high density, uncomfortable and flood-prone neighbourhoods that, by implication, the less well-off must endure. In addition, John's reference to the relative lack of congestion in Salasala draws attention to the aesthetic value of the layout of Dar es Salaam's new suburban landscapes. Whether particular neighbourhoods are planned – in which plots have been regularly laid out by municipal planners and sold with legal title – or unplanned, in which development is ad hoc – areas such as Salasala have gained a reputation for offering relatively low-density residential space. In fact, the small islands of formally planned streetscapes dispersed throughout the suburban sea do command higher values, both economic and aesthetic. Planned land promises

services (which may take time, or indeed fail, to materialize), and security in relation to land use, plot boundaries and title. But planned land is also valued for its aesthetically pleasing landscape, which residents considered to be neat and orderly. During a conversation with David, who had built in a planned part of Tegeta, I asked him to describe his neighbourhood. He responded at length:

“I am thinking of *Uswahilini* but that is not right....*Uswahilini* means that a place is constructed irregularly, it is a place that is difficult to govern because people just do what they want, it is a place where people live anyhow. There is no planning in the construction of houses. The fire truck cannot pass! There is no organization. The government just leaves you there. [CM: So what is different about Tegeta?] Here there is a good standard of living. Most of Tegeta is planned. Have you been to those other places? Manzese, Tandale, Tandika, Kigogo? There is no space. There are a lot of people. It is dirty, there is garbage. People live on less than 1,000/= a day.^{vii} They eat their three meals with just 1,000/= a day. Can you imagine? 10,000/= a day wouldn't suffice here. Here a cup of tea – just a cup of tea – is 500/=. There you can buy for 100/=. [CM: So what do you like about living here?] The level of community that lives here. I don't like it 100%. But there is enough space, there is no theft. Security is assured because my neighbour [points to his left] is an inspector general of police. His place is guarded. And the other neighbour has a night guard, and the neighbour on the opposite side of the street has a night guard” (Tegeta, 7th April 2015).

What is striking about David's description is that Tegeta is defined by what it is *not*: it is not *Uswahilini* ('the area of the Swahili people'), the informal inner city neighbourhoods where much social life is lived on the street (Lewinson 2007). *Uswahilini* is a multi-faceted and widely used term that originated in colonial Dar es Salaam. For many, such as those who live there, *Uswahilini* is a space of sociality and opportunity, where one can use *ujanja* (cleverness that may rely on trickery) to live and prosper (Degani 2015). But the term also carries the racialised and hierarchical meanings that were inscribed on to the tripartite division of urban space during the colonial era (Smiley 2009), when the Germans and then the British effectively established separate zones for Europeans (Zone 1), Asians (Zone 2) and Africans (Zone 3). These zones lived on in master planning documents that allocated unequal residential densities to different areas (the African neighbourhoods being the most densely inhabited; Njoh 2009). The zones became widely known by their respective Swahili names; *Uzunguni*, *Uhindini* and *Uswahilini*, and they have stuck as popular descriptions of certain kinds of neighbourhoods in which certain kinds of people live, even though in

some cases they have taken on new meanings, or no longer fully capture the social geography of the city. The new suburban neighbourhoods are a case in point: as David points out, they are not *Uswahilini*, but neither are they *Uzunguni* or *Uhindini*. As a landscape ‘type’ the suburbs are yet to be named,^{viii} although popular representations of individual neighbourhoods circulate widely, feeding into the everyday practices of middle class boundary work in which the properties of a landscape, by implication, reflect the social qualities of its inhabitants, or as David puts it, the ‘level of community’ that lives in a place. The representation of the new suburbs as *not Uswahilini* – not densely settled, poorly planned, or noisy – is a familiar trope in everyday interactions. “It’s like Manzese” is a common refrain among the suburban middle classes when referring to undesirable residential areas, referencing the well-known high-density, low-income inner city neighbourhood. As a local councillor who was explaining the city’s different landscapes to me put it:

“Wazo is a middle class area. If you compare it to Manzese – we can say people of the lower level live there; if you go to Masaki or Oyster Bay then high level people live there. But here....it’s in the middle. But, there’s *Uswahilini* inside [Wazo Ward], for example in parts of Tegeta” (Wazo Ward Office, 5th April 2018).

The councillor identifies an important point here: *Uswahilini* is no longer confined to the ‘African’ part of the colonial town, or the post-colonial inner city neighbourhoods, but can be found everywhere. A local government official in Kilimahewa Juu (Map 2) described the two parts of her neighbourhood thus: “Kwa Babu is like Manzese, but Msiige is better planned by the people who have developed the land” (Kilimahewa Juu Local Government Office, 7th August 2017). The following day I asked a resident of Msiige about the official’s description. They agreed with the way she had described the neighbourhood, explaining that those who settled in Kwa Babu, “know their status.” When I asked whether this was explained by different land prices, he shook his head and said, “they look at the other buildings around.” “They are squatters”, offered his companion. The move from *Uswahilini* to ‘squatter’ represents an allied act of middle class boundary work, in which ‘squatter’ is a widely used pejorative term (in English even among Swahili speakers). In fact *Uswahilini* and squatter are both ambiguous. Take the definition of ‘squatter’ for example: for officials in the

Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements it refers to those who build on government land; for municipal planners at Kinondoni Municipality it refers to those who build on unplanned land; for lower local government officials in Wazo Ward it is anyone whose land is not surveyed; and for many of Dar es Salaam's middle classes, it is shorthand for the urban poor who live in low quality housing. For the middle classes the representation of 'squatter' areas and *Uswahilini* is a practice of boundary work that marks out the less well-planned landscapes of the urban poor from the aesthetically pleasing suburban landscapes that they have built and inhabited. The irony here is that many middle class residents could be thought of as squatters because the land on which they have built either belongs to government, is unplanned or unsurveyed (Roy 2005). Yet the middle classes are rarely referred to 'squatters'.

Conclusion

In the growing literature on the African city, much attention has been paid to the spaces of the elite and of the poor. The focus has been on the futuristic new cities that the urban planners hope to coax into life, or on the 'slums' that are to be upgraded, razed, or ignored. The forces shaping these spaces are, of course, important to understand. What I hope to have demonstrated here is that we also need to pay attention to the urban interstitial – the spaces and social groups that slip through our established frameworks for rendering the African city knowable. Indeed, doing so can reveal the weaknesses of such frameworks. Starting from the observation that the vast majority of new housing in Dar es Salaam is constructed as self-build projects of the suburban middle classes, who build incrementally and without formal housing finance, we find for example that theories of the ways in which 'capital' builds the urban environment are of limited use in contemporary urban Africa where, as the historian Fred Cooper pointed out long ago, "one of the most critical [ways that space can be divided] in Africa is the division between legal space and illegal space" (Cooper 1983, 26). A significant challenge to 'capital' in African cities, as we have seen in the case of Dar es Salaam, is the sheer complexity of land ownership – of Cooper's 'illegal space'. This challenge is not insurmountable and in fact is often overcome in the interests of alliances of local and international elites in the state and private

sector (Shearer 2015, Gillespie 2016, Goodfellow 2017). To date, such projects in Dar es Salaam have been concentrated in the city centre, and highly-capitalised commercial projects in the city's housing sector have been limited. And yet, all the while and largely unnoticed, the middle classes have been building. Thousands of small, individual building projects have materialized new residential suburban landscapes, a kind of 'quiet encroachment' (Bayat 2013, Simone and Fauzan 2013, Caldeira 2017) that has pushed back against decades of anti-urban policy, and has, in the process, transformed the city's edges into residential suburban space.

In order to think through the making of middle class suburban space in Dar es Salaam I have turned to everyday practices of acquiring, securing, building and representing. As Heiman et al (2012) have argued, our analyses of the global middle classes can benefit from extending our conceptualisation of middle class labour to the work of everyday aspirations and practices, including the work that goes in to the making and maintaining of urban space. It is through the repetition of distinctive practices in relation to suburban land and landscape – the boundary work that I have described here – that middle classness emerges in contemporary Dar es Salaam. Both land and landscape must therefore be understood as significant resources in the African city. In contemporary scholarship on urban Africa land is an often-overlooked asset that underpins class formation (cf Mabandla 2013). The approach taken here drags our attention back to the materiality of land but also insists that the landscapes being constructed in the contemporary African city must be understood as differentiated, and that that difference has material effects for understanding social class. I have unpicked the very concrete ways in which space and class make each other in contemporary Dar es Salaam; to document not just how the middle classes build suburban space, but also how the landscapes they construct come to define what it means to be middle class. Central to both is a distinctive repertoire of boundary work: the everyday material and social acts that draw and re-draw the boundaries between the middle classes and their class others. The effects of such work is to make more secure the middle classes' claims to highly valuable suburban land, sometimes to the explicit cost of less well-off

neighbours. It also reproduces a politics of landscape aesthetics that is embedded in colonial ideologies of the African city. It is the spacious and orderly suburban neighbourhood that is valorised by those who would distinguish themselves from *Uswahilini*.

Yet, as I have underlined, the suburbs are not exclusively middle class. Dar es Salaam's urban future is by no means settled. What is also apparent from this account of boundary work is that Dar es Salaam's suburban middle classes occupy a relatively privileged, yet also precarious social and spatial position. These interstitial suburban landscapes do not always match the aesthetic vision of their middle class builders. They continue to develop incrementally according to thousands of uncoordinated individual plans, they are mostly served by dirt roads that disintegrate in the rains, and the urban poor persist amongst their wealthier neighbours. To think of these new residential neighbourhoods as middling, suburban spaces under construction seems to capture well these ambiguities, and reminds us that boundary work requires constant effort.

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ⁱ Party of the Revolution, the political party that has held power in Tanzania since 1977.

ⁱⁱ *Nipashe* (2017) 'Takukuru yamhoji Masamaki wa TRA', Dar es Salaam, 10th August.

ⁱⁱⁱ *The Citizen* (2014) 'Kilimo kwanza: where did we lose the plot?' Dar es Salaam, 22nd May.

^{iv} The Land Act 1999 overturned the Land Ordinance 1923, which did not recognize the value of undeveloped land.

^v The 1979 master plan is the most recent published plan for Dar es Salaam. A new one has been expected since 2012.

^{vi} Approximately £140 in the early 1990s.

^{vii} At the time of research Tsh1,000/= was worth approximately £0.38.

^{viii} There is no word for 'suburb' that is widely used in Swahili, although some planners use *maeneo ya pembezoni wa mji* ('areas next to the city') or *viunga* ('suburbs'; Myers 2014).