



Translation of urban planning models: Planning principles, procedural elements and institutional settings



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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the process of the translation and instrumentalisation of colonial urban planning principles into contemporary urban planning laws and instruments in Dar es Salaam. Based on a historical reading of the urban planning institutions and empirical references about current urban planning practices in this city it develops three main claims. First, there is a continuation of colonial planning institutions in the post-colonial Dar es Salaam. The shift of power from the colonial authority to the national state of Tanzania did not greatly impact on the planning institutions and practices in this city. Second, colonial urban planning legacies still dominate the planning institutions and practices in the post-colonial Dar es Salaam, however in different forms. They are now shaped by different sets of actors, follow economic logics, benefit only small groups of the economically privileged at the cost of the majority, and support the accumulation of power of the nation-state authorities. Third, the urban consequences and the urban planning institutions and practices of Dar es Salaam are interrelated; each is a result of the process of translation and instrumentalisation of colonial urban planning principles in the post-colonial setting accompanied by poor management and governance processes as well as the contradictions in the land tenure system that characterise this city. Acknowledging the urban consequences as being conditioned by the intense interplay between planning institutions and practice, and urban management and governance, this paper shows how the continued presence of colonial planning principles in the shaping of post-colonial planning practices may contribute to present-day urban consequences in Dar es Salaam.

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1. Introduction

The urban planning ideals and the corresponding organisational and planning models of African cities are inherited from the Western countries that colonised them. The zoning concept with separated land-use categories used in the former British colonies is the basis of most planning legislation in many African countries (Watson, 2009), while euro-centric colonial-type master planning systems inform planning education in Africa (AAPS, 2010). Improvement in sanitary conditions for the white population (Mabogunje, 1990: 137) and racial segregation (Alexander, 1983) were the key elements of colonial urban planning principles. The need for sanitary improvement and consequent racial segregation also provided a necessary reason for the translation of colonial planning principles into contemporary urban planning laws and

instruments. While there are literature that have examined the colonial legacies of planning in Africa including planning legislation, spatial planning systems and planning education, there has been little study of the process of the translation and instrumentalisation of colonial planning principles in contemporary urban planning laws and instruments. Only recently have the dynamics and outcome of the translation of paradigms, processes and instruments of urban planning from Europe to African cities been put on the agenda in urban planning studies (Odendaal, 2012; Silva, 2012; Watson, 2009). Based on critiques of the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of persistent planning approaches, in particular the supremacy of the rational planning model and its master planning concept (Myers, 2011) and Western approaches to comprehensive planning (Porter, 2010), these studies argue that African cities are largely developed outside the scope of public planning and land-use regulations (Harrison, 2006; Watson, 2003) and that they are thus not shaped by the inherited ideals and concepts of urban planning. Acknowledging the above argument, we frame our study

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around the assumption that persistent approaches to urban planning in African cities have their roots in Western urban contexts which do not hold in African cities (e.g. ideals of comprehensive planning approaches). Although these models and ideals are dominantly persistent in urban planning, they have in fact been appropriated, adapted, hybridised or refused depending on very place-specific and spatially diverse conditions and needs, and also framed by arrangements of actors. We accordingly argue that the reality of urban planning in African cities is characterised by hybrid arrangements and their constant reproduction and translation, acting partially within and partially outside of state regulations.

In this article we understand translation as the process of appropriation, adaptation, hybridisation, and refusal and their interplay in the rationalisation of dominating circulating models and planning ideals and thus context-specific urban planning practices. Following Dewey (1986), we define the key terms as follows. Adaptation relates to adjustment to a changing environment by changing one's internal structures and one's normative and epistemological orders. It accommodates strategies that are necessary to address circumstances that are beyond control, close to adherence, resignation and submission, and also includes tactics that preserve internal structures for the continuation of a prevailing benefit structure, despite changes. Appropriation relates to something being changed in relation to a given context, however in such a way that the receiving context remains basically unchanged, while the integrated element is reproduced in order for its adjustment to the receiving context. Hybridisation refers to the situation where adaptation and appropriation are simultaneously at work, however at varying degrees and levels of influence and without allowing a distinct separation between the two processes. Refusal presents the process of rejection of a new feature or a part of it at a given moment in time. It refers to those that have to date failed to get an acceptable status. Understanding the process of refusal is important as it indicates the struggles and contestations that the successful have already experienced and the fact that the successful achieve their comprehensive meaning only in the presence of the refusal.

This article is based on our historical reading of urban development and planning practices in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and its mapping on our empirical experience gathered within the framework of an on-going research project started in the first half of 2013. In our analysis we thus link the planning documents and literature with our knowledge gathered from interviews of local practitioners and professionals. We start with a historical reading of the development process of planning institutions and planning practices in Tanzania, dividing its past into two main periods regarding the development of planning legislation: the top-down period with a master plan approach including the colonial time and post-colonial socialist period following *ujamaa*,¹ and the contemporary more market-led period characterised by

international pressure from globalisation but also by the demand for participation from civil society.

This division into these two periods is shaped by the analysis of planning documents and planning legislation. From early colonial times up to the 1990s (or 2007 when the new General Planning Scheme was officially introduced), urban planning displayed a top-down attitude derived from the various governments (German, British and independent Tanzanian) and the master planning approach in keeping with centrally made decisions. Furthermore, the colonial racial division of planned areas which created three zones of different plot size for Europeans, Asians and Africans continued in post-colonial times with zones of high, medium and low density that used the same size standards as before. Only the racial division was replaced by segregation along income groups, continuing to shape the city with neighbourhoods defined along sharp lines. Concerning informal settlements, an important phenomenon from colonial times up to today, the policies remained hostile to poor settlers both in earlier times and throughout the *ujamaa* period, and have only recently moved towards recognition and regularisation (Brennan, Burton, & Lawi, 2007). Therefore, from colonial times up to the 1990s a continuum in planning legislation and approaches can be observed and forms the basis of the periodical division of this article. From the 1990s onwards internal and external factors like the introduction of a multi-party system, a market-led economy and pressure from civil society towards participation has somewhat changed urban planning. Nevertheless, the sharp segregations remain an important feature of Dar es Salaam. This article intends to overcome the common colonial and post-colonial divide and focus rather on the outcomes of urban planning legislation and power relations, which are shaped by strong social segregation in favour of dominant groups.

In the following sections we discuss the characteristics, underlying normative ideals and assumptions of the dominant urban planning models that have shaped urban planning reality in Dar es Salaam in the periods under consideration; how their involvements in planning practice have changed the urban morphologies and the planning procedural elements in this city; how these changes are related to the expression of power relations of the individual time periods; and how in each period urban planning in Dar es Salaam has dealt with the issue of appropriation, adaptation, hybridisation, and refusal. We thus claim that the translation of planning models and ideals in Dar es Salaam has historically benefitted the powerful or at least those with the capacity to influence planning institutions and practices. This translation process followed a path that largely excluded the ordinary from planning benefits, instead deepening the very discrimination on which the planning process in Dar es Salaam is historically grounded. This is true for planning institutions and practice in the Dar es Salaam of both colonial and independent Tanzania. Spatial segregation is still in place in this city – the race-based planning practice of colonial times has simply been replaced by the urban planning practices of independent Tanzania that consider populations differently according to their different economic statuses. Despite efforts to overcome the colonial legacy, the planning practice, institutions, administrative system and planning consequences continue to resonate with the colonial past. A reason for such continuation of colonial planning practice, albeit in different forms, is planning's differential relations with different sections of the population.

2. Dar es Salaam: a brief introduction

Dar es Salaam was unoccupied land near a small coastal village with a handful of fishermen until it was converted into a small harbour and trading centre in 1867 by the Arab Sultan of Zanzibar, Sayid Majid. After the death of Sultan Majid in 1870, it experienced

¹ After independence with the turn towards nationalism under the guiding vision of *ujamaa* in the period between 1967 and the mid-1980s, Tanzania developed an "impressive planning infrastructure" consisting of e.g. economic development plans and urban master plans (Armstrong, 1986; Rugumamu, 1997:142). With the end of urban racial segregation there was insufficient infrastructure to provide economic plans to guide national development. There was massive population growth in the city after independence and this caused the post-colonial government to introduce a comprehensive programme to decrease the urban primacy of Dar es Salaam. Attention was given to regional development and the capital city of the country was also shifted from Dar es Salaam to a centrally located part of the country, Dodoma, in 1973. Concerning the administrative structure, urban authorities, responsible e.g. for providing sanitation and water supply, were abolished in 1972. Instead, regional and district authorities were put in place with responsibility for all public services in rural and urban areas.

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