From City of the Oppressed to City of the Free: Tracing the Progress of Decolonization in African Cities

Oluwapelumi O. Botti

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<td>The adoption of African “traditional” values to share resources equally.</td>
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<td>Decolonization</td>
<td>A progressive act of dismantling colonial domination.</td>
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<td>Arusha Declaration</td>
<td>A 1967 political statement on socio-economic development and Tanzania’s commitment to socialism. Also known as TANU’s Policy on Socialism and Self-Reliance.</td>
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<td>Arabic term for leader. Nigerian context, a traditional leader in the Muslim northern regions of Nigeria.</td>
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<td>An identity document that included employment information, worn around the neck during British colonial rule in Kenya.</td>
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Malaya (continued)  prostitutes who also rendered domestic services to patrons.

Oba  A title for a Yoruba or Edo king in Nigeria.

Primate City  A term, coined by Geographer Mark Jefferson to describe a country’s largest city that is unrivaled in population size, economic activity and political significance.

Ujamaa  Swahili term for “brotherhood” or “family hood.” In Tanzanian context, used to conceptualize African socialism.

Villagization  A policy that forcefully groups rural people to work on communal is often used synonymously with collectivization.
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Introduction

On 9 March 2015, University of Cape Town (UCT) student Chumani Maxwele smeared human feces on a statue commemorating the late British colonialist and diamond magnate, Cecil Rhodes. The act sparked a national movement dubbed Rhodes Must Fall (RMF). Maxwele, other UCT students, faculty and staff demanded the removal of the statue and what they called the decolonization of the university.¹ The campaign spread across South African universities and received support from international universities, notably from the University of Oxford, Rhodes’ alma mater.² Participants in the RMF movement called for the university space to be rid of not only plaques and statues that commemorated oppressive colonial figures but also legacies of colonialism, namely white supremacy, institutional racism, and economic inequality. This is evident in the UCT Rhodes Must Fall Mission Statement:

We want to be clear that this movement is not just concerned with the removal of a statue. The statue has great symbolic power; it glorifies a mass-murderer who exploited black labour and stole land from indigenous people. Its presence erases black history and is an act of violence against black students, workers and staff – by “black” we refer to all people of color. The statue was therefore the natural starting point of this movement. Its removal will not mark the end but the beginning of the long overdue process of decolonizing this university.³


Many historians critical of Rhodes agree with the sentiments of the Rhodes Must Fall campaign. Rhodes was a firm advocate of British imperialism as he believed the Anglo-Saxon was superior over all races. Believing Black Africans to be “in a state of barbarism,” he actively supported colonial policies that subjugated Black Africans.

On 9 April 2015, the statue of Rhodes was removed from the University of Cape Town grounds. The RMF movement contributes to a long history of African attempts to decolonize physical spaces. While members of RMF protested to purge universities of colonial legacies, in the twentieth century, colonized Africans as well as postcolonial African leaders made efforts to rid cities of problems associated with imperialism. Which raises the question: what effects did colonial policies have on African urban dwellers? How did Africans resist oppressive imperial forces within the city? How did African leaders and urban planners address the challenges inherited from colonialism? Finally, how effective were these anti-colonial actions? This thesis will primarily focus on the relocation of African national capitals as a means of decolonizing the urban space. Throughout, this thesis will examine the progress made from the colonial period to the postcolonial period towards dismantling colonial legacies. In doing so, this historical investigation illuminates present-day struggles such as the Rhodes Must Fall Movement.

In studies of the colonial African cities, scholars such as Gwendolyn Wright, Garth Myers and Kai Gutschow argue that the colonial city was designed with little respect for the cultures or


dignity of Africans. Rather, it was seen as a means to civilize the colonized Africans and as a means to expose Africans to a “superior” European culture. Wright concluded that French urban planers viewed colonial cities as social experiments and the testing ground for solutions to solve Paris’ urban woes. Kenyan historians Kefa Otiso and Godwin Murunga argued that British colonial urban policy actively discouraged Africans from residing in colonial cities. Otiso argues that the British sought to keep Africans bound to rural subsistence farming in a bid to protect the capitalist interests of White settlers. Murunga argued further that the colonial cities were governed by strict policies of racial segregation that privileged Europeans at the expense of Africans. Maurice Amutabi went on to argue that colonial cities symbolically served as a place of terror to colonized Africans who were bombardeed with images of European superiority such as large sculptures immortalizing colonial conquerors. Amutabi, Murunga and Otsio all depict the colonized urban residents as victims, deprived of agency in contrast to the powerful colonial authorities.

Historians such as Wright, Odile Georg and Fassil Demissie have written on the role colonial authorities played in shaping the political, cultural and socio-economic relations of


colonial cities. The colonial city is recognized by historians as the seat of power from which colonial authorities ruled the entire colony. On the opposite side of the spectrum, colonized Africans are often depicted by historians as having little agency in influencing the dynamics of the colonial city and, consequently, the colony. Georg highlighted how colonial policies of segregation and racial discrimination rendered urban Africans as powerless victims.\(^9\) Amutabi further argued that the colonial city not only symbolized a site of oppression to urban Africans but as a source of oppression to all colonized Africans.

This thesis argues that the disenfranchised African quarters of the colonial city, were not only sites of great poverty and inequality but also sites of anti-colonial struggle. Although disenfranchised, Africans mobilized against racist urban policies and reclaimed the urban space as their own. Garth Myers has argued that the construction of shanty towns and informal housing by colonized Africans, served as grassroots efforts to defy colonial urban policies and decolonize the city. He observed that by creating these informal settlements, Africans redefined spaces in the colonial city as their own and provided their own means for survival in the absence of provisions from colonial governments.\(^10\) According to Maurice Vambe, African residents in black designated townships took ownership of colonial space, appropriated colonial intentions for urban space and placed their own African markings on the space. He argued that African migrants revealed their agency by developing cultural expressions of resistance in the townships. Vambe highlights, for example, the Jerusarema dance as an important symbol of African

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resistance in the Rhodesian urban space. This thesis will demonstrate that African urban dwellers acted as political agents in colonial and postcolonial cities.

During the period of colonialism, African cities did not all have the same origins but bore similar qualities. Some cities such as Ibadan, Jenne, Mombasa and Cairo already existed as large thriving cities of trade prior to colonial rule. Other African cities such as Nairobi of the Kenya colony and Lusaka of Northern Rhodesia were established by the European colonial powers. The establishment of European colonial rule on the continent, officially formalized with the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 allowed colonial powers to change the dynamics of existing African cities or develop entirely new cities. In the instance of preexisting settlements, colonial powers often chose to either 1) merely occupy the existing precolonial city, 2) destroy the existing settlement and build a new city 3) create a ‘hybrid’ city by building around the existing settlement or building a separate city close to the existing settlement. Historians commonly associated colonial plans of the urban spaces with colonialists’ political ideologies. Anthony D. King stressed that colonial cities often supported the main colonizing mission of the colonizer. Resource extraction was the main motivation for

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12 Urban planning scholar Myers describes the size of these pre-colonial cities as ‘comparable to many European cities in size prior to the rise of European power.’ See Myers. Postcolonial Cities, 50.

13 Amutabi, Buildings as Symbols and Metaphors of Colonial Hegemony, 327.

colonization in most African colonies. Thus, several colonial cities such as Accra (Ghana), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Lagos (Nigeria) were located on the coast to further facilitate overseas trade whilst other cities such as the copper towns of Northern Rhodesia (present day Zambia) were located near resource sources to better facilitate extraction. Vittoria Capresi argued that the Italian mission to populate the colony of Libya with unemployed Italian nationals at the height of colonization heavily impacted the architecture of Libyan towns. According to Capresi, Libyan cities were thus designed to be extensions of the Italian homeland and symbols evoking fascist power. On the other hand, Hassan Radoine linked the French colonial policy of fetishizing Moroccan culture to the dual nature of Moroccan cities. Moroccan cities are characterized by two separate quarters: the precolonial walled quarter, the medina, and the French developed and inhabited quarter, Ville Nouvelle, built around the precolonial city. Radoine argued the French’s sought to stem the roots of resistance amongst the colonized by appealing to the cultural and architectural practices of the colonized peoples. Radoine further argued that the so-called preservation of the precolonial medina was actually an attempt by the French to prevent the colonized from being influenced by Western practices.

By the mid twentieth century, the European colonial powers lost most of their African colonies through the process of decolonization. In some violent struggles for liberation such as

the case of the colonies of Algeria, Mozambique and Kenya, and some peaceful processes such as the case of Tanganyika, Nigeria and Morocco, colonized Africans gained their independence from colonial powers. Colonial leaders were replaced with a new class of nationalist and highly educated African leaders such as Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, many of whom were educated abroad in the metropole and returned to the colonies to lead the independence movements. What became of these former colonial African cities that were designed to promote European superiority? How did they evolve from the colonial period to the postcolonial period, and finally, how did postcolonial African leaders and urban planners overcome the challenges they inherited from colonialism?

Various methods were used by postcolonial leaders to decolonize the city. Bill Freund highlighted that certain African leaders decolonized cities by renaming them with Afrocentric and vernacular names. Mobuto sese Seko, president of the Democratic Republic of Congo renamed Leopoldville (which was named after the Belgian King Leopold) in 1966 to Kinshasa. Similarly, Salisbury of present-day Zimbabwe (formerly known as Rhodesia) was renamed Harare in 1982.18 In her study on postcolonial Nairobi, Many monuments that were erected to celebrate European imperialists were removed and replaced with monuments dedicated to African freedom fighters or emblems of national unity.19 In a further attempt to decolonize the African city, several postcolonial African leaders chose to abandon former colonial capital cities and create new national capitals altogether. For example, in 1983, President Félix Houphouët-

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18 Freund, The African City, 144, 146.

Boigny transferred the Ivorian capital from Abidjan to Yamoussoukro whilst President Hastings Banda relocated Malawi’s capital from Blantyre to Lilongwe in 1975.20

African postcolonial leaders were instrumental in relocating African national capitals. Although, historians identify how the ideologies of colonialists influenced colonial cities, they rarely assess how the ideologies of the postcolonial leaders influenced urban plans. This thesis explores the impact of various postcolonial political regimes and ideologies on urban plans. To simplify the scope of analysis, only cities in former British colonial Africa will be studied. The capitals of Tanzania and Nigeria, Dodoma and Abuja, will be used as case studies of relocated, planned cities. Both countries were formerly colonized by the British with one country being located on the east of the continent and the other located on the west of the continent. The postcolonial political regimes of both countries differed greatly. From 1977 until 1992, Tanzania was ruled as a single-party state. At present, the same party, has ruled the country since Independence in 1962. On the other hand, Nigeria’s political history has been characterized by several coups, multiple regime changes ranging from civilian rule to military rule. Thus how would these different political histories influence the postcolonial urban space?

This thesis also seeks to study what new visions African postcolonial leaders had for the African city as opposed to those of the colonial leaders. As such the case studies of Abuja and Dodoma will be contrasted with that of colonial Nairobi. Like the postcolonial cities of Abuja and Dodoma, colonial Nairobi is also a relocated capital. The British colonials chose to relocate the capital of the East African Protectorate (later the Kenya colony and present day republic of

Kenya) from Mombasa to Nairobi albeit for different political reasons than the leaders of postcolonial Nigeria and Tanzania. Geographically, all three capital cities were relocated from coastal regions to the central hinterlands of the political territories: the capital of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was relocated from the coastal colonial capital to the hinterlands of Abuja; Dodoma and Nairobi replaced coastal Dar es Salaam and Mombasa respectively; while, Nairobi, Dodoma and Abuja were developed on rural sites.

The chapters of the thesis will be broken down in the following manner: the first chapter provides a study of colonial Nairobi. It gives a brief history of colonial Nairobi, outlines the origins of the city and explores the political, cultural and socio-economic agenda the colonialists had for the city. This chapter will also evaluate how colonized Africans fit into colonial urban plans and identify the challenges faced by colonized Africans in colonial Nairobi. Ultimately, I demonstrate how colonized Africans sought to decolonize Nairobi from within, tracing the anti-colonial resistance until Kenya’s Independence in 1963.

The second chapter studies efforts to decolonize the Tanzanian city through the establishment of Dodoma. Picking up where chapter one left off, chapter two begins by identifying the challenges that face Dar es Salaam in the new era. Essentially, it explores in great detail why the postcolonial government chose to relocate the capital city from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the ideology of the country’s first postcolonial leader, Julius Nyerere impacted Tanzanian urban space. Historians commonly note the failures of Nyerere’s ideology of African socialism particularly as it pertained to Tanzanian rural areas. Little, however, has been written on how the ideology translated to the urban space. In my work, I provide a careful evaluation of how Nyerere’s ideology impacted upon Dodoma.
The final chapter is a study of the relocated, planned capital of Abuja. It begins by illuminating why the transfer of the Nigerian Federal capital to Abuja took place. Unlike Kenya or Tanzania, Nigeria did not have a significant white settler population. Therefore, the colonial legacies in Lagos differ from those in Nairobi or Dar es Salaam.

This chapter also explores the main political motivations of the Nigerian government to transfer the capital and how these motivations impacted upon the urban plans of Abuja. Going a step further than the Dodoma chapter, this chapter will also trace the progress of the construction of Abuja up to the present. It will also evaluate the extent to which the urban plans of Abuja were physically realized and thus addressed urban challenges rooted in imperial times.
CHAPTER I.

Nairobi: Creating a White-only Metropolis in Colonial Kenya
The 1950 film Nairobi, produced by the British colonial government, celebrated the so-called development and progress that colonial rule brought to African people. The British commentator in the film contrasted scenes of Maasai cattle herders in rural Kenya with the “great African metropolis” of Nairobi and its “modern colonial architecture.” The film further emphasized 'the great blocks of flats and huge hotels standing where once the skin huts of Maasai herdsmen stood and motor cars parked where once the cattle rode”. Notably absent from the film are the voices and experiences of the Africans who resided in Nairobi. The film does not portray the oppressive nature of the city on its colonized people. Nor does it examine the city as the backbone of the colonial economy, highly militarized and the seat from which the imperial power dominated the wider colony. More significantly, the film depicted neither the agency of African urban residents nor their resistance to imperial forces.

Origins of the Colonial City

Initially established as a rest and supply depot for railway workers, Nairobi was created by the British Colonial Government in 1899 during the construction of the Ugandan Railway from coastal Mombasa to Kisumu. Prior to British settlement, the Nairobi area was a swampy space, mainly inhabited by the Maasai and Kikuyu cattle herders. Upon the British occupation of


23 Garth Myers, Verandahs of Power, (Syracuse University Press, 2003), 33.
Nairobi, the Maasai and Kikuyu were subsequently displaced. The British named Nairobi after the Masai name for the river in the area, *Ewaso Nairobi* translated as “stream of cool water.”

The British saw Nairobi as a “natural capital” for a number of geographical, political and economic reasons, therefore they decided to transfer the capital of the British East Africa Protectorate (later known as the Kenya Colony in 1921) from Mombasa to Nairobi in 1905. In order to provide administrative and commercial support to white settler farmers in the agrarian hinterlands, the British Colonial Government chose to transfer the colonial capital from the coastal city of Mombasa to Nairobi in the agrarian hinterlands. This move was in accordance with the colonial agricultural policy which emphasized the establishment of large white-owned plantations to defray the costs of the railway. The colonial government pursued a white supremacist policy of creating a “white man’s country” in which only white European settlers would inhabit and profit from the Protectorate. The decision to transfer the capital from Mombasa to Nairobi was also spurred a desire by the colonial government to closely monitor and control the African populations of the colony from a central and thus more strategic part of the country. In a 1904 article in the colonial newspaper *East African Standard*, colonial authorities rationalized their choice of Nairobi as the administrative capital:


26 Myers, *Verandahs of Power*, 33.

Nairobi is the centre from which all action will come in case of any trouble with the
native races—and few new countries have been settled and civilized without such
troubles — for it is between Nairobi and the Lake that any possible rising can occur.28

Unlike the humid, tropical and coastal climate of Mombasa, the Nairobi climate was one “in
which a white man could live.”29 Further away from the coast, Nairobi’s climate was less humid
and hot with fewer mosquitos than Mombasa. The new capital thus proved to be more conducive
to European temperament and health than Mombasa. Thus, the British transferred the capital to
cater to European health concerns, to monitor African populations and support White farmers.

The transfer of the capital to Nairobi was a gradual one. In 1919 Nairobi’s municipal
government was established and key Government buildings were erected in 1922, most notably
the Government House. In 1926, an urban plan for Nairobi, which outlined the various quarters
of the city, was drawn up by Baker and Walter Jameson. On March 30th 1950, Nairobi was
recognized and given the title of city by the Duke of Gloucester.

Colonial Visions of the City

British colonialists intended to use Nairobi to tame the presumably wild colonial territory.
This vision was outlined by Eric Dutton, Britain’s colonial clerk and secretary. In February 1926
while passing through Nairobi, Dutton outlined his vision for Nairobi. He expressed a strong
desire to bring structure and order to the colonial urban space:

A town plan ambitious enough to turn Nairobi into a thing of beauty has been slowly
worked out, and much has already been done. But until that plan has borne fruit Nairobi


29 Ibid.
must remain what she was then, a slatternly creature, unfit to queen it over so lovely a country.30

Dutton used highly gendered language to outline his proposal. He likened (pre-colonial) Nairobi to an unrefined, unkempt, undignified woman in great need of direction and training. Such training would come from the masculine and noble colonial authorities. This language was evocative of the colonialists’ desire to steer and expose undignified colonized people to so-called refined Western civilization and culture. Dutton also went on to oversee the development of the cities of Zanzibar, and Lusaka.31

The development of Nairobi was presumed to be the beginning of the wider colony’s civilization. Elspeth Huxley, a colonial writer, a devout fan of British Imperialism and self-described ‘authority on the Kenya Colony,’ regularly wrote about the progress brought by the British through the development of Nairobi. In a 1950 newspaper article on Nairobi, Huxley celebrated the so-called civilization and order that white settlers brought to Kenya:

Fifty years ago, Nairobi was a railway construction camp beside a swampy stream where Masai warriors drove their cattle to drink. Lions roared there every night and game grazed the plains all round in fantastic profusion. Two strips of steel destroyed this savage Eden: the tracks of the Uganda Railway, built to link the east coast of Africa with the sources of the Nile.32

Notably absent from Huxley’s narrative are the voices of Africans, whom she effectively excluded. Kenyan historian Maurice Amutabi, equated this erasure with the exclusion of Africans


from the urban space, which made white Europeans the presumed residents of the urban space.\textsuperscript{33} In her 1935 biography on the earliest white settler in the Kenya colony, Lord Delamere, Huxley presented Africans as the antithesis to white settlers who she praised as bringing development and civilization to the city:

\begin{quote}
The land to which Delamere came was…wholly primitive. Its scattered peoples, grouped into separate and mutually hostile tribes, were pagan, frequently nomadic, ignorant of the outside world and such simple devices as the plough, the wheel, the pump, the loom, the coin; they had evolved no alphabet, built no cities, made no roads; their tool was the digging stick, their dress their skin, their weapon the spear…Europeans were civilized, Africans were not.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

In the above quote, Huxley implied Africans were backward, naive, and barbaric peoples as contrasted with European settlers who were presumed to be sophisticated, intellectually superior and the natural redeemers of the “primitive” African race.

Colonial authorities sought to replicate the cities and towns of the metropole in the colonial city of Nairobi to cater to the comforts of white settlers. In his 1929 memoir, Dutton outlined his desire for a European town within Nairobi:

\begin{quote}
There may one day arise a citizen who will proclaim to the world his pride in Nairobi. It is possible. Maybe one day Nairobi will be laid out with tarred roads, with avenues of flowering trees, flanked by noble spaces and stately squares; a cathedral worthy of faith and country; museums and galleries of art, theaters and public offices.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

Certain colonial establishments were modeled after those in Europe. This is nowhere more clear than in the 1904 plan for the five star hotel in Nairobi that was intended to be “conducted by

\textsuperscript{33} Amutabi \textit{Building as Symbols and Metaphors of Colonial Hegemony}, 337.
\textsuperscript{34} Huxley, \textit{White Man’s Country}, p.v.
\textsuperscript{35} Dutton, \textit{Kenya Mountain}, 1-2.
Europeans for white people in the style they have been accustomed to at their homes.”

It was intended to be staffed solely by white Europeans. It was anticipated that when the hotel was opened at the end of 1904, “there will be a white woman cook; in fact all the help inside will be white, including a white bartender.”

By creating Western-style hotels and other establishments, the British sought to recreate the comforts of home in Nairobi.

As the seat of administration for the entire Kenya colony, Nairobi was also intended to be a fitting symbol of British hegemony. Scholars have argued that the prevalence of European architecture and the erection of colonial monuments within the colonial city served to symbolize, commemorate and consolidate colonial power.

Ikem Okoye argues that the dominant use of European style architecture in the colonial cities by colonizers at the expense of traditional African architecture attempted to highlight the superiority of European power, “the new civility in all its propriety.”

Herbert Baker, the celebrated architect who designed several iconic colonial buildings across the British Empire, strongly believed that colonial architecture needed to reflect the strength of the British empire.

In commemorating British imperialism through urban design, colonial planners intended to symbolically dominate the space and intimidate the colonized populations. Baker subscribed to the idea of "Nairobi — The Natural Capital”

The East African Standard, August 13, 1904.


to the urban principles of the influential British colonialist, Lord Lugard, who declared in 1893 that the colonial officer’s “dwelling house should be as superior to those of the native as he is himself superior to them.” In this way, Baker’s design for the Nairobi Government House (now the Senate House and residence of the President of the Republic of Kenya) was neoclassical featuring Roman and Greek architectural traditions such as pillars, in a bid to liken the British

Figure 1.1 Nairobi Government House building designed by Herbert Baker, 1938, Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

Empire with the great ancient Empires.\textsuperscript{42} Moreover, Baker positioned the Government House on the highest point of the city, on top of Nairobi Hill, to dominate the city’s landscape and further symbolize the power of the Governor of the Colony who resided in the house.

Thomas Metcalfe argued that “Baker’s architectural ideals spanned, as they were meant to join together, a far flung empire that would forever secure Britain’s position in the world.”\textsuperscript{43} Baker’s key colonial buildings such as the Viceroy’s Palace in New Delhi and the Union Buildings in Pretoria bore similar features to the Nairobi Government House, as they too were designed in the neoclassical tradition and were all perched on the central hill of the respective cities.\textsuperscript{44} In his vision for the Union buildings, Baker highlighted the imposing role the building was to have on the African population. There were to be “small partly open Council Place for Native Indabas [meetings], where, without coming into the Building, Natives may feel the majesty of the Government.”\textsuperscript{45} To Baker, the colonial city was an essential tool for celebrating and consolidating British hegemony. He acknowledged and praised Dutton’s vision of the colonial urban space which he described as: “understanding and sympathetic in all things pertaining to architecture in its widest implications as affecting the establishment our civilization

\textsuperscript{42} Myers, \textit{Verandahs of Power}, 49; Amutabi \textit{Buildings as Symbols and Metaphors of Colonial Hegemony}, 335-6


in the new, untamed countries.” Through architecture, imperialists sought to effectively symbolize European hegemony.

By naming Nairobi’s streets after influential colonial figures, colonial authorities also reinforced colonial rule. The main street in Nairobi was named Delamere Road after Lord Delamere, an early British settler, whilst the largest street in Nairobi was named Hardinge Street after the colony’s first Governor. Several streets in Nairobi were also named after members of the British Royal Family such as Princess Elizabeth Way, named for the current British monarch Queen Elizabeth II. The erection of monuments of imperial figures such as Queen Victoria and King George V served to further assert colonial power in the African colonial cities. Thus, the

Figure 1.2 The removal of the King George V Statue from Nairobi, Kenya (1964) (source East African Standard archives)

46 Baker, Architecture and Personalities, 103.

47 Ibid., 339.

48 Laragh Larsen, Re-Placing Imperial Landscapes, 45.
prevalence of monuments commemorating European figures, western style architecture and key colonial buildings on the urban landscape served to re-enforce European dominance.

**Racial Segregation in the City**

The British colonial government pursued a strict policy of racial segregation in Nairobi. Colonial planners designed cities where the residence quarters of Europeans were separated from the African colonized peoples. The spatial separation of races in colonial cities was based in part, on colonizers’ fears of diseases and epidemics they were likely to contract from the native populations. A 1908 report addressed to the H. M. Secretary of State for the Colonies on the sanitary conditions of Nairobi, described Nairobi as “hopelessly unsanitary” with poor drainage systems, concluding that the health of Europeans was of utmost concern in comparison to the other races represented in Nairobi. “The site of Nairobi was a hopelessly unsanitary one that even if it were to late to move the railway town and the Indians it might still be advisable and even necessary, to remove the European inhabitants to some site on the neighboring hills.” In 1911 the British Colonial Office medical advisory committee concluded that ‘it has been proved that the separation of the European from the natives is one of the most efficient means of protection against disease endemic amongst native races.’

The colonial policy of segregation solely benefited the white population. In 1930, the

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Public Health Act divided Nairobi into European, Indian and African quarters.\footnote{Hebert H. Werlin, \textit{Governing an African City: A Study of Nairobi} (New York: Africana Publishing, 1974), 54.} European settlers were awarded the choicest plots of land and access to the city’s finest facilities. In western Nairobi, whites exclusively enjoyed prime real estate, the choicest hotels such as the Norfolk, the highest quality schools such as the Prince of Wales school, recreational spaces including parks, and various places of worship such as the Dutch Reformed Church, the Anglican Church, All Saints Cathedral and the Catholic Church the Holy Family Basilica and the Presbyterian church, St Andrews Church.\footnote{Amutabi, \textit{Buildings as Symbols and Metaphors for Cultural Hegemony}, 339.}

In colonial Nairobi, racial segregation was not only restricted to separating white Europeans from Africans but also separating whites from the “highest class Indians.”\footnote{Luise White, \textit{The Comforts of Home; Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi} [Hereafter \textit{Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi}] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 5} The British brought Indian population to East Africa as indentured servants to work on the construction of the Ugandan railway. After the railway was completed, many Indians remained in the Kenya colony.\footnote{Kefa M. Otsio, “The Voluntary Sector in Urban Service Provision and Planning in Nairobi City, Kenya” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 2000), 67-68} Prohibited from owning land in the rural areas, they settled in Nairobi and dominated the city’s commercial industry.\footnote{Otsio, \textit{Colonial Urbanization and Urban Management in Kenya}, 81.} The earliest commercial ventures in Nairobi have been attributed to the Indians who established a bazaar in 1900. Although they were not at the top of the racial hierarchy, Asians were afforded certain municipal benefits such as representation
on the Municipal council, the right to vote in municipal elections and the right to own land. Europeans, however, still dominated. Indians owned several properties in the Central Business District and the Asian and African districts. Still, British colonialists maintained negative sentiments toward the Indian population.

Colonial leaders and white-settlers regularly expressed their distaste for the Indian population. In 1923, in a letter to then Governor of Kenya, Governor Croydon, Dutton expressed a desire to have a strict spatial separation of Indians from the white residents of the city: “I believe nobody wants an Indian to come and live next to him….If we can prevent an Indian from living next to us, without treating him with injustice, then we should do it.” The resentment towards the Asian population was not heed only by the top colonial officials but also members of the general white settler population. In a letter to the Editor of *The African Standard* by a white Settler, Thomas A. Wood, justified segregation as a means of managing white racism towards the Indian population:

…there is plenty of land available for the Indian, eminently suitable for him, in other parts, where he can associate with people of his own color, habits, and religion, which is much the happier arrangement than having him rubbing shoulders with a different race of people who don’t particularly enjoy his proximity…The Indian must be reasonable—not expect to take possession of this country in its entirety, which would probably be the result were he allowed to settle anywhere and everywhere, and the best way to prevent the ebullition of hatred and contempt, quoted by your correspondent as occurring in other British Colonies, is to continue following the very wise plan of locating peoples of different race, habits, &c., in different sections of the country.  

56 Ibid., 89-90.  
57 Letter. Major Eric Dutton to Governor Coryndon, 1923, Coryndon Papers, Box 3 cited in Myers, *Verandahs of Power*, 37.  
White settlers were threatened by the Indian population who through their multiple commercial ventures, properties and political rights had the potential to undermine white supremacy.

Colonial authorities were arguably harshest towards the African population. In 1922, the Vagrancy Act was introduced to monitor and control the movement and presence of Africans in the colony, particularly in the city. 59 African men from the age of 16 years and above were required to wear an identity card, Kipande, and work authorization documents around their neck. At any moment they might be stopped by any white man requesting to examine their Kipande. 60 Any African who had no legitimate cause to be in the city, was not employed by a white Settler, or deemed a squatter was immediately ejected from the city. 61 To further limit the African presence in the city, families of African laborers were restricted from residing in the city. This resulted in an extremely high proportion of African adult men residing in colonial Nairobi with very few African women and children urban residents. 62

The British colonialists envisioned Nairobi as a city solely for white occupation. The British colonial government intended that the indigenous African populations would remain in the rural areas to provide labor to white-owned plantations. The British promoted white-owned plantations, and gave white settlers the choicest and fertile land. Multitudes of Africans were


forced off their land into small ethnic reserves, allocated to each identified African ethnic group. The white minority population received the vast percentage of the land whilst the Africans were forced to live in overpopulated and often low quality land reserves. For example, the land reserves allocated to the Meru and Embu were arid and plagued with tsetse flies. Timothy Parsons argues that the African land reserves mainly served as labour reserves to support a white-dominated economy.

The lack of viable agricultural opportunities and healthy living conditions in the rural areas drove many Africans to Nairobi. The colonial government restricted many African from owning or developing land for commercial farming. The emphasis on tribal homelands by the colonial state discouraged private ownership of land by African individuals. Rather, it promoted collective ownership of land. Furthermore, increased population growth on these reserves created great competition over resources which heightened social tensions, and further compromised an African individual’s ability to profit from private land ownership. To complicate matters further, Africans who sought to obtain private land in the less crowded reserves of another “tribe” not only were greatly restricted but often had to forsake their ethnic identity and allegiances in order to be adopted by this new ethnic group. It is thus no surprise that thousands of dispossessed and landless Africans ventured from the rural areas into Nairobi in hopes of

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64 Ibid., 69.

65 Ibid., 73

better economic prospects and to seek wage labor. The need for African labor in Nairobi also made it impossible for a city solely for white inhabitants to be established.\footnote{Freund, The African City, 68.} In the 1920s, with the end of World War I and a construction boom, there was a huge demand for cheap labor in Nairobi. Colonized Africans formed the bulk of that labor force.\footnote{White, Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi, 5.}

One of the major challenges faced by Africans in city of Nairobi was the lack of housing. Nairobi rarely provided social services, neighborhoods or even housing for the growing black population. In a 1942 report on housing in Nairobi, a colonial officer, admitted housing was not even considered for Africans in the initial plan for Nairobi.\footnote{Letter. British East Africa Protectorate to British Colonial Office. 1942 folder Nairobi Housing Scheme 1942/3, Records of the Colonial Office, Commonwealth and Foreign and Commonwealth Offices, Empire Marketing Board, and related bodies relating to the administration of Britain's colonies, 533/528/18. The British National Archives, Kew Gardens, United Kingdom.} Housing for Africans, which was mainly provided by the private sector, was really perceived as an afterthought. Such housing was limited, expensive and poor in quality. In 1943, a government inspector described the housing available to Africans as “appalling sub-human dwellings,” whilst a newspaper article described the houses as “old pieces of corrugated iron and discarded oil drums.”\footnote{Letter. Sir Cosmo Parkinson to Sir Arthur Dawe Dated 20th July, 1943. Folder Nairobi Housing Scheme, 1942/1943; Slum Labour,” East African Standard, 29 July 1943.} Indeed, as a city intended for and administered to promote white inhabitation Nairobi was a hostile environment for colonized Africans.

The African in Nairobi: Challenging Colonial Visions of the City
Penetrate the white front a little deeper, and you will quickly find the none too pleasant evidence of an Africa which has tried to keep pace with the towering white buildings. Here, behind the big departmental stores, are the slums and bazaars - but mainly the slums. They are a constant reminder that, although much have been accomplished in 50 years, centuries of hard labour will be needed to adjust the temperamental balance between the old Africa and the new.” - J. K. Holroyd, “A Landmark in Kenya’s History: When Nairobi Becomes a City” Yorkshire Post, 12 January 1950

In the above 1950 newspaper article on colonial Nairobi, the journalist J. K. Holroyd confronted the overwhelming presence of the slums. According to Holroyd, the slums appeared to be in direct opposition to the layout, design and order of the colonial city. In a city that ignored their presence, Africans carved their own space by establishing slums on the periphery of Nairobi. These informal settlements, with no municipal control, posed a threat to colonial authority. Colonial officers were deeply suspicious of the slums and deemed them “breeding grounds of discontent and of future troubles.”

Despite several attempts by the municipal government to destroy the slums, they still remained. Unable to stop their rise, in 1919, the municipal government identified Pumwani district as the first African housing scheme. There, Africans were legally allowed to build their houses in the Pumwani district which was later followed by other African housing schemes.

Africans also found means to defy colonial social policies. Despite restrictions preventing African families from residing in Nairobi, several African women still managed to reside in the city and prostitution was rife amongst Nairobi’s African neighborhoods. In her book on

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73 Ibid., 87-8.
prostitution in colonial Nairobi, *The Comforts of Home*, Luise White explores the different kind of prostitution that arose in African neighborhoods as a result of the housing and labour conditions on the African population. One such form was *malaya* prostitution in which a prostitute owned her own room and offered domestic services to patrons in addition to sexual services.\(^{74}\) The domestic arrangements between *malaya* prostitutes and African male workers was a subtle act of defiance against colonial authorities. In a setting that discouraged the presence of African women and families, these domestic unions still managed to occur between *malaya* prostitutes and their African clientele. Moreover, *malaya* prostitutes owned their property in a white dominated city.

Africans actively resisted colonial policies by mobilizing in labor strikes and seeking improved living conditions. In 1939, the housing crisis reached a crescendo as Africans struck over the high cost of rent and poor living conditions. The Kenyan Governor, Sir Henry Robert Brooke-Popham, outlined the grievances of the African uprising in a letter to Malcolm MacDonald, the Secretary of State for the Colonies and Member of Parliament:

> The present position regarding native housing in Nairobi is undoubtedly serious. The demand for houses greatly exceeds the supply, with the result that considerable numbers of private native lodging house keepers are able to demand rentals which are beyond the capacity of the average native to pay without hardship. This profiteering has led to considerable native unrest which has manifested itself recently in a series of native strikes which, in the opinion of Principal Labour Officer, arose largely by reason of the high rents prevailing.\(^{75}\)

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\(^{74}\) White, *Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*, 55.

\(^{75}\) Letter. Kenyan Governor Sir Henry Robert Brooke-Popham to the Secretary of State for the colonies and Member of Parliament, Malcolm MacDonald, 23 July 1939, Folder Nairobi Housing Scheme 1939.
The 1939 labour strike resulted in a response from the colonial authorities. Several colonial officers began to recognize the connection between the housing crisis for Africans and the precarious nature of African labour. The housing available to African populations was expensive and yet Africans were only employed as casual labor and paid low, pitiful wages. In 1939, colonial officer J. L. Keith blamed the hiring practices of whites for the Nairobi housing crisis, accusing white employers for hiring unskilled African laborers. According to Keith, African labor in Nairobi was highly unpredictable as such employees were easily fired and replaced which produced an unnecessarily large pool of labor and consequent overcrowding.76

In fear of another African uprising, the British colonial government made efforts to respond to the housing crisis. One such response was to further restrict the influx of African labor into the city. In 1939, Secretary of State to the Colonies Malcolm MacDonald proposed that some Africans be returned to the native reserves to reduce pressure on housing.77 This however, proved impossible. Other colonial officials called for a curb on the rent of private housing for Africans. In this way, colonial authorities shifted blame to private landlords who they accused of hiking up rent for Africans. In a 1939 report on housing Nairobi, colonial officer, Major G.H. Orde Brown acknowledged the colonial government’s failure to monitor the housing industry and the high rents charged by private landlords:

There seems to be no indication of legislation to supplement the effect of municipal building; there appears to be a conspicuous need for better regulation of overbuilding and

76 Report. J. L. Keith, 2 September, 1939, Folder Nairobi Housing Scheme 1939.

77 Letter. Secretary of State to the Colonies and Member of Parliament, Malcolm Mac Donald to Major G. H. Orde Brown Nairobi Housing Scheme 1939.
rackrenting by private owners. The corporation housing can be used to set a standard, but some means for compelling the private landlord to come into line are essential?\textsuperscript{78}

As the quote implies, private landlords exploited housing shortages for Africans by charging exorbitant rents. Indeed, housing market for Africans was highly exploitative.

Prior to the labor strike of 1939, municipal housing for Africans was generally overlooked altogether by the colonial government. In 1942, a British colonial officer in the East African Protectorate admitted that, prior to African labor strikes, municipal housing for Africans in Nairobi was not considered an issue.\textsuperscript{79} The Nairobi Municipal Authorities constructed housing to accommodate African casual labor. Most of the plans featured barrack or dormitory style housing consisting of single room quarters with communal kitchens, bathrooms and latrines. This style of housing was suited for single male workers rather than families. There were also plans for recreational facilities for the Africans such as football pitches and a recreational hall in which “Africans [could] play billiards, pingpong, darts etc.. and dances are held.”\textsuperscript{80} In addition, training centers, vocational centers and night schools were also planned to alleviate the shortage of skilled African labour.\textsuperscript{81}

The housing constructed by the colonial authorities failed to mitigate the shortage of housing for the African population. The colonial government identified several problems in their attempt to provide housing for Africans in the city, namely a shortage of building materials,

\textsuperscript{78} Major G H Orde Brown, Folder Nairobi Housing Scheme 1939.

\textsuperscript{79} Letter. British East Africa Protectorate to British Colonial Office, 2 November 1942, Folder Nairobi Housing Scheme 1942/1943.

\textsuperscript{80} Nairobi Housing Scheme 1939.

\textsuperscript{81} Nairobi Housing Scheme 1942/1943.
limited finances and skilled labour to construct the housing. One colonial officer remarking on
the difficult task of providing quality housing for African urban residents, concluded that “it is at
present impossible to provide accommodation which will meet with municipal health
requirements at an economical rental within the means of the average worker.” 82 He further
concluded that the surplus of African labour in Nairobi made the rise of shanty towns inevitable.
The shanty towns would simple “serve as African quarters to European towns.” 83 Recognizing
their inability to provide sufficient housing for the African population, the Nairobi municipal
authorities saw Shanty towns as an additional housing source for the African populations: “[t]he
alternative to municipal housing schemes is to allow ‘African towns’ to be built by the Africans
themselves outside the municipal control.” 84 Employment for African laborers was often
unpredictable. They could be ejected from the city at any point. It was, thus, not feasible to
require Africans to provide their own accommodation.

The increased neglect, disenfranchisement and dispossession of Africans and the lack of
funds or willingness on the part of the colonial government to consider rights for Africans,
ultimately resulted in more African uprisings. The largest and most violent uprising in colonial
Nairobi was the Mau Mau Emergency of 1952-60. The Secretary to the colonial War Council
identified increasingly poor socioeconomic conditions as the source of the rebellion. 85 Several

82 Report J. L Keith, 2 September 1939, Folder Nairobi Housing Scheme.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.

85 Note by the Secretary of the War Council, “Crime in Nairobi and the Security of Towns” 2 May 1957,
INCREASE OF CRIME IN NAIROBI AND SECURITY IN TOWNS 1957-1959, Records of the Colonial Office,
Commonwealth and Foreign and Commonwealth Offices, Empire Marketing Board, and related bodies relating to
the administration of Britain's colonies, 822/1804, The British National Archives, Kew Gardens, United Kingdom.
Africans joined the armed struggle of the Mau Mau in an attempt to regain their land. Accordingly, numerous demoralized Kikuyu, Embu and Meru took an oath and committed themselves to join the African-led militia, self-labelled as the “Kenya Land Freedom Army.”

The Kenya Land Freedom Army promised ‘ithaka na wiathi’ which is translated as ‘land and freedom.’

The Mau Mau uprising soon spread from the countryside to the city. From 1952 to 1960, the African rebels waged a violent battle of resistance against colonial authorities. In 1954, the British colonial authorities engaged in Operation Anvil, a brutal and violent suppression of rebels in Nairobi. Nairobi was deemed the support base of the rebellion and the financial source for the rebels. Thus, the colonial government attempted to clear out the city of all Kikuyus and rebels. 50,000 suspected Mau Mau were forcefully removed from Nairobi. Some were transferred to concentration camps whilst others were transferred to reserves. Historians commonly recognize the brutal torture and war crimes that were committed by the British against Mau Mau suspects and participants. Many African men were castrated, several African women were sexually assaulted and multitudes of Africans were killed.

At a glance, it appeared that the armed resistance posed by the Mau Mau rebels was fruitless. In 1960, colonial authorities managed to win the Mau Mau war. However, the Mau Mau insurgency was not totally unsuccessful. Certain historians identify the Mau Mau Emergency, as

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86 Parsons, *Being Kikuyu in Meru*, 84.

87 Branch, *Loyalists and the War against Mau Mau*, 292.


the ultimate catalyst for the decolonization movement. Hilda Nissimi argues that the Mau Mau Emergency was the turning point in which the British colonial power recognized their limits to colonial rule. She further argues that in continuing colonial rule, the British colonial Office used brutal force, committed more atrocities against the Africans and thereby angered the general British public in the metropole. Other historians, such as Kefa Otsio, argue that the mobilization and demonstrated nationalism of the Mau Mau fighters forced the British to accommodate itself to African demands for representation. In January 1960, the first of the three Lancaster House conferences occurred and thus began official negotiations for Independence. On 12 December 1963, Kenya was declared Independent.

The British idealized Nairobi as a city solely for white-settlers. The urban plans, architecture, and administration of the city were all designed to support this vision of white supremacy. Colonized Africans were denied access to the city. Paradoxically, the need for manual and domestic labor prevented colonial authorities from shutting out Africans from the city. Additionally, the discriminatory colonial policies pursued in the rural areas drove many Africans to Nairobi. The colonial administration’s lack of consideration for Africans’ living conditions rendered Nairobi a site of great oppression to the Africans. Yet even in this hostile city, Africans gained ownership of the urban space and resisted colonial authorities.


91 Otsio, Colonial Urbanization and Urban Management in Kenya, 90.

CHAPTER II.

Dodoma: Translating Ujamaa to the Postcolonial City
On the 9 December 1961, the British granted Independence to the colony of Tanganyika (now presently known as Tanzania) whose decolonization process has been attributed to a man of humble origins a teacher by profession affectionately referred to as Mwalimu (Swahili for teacher) by Tanzanians, Julius Kambarage Nyerere. In 1954 whilst serving as a teacher, Nyerere created the political party, The Tanganyikan African National Union (TANU), that spearheaded the Tanganyikan decolonization movement. Nyerere is also recognized as Baba wa Taifa (the founding father of the nation) as he masterminded the integration of mainland Tanganyika with the islands Zanzibar and Pemba in April 1964 to form the nation state of Tanzania. He served as the first leader of the post-colonial Tanzania.

A self-proclaimed pan-Africanist and socialist, Nyerere is well known for his revolutionary ideology of Ujamaa (African socialism) that promoted the industrialization of rural areas, collectivization of farms and the unity of the global south. As such, Nyerere’s vision for the African capital city was often diametrical to colonial visions of the African city. One key development during Nyerere’s rule was the transfer of the Tanzanian capital city from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma in 1973. Tanzania’s former colonialists, the British, did not view Nyerere’s decision to relocate the capital favorably.

The British consulate officers described the new capital as “treeless” and “a bleak township baking in the arid central plateau.” The British were of the opinion that it was more efficient and economically viable for the capital to remain in Dar es Salaam, an already

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developed city with heavy infrastructure, as opposed to Dodoma ‘a one-horse township in the
centre of the most arid region of Tanzania.’ Furthermore, the British were convinced that the
decision to relocate the capital was Nyerere’s attempt to unravel modernity and progress in the
name of decolonization. The plans for the new capital of Dodoma drew references to the Garden
City Movement which will be further explored in the chapter.

The Arusha Declaration: A framework for understanding Nyerere’s policy for urbanization

In the 1967 Arusha Declaration and TANU’s policy on Socialism and Self-Reliance,
Julius Nyerere outlined the country’s commitment to becoming a socialist state. In this statement,
In this statement, Nyerere emphasized his goal to create a socialist state of Tanzania and its
significance to the people of Tanzania. In his vision, a socialist state was “one in which all people
are workers and neither capitalism nor feudalism exists.” Nyerere’s definition of socialism
stressed equality amongst all members of society and the “absence of exploitation” in Tanzanian
society. Transcribing these principles of socialism to Nyerere’s vision for the city, one can
conclude that Nyerere idealized a Tanzanian city that was absent of capitalist and feudalist forces
where everyone worked equally, were treated equally and had equal ownership of factors of
production.

95 Letter entitled The Transfer of the Tanzanian Capital from Dar-es-Salaam to Dodoma. M.K. Evans of the East
African Department to Mr Campbell of British High Commission in Dar es Salaam, Undated, folder, Change of
Capital in Tanzania.

96 Julius K. Nyerere "The Arusha Declaration and TANU's Policy on Socialism and Self-Reliance." [Hereafter The

97 Ibid., 15.
In this Declaration, Nyerere envisioned the overcoming of colonial legacies of oppression, exploitation and poverty through Tanzanian self-reliance. He also identified challenges to past frameworks for development. According to Nyerere, the emphasis on money as a means to Tanzania’s development by previous Tanzanian development models was utterly flawed and posed a threat to the Tanzanian State. Since Tanzania was already a relatively poor country, Nyerere argued financing development proved impossible as one could not increase the taxes of already burdened tax payers: ‘We realize that the cow has no more milk - that is, that the people find it difficult to pay more taxes.’ Thus Nyerere saw collective work as the way out for a country that had no access to development funds.

Nyerere then critiqued external aid as an alternative source to Tanzanian development. He argued that seeking external aid in the forms of gifts, loans and foreign direct investment was not a realistic means to development. He argued that external aid would not be sufficient to make Tanzania a prosperous nation. He further opined that in the instance external aid was able to meet Tanzania’s development need, it would ultimately undermine Tanzanian self-reliance: ‘Independence means self-reliance. Independence cannot be real if a nation depends upon gifts and loans from another for its development.’ Furthermore, Nyerere argued that any loan received from foreign countries would only serve as a burden to the Tanzanian people who already had little means to repay any loan. Finally, Nyerere concluded that external aid, particularly foreign direct investment, compromised African socialism as profits would not be shared equally amongst Tanzanian people but diverted overseas.

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98 Ibid., 21.

99 Ibid., 23.
Industrialization and urbanization were also major themes in the Arusha Declaration. Nyerere opined that the conflation of industrialization and development was detrimental to the cause of African socialism. Firstly, he argued that industrialization was unrealistic for Tanzania as the country was neither able to finance such heavy capital nor did Tanzania possess the necessary expertise. It is important to note that Nyerere’s negative views on industrialization are in accord with the economic thinker, E. F. Schumacher, a German development theorist who believed that developing countries would achieve development by improving human capital and through modest agricultural centered development policies as opposed to the large-scale industrial policies pursued by the West. Schumacher who visited Nyerere in Tanzania was regarded to have been an avid supporter of Nyerere’s Arusha Declaration. Nyerere argued that even if Tanzania procured the finances and expertise necessary for industrialization such an action undermined Tanzania’s path towards self-reliance and socialism. Dependency on foreign capital solely reduced Tanzania’s agency to develop herself. Furthermore the solicitation of expertise from foreign capitalists promoted capitalism over TANU’s vision of socialism.

Nyerere further argued that the emphasis on industrialization and consequently on urbanization negatively impacted the country’s path to socialism. According to Nyerere, the knowledge of a country’s limited finances influenced policy makers to industrialize cities and towns over rural villages. The trend of industrialization thus favored urban centers and left rural areas vastly underdeveloped. Nyerere contested that the rural farmers, through the toil of their labor financed urbanization and bore the financial burden of industrialization. He further argued

that such peasant farmers were exploited in the grand scale of things, and thus moved Tanzania farther away from the path of a truly socialist state: “If we are not careful we might get to the position where the real exploitation in Tanzania is that of the town dwellers exploiting the peasants.” Nyerere thus envisioned a city to be one that did not eclipse or exploit the rural area.

Another recurring theme in the Arusha Declaration is that of agriculture. Nyerere presented agriculture as the sole means of developing Tanzania. Not only did he intend for Tanzanians to grow their own food he also saw them exporting surplus agricultural goods. He argued that Tanzania needed to make use of the vast resources, it’s more than 362,00 square miles of fertile land and plentiful rain. Nyerere believed that by increasing agricultural capacity through efforts like collective farms, Tanzania would achieve prosperity and self-reliance. His vision for agriculture also translated into urban planning. The urban planners of the Tanzanian capital of Dodoma were commissioned to incorporate several pockets of agricultural land for residents to grow their own food.

The final apparent theme in the Arusha declaration was its emphasis on human capital. Nyerere opined that it was people rather than money that was the means of development for Tanzania. Like Schumacher, Nyerere argued development policies centered on improving human capital and well-being which was the solution to the country’s prosperity. As such, Nyerere urged every Tanzanians to adopt the human ethic of hard work and equally contribute to the collective effort of work. He argued that laziness and drunkenness would prove detrimental to Tanzania’s

growth. He noted: “nobody should be allowed to loiter in towns or villages without doing work which would enable him to be self-reliant without exploiting his relatives.”

Nyerere warned against citizens who were not equally contributing to the country’s collective work effort arguing that they contributed to the country’s damnation: “…And for the defence of our nation, it is necessary for us to be on guard against internal stooges who could be used by external stooges who could be used by external enemies who aim to destroy us.” It was thus not uncommon for TANU to expel squatters, the unemployed, the underemployed and those employed in the informal sector who TANU deemed as lazy individuals from the streets of Dar es Salaam. Such campaigns were justified by TANU as the transferral of individuals from unproductive labor to more productive labor on rural farms.

Nyerere also valued education. He persistently highlighted the importance of teaching Tanzanians the value and practice of self-reliance. He argued that educated workers would be more productive resulting in the greater prosperity of the nation. It is to no surprise that schools were the most common features in the urban plans of the city of Dodoma. Nyerere’s administration and its Five Year Plans have been lauded for increasing literacy rates in Tanzania. To achieve the principles of the Arusha Declaration, Nyerere identified four areas of focus (i) The Land and Agriculture, (ii) The People, (iii) The Policy of Socialism and Self-Reliance, and (iv) Good Leadership. He argued that the sustainable use of Tanzanian land was key to...

102 Ibid., 34.

103 Ibid., 34.


105 Nyerere, The Arusha Declaration, 33.
successful rural and agricultural development. Furthermore, Nyerere believed that effective stewardship of land would enable Tanzanians to produce enough food as well as export cash crops for present and future generations to come.\(^{106}\) He argued that hardworking and committed people, policies of socialism and effective leaders were essential to Tanzania’s progress.

Dar es Salaam and Nyerere: The Decision to Transfer the Tanzanian Capital City

Nyerere’s administration sought to create a classless capital city that would embody the principal of *Ujamaa* (brotherhood). As with most colonial cities, the city of Dar es Salaam was characterized by inequality and racial segregation. European settlers occupied the prized parts of the city, followed by Asians and then Africans who lived in the worst parts of the city. They were plagued by insufficient housing and services. Upon Independence, Nyerere was tasked with not only providing services and housing to those who were underserved by the colonial government but also to eliminate economic and racial inequality in a new socialist state. The Nyerere administration thus had the following to say about Dar es Salaam: “Dar es Salaam is a dominant focus of most development, the antithesis of what Tanzania is aiming for, and is growing at a pace, which, if not checked, will damage the city as a human habitat and Tanzania as an egalitarian socialist state.”\(^{107}\)

The key visions of Nyerere’s economic plan as outlined in the Arusha declaration were related to rural development and national unity. Citing the unrivaled economic development

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\(^{107}\) *Dodoma Master Plan*, 11.
present in Dar es Salaam, the Nyerere administration viewed Dar es Salaam as diametrically opposed to the vision of *Ujamaa*. Garth Myers introduced the concept of the ‘primate city’ to characterize the disproportionate development of most former colonial cities in comparison to other regions. In a primate city, Myers argued economic development was highly concentrated in the colonial city and non-existent in other regions of the country. Incentivized by protecting colonial trade interests, colonialists tended to develop and urbanize regions that were along major trade routes, namely the coastal regions, or near the source of valuable resources, as with the case of the city of Johannesburg which was located next to gold deposits. Located on the East African coast and one of the important connections on the British East African railway, the city of Dar es Salaam, not only served as the seat of colonial government but a convenient location from which colonialists could charter of the colonies resources to the metropole. It is no surprise that Dar es Salaam served as one of the largest commercial centers of British East Africa.

Contrarily, Nyerere sought to spread development throughout the country by means of *Ujamaa* - agricultural development, rural industrialization and the implementation of collective farms. TANU deemed Dar es Salaam as isolated from the rest of the country with poor and unhealthy living conditions namely a ‘hot and humid climate and the prevalence of malaria’ and high congestion. TANU thus sought to build a new capital city that was central to the country

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108 Ibid., 11


111 *Dodoma Master Plan*, 9,11.
with plenty of space from which to facilitate the country’s economic growth. Dodoma, being centrally located in the rural hinterlands of Tanzania, “300 miles west of Dar-es-Salaam and 300 miles from all of the edges [of the country]”, was integral to the policy of Ujamaa. Nyerere’s administration intended to use Dodoma as a seat from which to oversee and effectively control the implementation of Ujamaa and villagization. The planners thus framed Dodoma in

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accordance to Ujamaa and villagization: “Dodoma is at the centre of Tanzania's Ujamaa village heartland. It is an appropriate setting for an Ujamaa capital, where the problems and progress of neighboring villages will be in daily evidence.”

Figure 2.2 Dodoma Proximity (Source Project Planning Associates)

113 Dodoma Master Plan, 30.
Nyerere and TANU also viewed Dar es Salaam as the moral abyss of Tanzania. TANU often presented rural residents, particularly village women, as model citizens whilst urban dwellers were depicted as morally bankrupt, corrupted by Western ideals and irresponsible citizens. According to Nyerere, village women were moral, upright and hardworking citizens whilst urban women and village men were the scum of Tanzanian society:

Women who love in the villages work harder than anybody else in Tanzania…the energies of thousands of women in the towns which are at present wasted in gossip, dancing and drinking, are a great treasure which could contribute more towards the development of our country than anything we could get from rich nations. We would be doing something very beneficial to our country if we went to the villages and told our people that they hold this treasure and that is up to them to use it for their own benefit and the benefit of our whole nation.\textsuperscript{114}

Shortly after Tanzanian Independence, TANU pursued a national cultural policy that promoted a rural and traditional lifestyle as authentically African and Tanzanian. On the other side, TANU scorned the transnational culture and trends adored by many of Dar es Salaam’s youth. Consequently, the TANU Youth League (TYL) launched a series of bans on what the party considered as perverse Western clothing and music. Operation Vijana (translated from Swahili as Operation youth) was launched in October 1968 as a ban on “miniskirts, wigs, women’s bleaches [skin lightening creams], and tight male trousers” with the purpose of “defending Tanzania’s culture and furthering the aims of the Arusha Declaration.”\textsuperscript{115} The TYL set up bands of mainly male members to enforce their campaign against public indecency in the streets of Dar es Salaam and young victims often faced the brunt of the attacks. Shortly after on November 12, 1969, soul

\textsuperscript{114} Nyerere, \textit{Arusha Declaration}, 31.

music was “banned from being played” by the coast regional commissioner, Mustafa Songambele, who felt the music was corrupting Tanzanian youth.\textsuperscript{116}

Nyerere and TANU made implicit assumptions not only about the culture of Tanzanian people but also collectively about the nature of Tanzanian people. TANU argued that Tanzanian people were authentically a rural people who were more accustomed to an agrarian lifestyle than an urban one: “Traditionally, the Tanzanian people relate to small communities and wide rural areas; a dense urban environment is in many ways alien to the national lifestyles and philosophies.” \textsuperscript{117} The above statement made by TANU above was also in accordance with the emphasis Nyerere placed on agriculture in the Arusha declaration. One, however, notes the irony of the TANU rhetoric in painting Tanzanians as non-urban dwellers but rural dwellers. Mamoud Mahmdani, Andrew Ivaska and Frederic Cooper all highlight the British colonial rhetoric that also portrayed colonized Africans as non-urban people.\textsuperscript{118} By presenting a mission to preserve and protect the rural, traditional and authentic identity of colonized Africans British colonialists delegitimized the presence of Africans in colonial cities. The British colonialists argued that Africans were more accustomed to agrarian life and so belonged to rural areas whilst white settlers who were familiar to cities in the metropole rightfully belonged in the urban areas. Thus, the demonstrated disdain shown by TANU towards Dar es Salaam youth bore eerie similarities to that of the British.


\textsuperscript{117} \textit{Dodoma Master Plan}, 15.

TANU argued that the move of the capital to Dodoma was in a bid to benefit rural populations, preserve natural landscapes and build an authentic African city. Despite being located in the rural hinterlands of Tanzania, Dodoma itself was an undeveloped region with limited infrastructure - a blank canvas of possibility. The Nyerere administration believed that Dodoma was an ideal location for a city as unlike Dar es Salaam it was in the heartland of village. Furthermore Dodoma was surrounded with vast natural spaces thus possessing “one of the greatest opportunities to create a new city that is in harmony with its total environment.”

Unlike Dar es Salaam which possessed an non-African (Arabic) name and bore foreign influences, Nyerere instructed that the new capital be built with local materials and: “Dodoma must be a town which is built in simple style but with buildings which reflect the light, air, and space of Africa. It must reflect the future and there must be room to grow, but it must not be futuristic in the sense of symbolizing passing and individualistic emotions.”

To ensure the transfer of the capital ran smoothly, President Nyerere commissioned a Ministry of Capital Development (Wizard ya Kusimamia Shughli za Makao Makuu) on October 5, 1973 to oversee the relocation of the capital. President Nyerere, himself, served as the Minister of Capital Development. Chief Adam Sapi Mkwawa, grandson of Chief Mkwawa of the Hehe tribe who led the Maji Maji rebellion against the Germans and was killed in 1898, was appointed by Nyerere as Minister of State to oversee the transfer of the capital. Other members

119 Dodoma Master Plan, 16.


of the Capital Authority included the “Ministers of Commerce, Finance, Economic Affairs and Development Planning, Communications and Works and Land, Housing and Urban Development, and the Regional Commissioner in Dodoma.” John Machunda was appointed as Principle Secretary for the ministry and George Kahama as the Director General of the Capital Authority. Finally a Capital Development Authority Members of the Capital Development Authority then made several visits to other newly transferred capital cities such as Lilongwe in Malawi. After reviewing several applications from several international firms, including a Japanese firm and a Greek firm, on August 1, 1974 the Capital Development Authority commissioned a Canadian planning firm, Planning Associates of Toronto to plan the new city.

Dodoma, the Garden City and the Global Planning Trends

It is difficult to reconcile the themes of Tanzanian Self-Reliance in the Arusha Declaration with the TANU action of hiring a foreign Canadian planning firm to plan the city of Dodoma. The plan was directed by Macklin Hancock, the firm’s founder and lead landscape architect and planner. Hancock is arguably one of Canada’s most prominent urban planners. Hancock’s most widely recognized design is his plan for the Canadian suburb, Don Mills, the first privately funded planned settlement in the country.

122 Letter. A. R. H. Kellas, British Commissioner to Tanzania to R. Holloway of the East Africa Department, 13 October 1972, Folder Change of Capital City in Tanzania.

123 Report entitled Transfer of Capital to Dodoma, Commercial Section of British High Commission of Tanzania. 31 October 1973, Folder Change of Capital City in Tanzania.

124 Ibid., *Dodoma Master Plan*, 3.

125 “Two Firms Complete Survey of Dodoma.” Newspaper article in untitled Newspaper, Folder Change of Capital City in Tanzania.
Heavily inspired by the North American suburbanization movements pioneered by Clarence Stein and Henry Stein, Hancock’s plan for Don Mills paid homage to Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City. Having graduated with a bachelor’s degree in agriculture and worked in his family’s nurseries, one can further conclude that Hancock was an avid nature lover. Unsurprisingly, Hancock incorporated large amounts of natural foliage, green belts and open space in his plan for Don Mills. Another unique characteristic of Hancock’s plan for Don Mills unlike other suburbs is lack of emphasis on cars. In a post-war automotive industry, Hancock sought to downplay the role of cars in urban space by placing motor roads on the periphery. He instead chose to emphasize pedestrian pathways and bicycle lanes by making them central in his plan.

Community and social relations was another emphasis of the plan for Don Mills. The town was sectioned off into four separate neighborhoods centered around a shopping district in order to facilitate community amongst neighbors. Each neighborhood had public spaces and parks to foster social interactions amongst neighbors. Hancock also featured curved roads in between houses and houses with large picture windows that faced the street to further foster community. Another common feature of Hancock’s design was the sectioning of the neighborhoods into zones: namely the commercial zones, the residential zones, public parks and central to each neighborhood were the schools.

126 John Sewell, *The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modern Planning*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 86.


Hancock also promoted community, industry integration and self-sufficiency. Consequently, residential areas in Don Mills were located very close to places of work. Hancock intended that residents would not have to commute far to go to work. The wide availability of pedestrian paths and bicycle lanes throughout the centre of the town further facilitated the community and industrial integration. Hancock also emphasized mixed housing in his design, seeking Don Mills’ residents to be diverse in social economic backgrounds. Consequently, Don Mills featured different style of houses from apartment blocks to semi detached houses.129

Hancock’s plan for Don Mills had several similarities with his plan for the Tanzanian capital of Dodoma. Hancock’s plan for Dodoma also provided several public spaces to facilitate community and social interactions. He designed the People’s Square to be in the middle of the city as a place for public gatherings in line with the nation’s socialist values. A similar neighborhood structure like that of Don Mills was also implemented in the plan for Dodoma. Dodoma was also divided in several neighborhoods, however, with a more intimate residential setting than that of Don Mills. He designed houses in a cluster of ten houses enforcing community amongst neighbors:

“The basic housing unit of the residential community is the TANU housing cell… The houses in each cell are grouped around a small communal… These provide the opportunity for daily social contact, avoiding the alienation created by many city environments, and providing an informal forum for the discussion of matters of common interest and concern.”130

129 Ibid., 236.

130 Dodoma Master Plan, 30.
Hancock chose to divide Dodoma into clusters of communities comprising 28,000 people each. Each community consisted of four neighborhoods of 7,000 residents each. His decision to section Dodoma’s population into communities were for management purposes:

The planning should be done on a neighborhood basis, as this provides for a convenient frame-work for distribution of essential services like primary schools, shopping, health, social and community needs. This planning concept provides for a social environment for a community development in line with Tanzania's socialistic pattern and over-all Government.
Hancock believed that by sectioning the city like he did with Don Mills, it would be easier to provide social services to the citizens of Tanzania.

Like his plan for Don Mills, Hancock intended Dodoma’s transit system to further facilitate social interactions. He hoped that by placing a greater emphasis on public transportation, bicycle lanes and public walkways, Tanzanians would have greater possibilities of social interactions with another. As such, he placed the public busways and public walkways in the centre of each neighborhood unit whilst placing motor ways on the periphery of the city:

The master plan for the city, at local scale, includes numerous opportunities for social interaction, not the least of which is the busway. This is seen, not only as an efficient mechanical transportation system, but also as an opportunity for meeting and
discussion, both on the bus and at the busway stations. The walkway systems in the communities and the bicycle ways between them, provide similar opportunities.\(^\text{132}\)

\(^{132}\) Ibid., 30.

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**Figure 2.6** A community of four neighborhoods. The furthest neighborhood is 1 km walk from the nearest bus stop (Source *Project Planning Associates*).

**Figure 2.7** Dodoma Transportation Plan (Source *Project Planning Associates*).
Social relations and community were thus promoted in the Dodoma Master Plan through the prevalence of public transit ways.

**Figure 2.8 Plan for Bicycle ways and Pedestrian Paths (Project Planning Associates)**

*The Pedestrian and Cycleway System*

A major pedestrian/cycleway network will be provided running parallel to the busway system, and through the commercial, government and industrial areas and the urban open spaces. This network will accommodate the anticipated, heavy pedestrian and cyclist movements. In addition to, and complementing this system, will be exclusive networks of smaller pedestrian and cycle routes that lie within the communities and other major activity areas, permitting free and direct movement with a minimum of vehicular conflict.

Where applicable, pedestrian and cycleway facilities will be located within a right-of-way of not less than 5 metres and should have surface widths of not less than 3 metres. These surfaces, where possible, should be either gravelled or thinly paved.
Hancock also designed each neighborhood unit in line with his goals for self-sufficiency and community and industrial integration. Each residential section was conveniently located to the community centre which consisted of employment areas, commercial centers, communal facilities and secondary schools (see Figure 2.5). Furthermore, the industrial and residential sectors were closely connected by bus ways, pedestrian paths and bicycle lanes, allowing residents to commute to work cheaply without cars: A highly developed system of public transportation, walkways and bicycle ways in the Capital is essential to avoid the need for private automobiles. The design of the Master Plan is, therefore, entirely based on the principle that all houses, work places and public facilities will always be within easy walking distance from a public transportation stop (see Figure 2.6). This could result in a city which can become a contemporary example of an urban environment which minimizes the high economic and environmental costs associated with cars.¹³³

Another similar feature the Dodoma plan had with Don Mills was the emphasis on green spaces. Hancock took care to ensure each neighborhood unit was surrounded with a green belt. “On the larger scale, and at a more symbolic level, the city was laid out so as to enable the open space of the landscape to flow through it. In this way every community would be close to major parkland, hills or green space.”¹³⁴ The plan for Dodoma did not only feature public recreation parks but also sought to preserve wildlife conservation areas as well as the natural landscape. Furthermore, green spaces were also provided to neighborhoods to promote self-reliance by allowing residents to grow their own food. Hancock seemed to pay heed to neither

¹³³ *Dodoma Master Plan* 137

¹³⁴ Ibid., 30.
Howard’s principles for the garden city nor to the Arusha declaration which gave considerate emphasis to land and agriculture: “The master plan [of Dodoma] should take advantage of every natural feature that the chosen city site has to offer and should be integrated with existing developments as far as possible.”

Looking at Hancock’s plans for Dodoma as well as from understanding his vision for Don Mills, one can see strong correlations with the Garden City Movement championed by Ebenezer Howard. In 18988, the Garden City Movement was a method of urban planning that

Figure 2.9 Landscape Plans for Dodoma (Source Project Planning Associates)

135 Ibid., 30.
arose from the great dissatisfaction Howard and several of his contemporaries had with what they deemed as the wiles of the European industrial city - overcrowding, individualism, slums and pollution. The garden city movement was an alternative urban self-contained community for the working class society to escape the problems of the industrial city. The key components of Howard’s garden city was communal ownership of land and the prevalence of green spaces. The garden city was enclosed by a green belt to act as a buffer for the growing city. The Garden City Movement went on to be adopted in several parts of the world, the British even adopted the garden city model in some of their colonial cities, for example in the plans for Lusaka and Zanzibar.

Hancock was greatly influenced by the Garden City Movement as evident from his plans. Like Howard, he incorporated green spaces and a green belt in his city plans (see figure 2.9). Similarly, Hancock designed his cities to be self-contained like the idealized garden city. One can also draw parallels between the garden city and Nyerere’s vision of an African socialist city. Similar to Howard’s disdain for the industrial European city, Nyerere had a dissatisfaction with the congested nature of Dar es Salaam which influenced his decision to transfer the capital city. Thus, how effectively did Hancock realize Nyerere’s vision of the Tanzanian capital city?

Hancock’s team used the four prerequisites (i) Land and Agriculture, (ii) the Policy of Socialism and Self-Reliance, (iii) Good Policies, and (iv) Good Leadership to inform the plans


for Dodoma.\textsuperscript{138} The prerequisites of Land and Agriculture were fulfilled by the incorporation of
the natural environment such as nature reserves, parks and communal farms in the Dodoma plans
(see Figure 8). Furthermore, Howard’s preservation of green spaces in the garden city aligned
with Nyerere’s stance of land prerequisite for development. Socialism was achieved by the
emphasis on shared communal facilities and neighborhoods designed for people of different
backgrounds to live together. The principle of self-reliance was actualized through the plans
inclusion of arable lands in all the communities for residents to be able grow their own food.\textsuperscript{139}
Howard’s garden city movement which idealized communal ownership of land also aligned well
with the Arusha declaration principles of socialism and self-reliance. The principles of good
leadership and good policies were actualized through the TANU housing cells designed in the
plans. Each ten-house cell would have a TANU member living amongst them to provide
leadership to the cell members and educate them on socialism:

\begin{quote}
The Cell is the smallest unit, at the grass-roots level. It consists of the people living in a
group of ten-houses, under a Cell leader, who is a TANU member. The 10-house Cell is
designed so that the people will meet and know each other and will share the
responsibility of resolving each other’s problems and of ensuring the implementation of
the policies of Socialism and Self-Reliance.\textsuperscript{140}
\end{quote}

Upon the completion of the draft of the master plan by Hancock and the Project Planning
Associates, underwent review before it was finalized. The plan was first presented to and
approved by the Directors of the Capital Development Authority in February 1975. That same
month, the plan was then reviewed by an International Advisory Panel organized by the United

\textsuperscript{138} Dodoma Master Plan, 14.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 15.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 14.
Nations Environment Programme. Members of the Panel includes experts in the field from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America as well as Tanzanian Ministers. The Panel was chaired by Sir John Overall, the former Commissioner of the National Capital Development Commission of Australia. TANU acknowledged that “[members of the Panel] living in a capitalist, industrialized milieu could not entirely appreciate the social and economic constraints involved in a plan for an African socialist environment”\textsuperscript{141} Finally, President Nyerere reviewed the plans and gave his endorsement of the plan, evidence of the plan’s compliance with the Arusha Declaration: “I believe this Plan, as it stands, is consistent with the ideology of Tanzania…I commend this Master Plan to the people of Tanzania.”\textsuperscript{142}

**Responses to the decision to transfer the Tanzanian capital to Dodoma**

President Julius Nyerere’s decision to transfer the Tanzanian capital from the well-established coastal city of Dar es Salaam to the largely rural and undeveloped town of Dodoma received many mixed responses. Nyerere’s vision for Ujamaa in Dodoma was not only restricted to an ideal of Tanzanian kinship but a global kinship. In a letter A. H. Kellas, an officer in the British High Commission in Dar es Salaam informed his superior in the British East African Department, M. K. Evans of an invitation made by the Tanzanian government to all foreign dignitaries to join a “diplomatic Ujamaa village” in Dodoma.\textsuperscript{143} As a part of this diplomatic village, each foreign embassy or high commission would be permitted to have a building that

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., viii.

\textsuperscript{143} Kellas, *Change of Capital City in Tanzania*. 

59
reflected their nation’s culture and heritage. One can argue that this call to form a diplomatic Ujamaa village was symbolic of Nyerere’s ideology of having a wider global Ujamaa movement in which the various countries of the world performed as one large collective family unit.144

The British were not supportive of Nyerere’s decision to transfer the capital nor were they willing to join an Ujamaa global village in Dodoma. In response to Nyerere’s invitation for the British High Commission to relocate to Dodoma and join a global village, M. K. Evans of the British East Africa Department remarked “I think we should be careful not to allow ourselves to be maneuvered into contributing to this idiotic move.”145 Evans’ harsh remarks reflects the British utter dismissal of Tanzanian efforts to transfer the capital, viewing the decision as ridiculous. One can further consider whether the British dismissal of the new Tanzanian capital also signified a rejection of Nyerere’s ideology of African socialism.

The decision to relocate the capital to Dodoma was branded as Afrocentric and nationalistic motives. According to the British foreign and commonwealth office, Dodoma signified for Nyerere a truly African city whilst Dar es Salaam represented foreign domination and thus bore painful colonial legacies: “more important in the President [Nyerere]’s mind is the fact that, where even the name of Dar-es-Salaam is not African but Arabic, Dodoma is wholly African, owing nothing to the Portuguese, Arabs, Indians, Germans, British or rather rapacious intruders. So the move in some sense an African gesture, a return to “authenticity”, and the


nationalistic motive which is so potent nowadays has proved again compelling."\textsuperscript{146} Besides deeming Nyerere’s decision to transfer the capital as “idiotic,” M. K. Evans goes on to criticize Nyerere’s notion to create a truly African city as ‘African “authenticity” to the point where one takes leave to doubt if [Nyerere] really is interested in development in any modern sense.’\textsuperscript{147} Thus, the British opined Nyerere’s vision for the new capital city as one that would drive Tanzania back to antiquity. Perhaps the British feared Nyerere was trying to unravel all that they had established in colonial Tanzania?

Nyerere’s vision for Dodoma emphasized people and community as a significant element of the city. He had little concern for developing skyscrapers in Dodoma preferring that buildings in the city’s commercial zone be restricted to only four stories. Nyerere insisted that Tanzanian citizens living in equality be the central focus of Dodoma rather than the buildings of the city. The British sarcastically responded to Nyerere’s people-centered city:

\begin{quote}
If need be, [Nyerere] would have Ministers, Government and party up at Dodoma in next to no time housed in caravans or barracks, and the National Assembly in session under a baobab tree. He does not dream of towered cities; he would not be much distress if the new capital turns out to be a modest \textit{kraal} [an African village], provided only that it is full of happy, co-operative and equal Africans; for “small is beautiful.”\textsuperscript{148}
\end{quote}

In the above remark, the British High commissioner to Dar es Salaam makes some rather snarky remarks towards Nyerere’s idea for the new capital whilst making jabs at the “small is beautiful movement” championed by Schumacher. Schumacher also exulted appropriate technology as a solution to development, citing appropriate technology as modest means to development by

\textsuperscript{146} Kellas \textit{Diplomatic Report No. 474/73}.

\textsuperscript{147} Evans \textit{The Transfer of the Tanzanian Capital from Dar-es-Salaam to Dodoma}.

\textsuperscript{148} Kellas \textit{Diplomatic Report No. 474/73}
focusing on a developing country’s existing capacity. Nyerere’s policy of African socialism and self-reliance had striking similarities with Schumacher’s “small is beautiful movement” particularly their shared emphasis on the agricultural sector. Thus the British were also critical of Schumacher’s ideology as they were of Nyerere’s vision of urbanization. Once again the British were unsupportive of Nyerere’s policy of self-reliance as symbolized through the city of Dodoma.

The community aspect of Dodoma was also poorly received by the British. Nyerere perpetually emphasized that the new capital was designed to facilitate community: “I want you to give emphasis to community type of living so that when a person comes back from work he doesn’t live in isolation and separation.” The British High Commissioner to Dar es Salaam interpreted Nyerere’s attempt for nation-building and ujamaa in Dodoma as ‘the focus of the [Tanzanian] Government’s most strenuous effort in social engineering, the concentration of impecunious peasants in small villages (ujamaa).’ Nyerere’s commitment to creating a truly community and ujamaa-centered city was also translated to Dodoma’s transport system. He envisions Dodoma’s transport plan to be centered on public transport and bicycle usage in the following: ‘I would like you to plan for public transportation because the idea of private car ownership in Tanzania is very remote to us. Think also of bicycles in our new city of Dodoma.’


150 Kellas Diplomatic Report No. 474/73

151 Capital Development Authority, Mwalimu approves Interim Plan for Dodoma.
Ultimately in dismissal of the plan for Dodoma, British High Commissioner Kellas depicts Nyerere as an enemy of progress and modernity. Kellas argues that “[Tanzania is] opting out of the 20th Century’ and that by [e]arnestly desiring progress on his own terms, President Nyerere thereby appears to risk losing a race that he does not believe in.”\footnote{152} It is rather intriguing that whilst the British are quick to pin Nyerere as one who is against progress they fail to acknowledge the significant role played by the Canadian firm, Project Planning Associates Limited, in the plan of Dodoma. Before the plan for Dodoma, the founder of Project Planning Associates, Macklin Hancock, designed a town, Don Mills, which bears similar characteristics to the city of Dodoma. As discussed earlier, Don Mills was also designed as a people and community-centered town with an emphasis on public transport and bicycle lanes. The British label these characteristics as what brand Dodoma as a city of African antiquity whilst there exists a Western town, Don Mills with this very same characteristics. It is also most ironic that the lead architect working under Project Planning Associates Limited that oversees the Dodoma plan is Mr R N Percival, a British national.\footnote{153} In addition, the design principles adopted in the plans for Dodoma had their origins to the garden city movement, an urban plan spearheaded by the British Howard. The British themselves adopted this very same garden city principles in the design of some their own colonial cities including Zanzibar.

The cost of the new capital Dodoma was another source of contention for the British. The Tanzanian government estimated that the transfer to the new capital would cost £226million.\footnote{154} It

sought foreign aid to fund the project even approaching the British for funding as well as support and technical expertise.\textsuperscript{155} One cannot help but wonder why the self-reliance proclaiming Tanzanian government not only sought Western aid but sought assistance from the very colonizers they fought for their freedom. The British were reluctant to assist the Tanzanian government deeming the project ‘an unnecessary and on the face of it a waste of money.’\textsuperscript{156} The British believed that the moving the capital to Dodoma would be a lost venture as “the possibilities could be great but it also could be lost though Tanzanian inefficiency.”\textsuperscript{157}

To rid the Tanzanian urban space of colonial legacies, the Nyerere government envisioned a brand new city that complemented rural collective farms, was self-sufficient and embodied African socialism. These were characteristics, Nyerere’s socialist government disassociated with the colonially influenced city of Dar es Salaam. Realizing this new African socialist city of Dodoma was a different story. The reliance on the West for urban planners and financial aid, however, complicated this vision of Tanzanian self-reliance and African socialism. In dismissing the plans to relocate the capital to Dodoma as foolish and African backwardness, the British did not recognize its global validity. After all, the plans for Dodoma belonged to the transnational garden city movement, a movement the British themselves had once ascribed to in designing their own colonial cities. Ultimately, one is left with the question whether one can fully realize or evaluate a postcolonial city without taking into account global trends, influences or even money sources.

\textsuperscript{155} FCO 31/1757 Change of Capital City in Tanzania 1974

\textsuperscript{156} Brief. R. E. Holloway to Mr Evans of the East African Department The New Capital of Tanzania, 2 November 1973 in Folder Change of Capital City

\textsuperscript{157} Holloway, The New Capital. in Folder Change of Capital City in Tanzania.
CHAPTER II:

Abuja: A Center for Unity and Ethnic Neutrality?
The Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970, revealed the fragile national identity of Africa’s most populous nation, a country that comprises over 250 different ethnicities. The war exposed deep-seated legacies of colonialism within the country in ethnic, religious and political tensions. The war itself was triggered by ethnic violence against the Igbo, one of the ethnic groups in Nigeria, competition over the control of oil wealth in the Niger Delta, and a series of military coups. After the war, attempts were made by the Nigerian government to promote a unified, national Federal identity. One significant step made towards restoring the fractured nation was re-envisioning the Federal capital of the country.

On August 9, 1975, military President General Murtala Mohammed established an eight-member Committee on the Location of the Federal Capital of Nigeria, the "Aguda Panel," chaired by Honorable Justice Timothy Akinola Aguda. The Committee was tasked with the mandate to examine the suitability of Lagos as both a Federal Capital and a State capital. In the event that the Committee deemed Lagos an unsuitable Capital for both governments, it was expected to propose alternative locations. In consideration of the mandate and in search of a new Federal Capital Territory, the Committee travelled to all of the country’s state capitals as well as multiple cities in different countries to gather information These included Dodoma in Tanzania; Mombasa and Nairobi, Kenya; Lusaka and Livingstone, Zambia; Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Sydney and Canberra, Australia; Islamabad and Karachi, Pakistan; Gaborone, Botswana and New Delhi, India. In a report published on 20 December 1975, the Committee concluded

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that Lagos was unable to serve as a dual State and Federal capital. Instead, the Committee advised that a new Federal capital city be established.\textsuperscript{159}

**Why Abuja? Reasons for the Transfer of the Capital**

The decision to transfer the Federal Capital was primarily motivated to heal the wounds of the painful civil war. In 1914, Nigeria was hastily amalgamated by her British colonial rulers who paid little heed to the ethnic, political and religious differences of the local people. The British arbitrarily carved up the Nigerian colony in regions along the lines of ethnic and religious identity. Each region was ruled separately under a system of indirect rule so as to foster ‘communal loyalty.’\textsuperscript{160} The Northern region comprised mainly of the Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups, the Eastern region was dominated by the Igbo ethnic group and the Western region was mainly occupied by the Yoruba ethnic group.\textsuperscript{161} The British pursued divisive politics amongst the colonized peoples. Not all ethnic groups were treated equally by the colonizers. Some ethnic groups were commonly pitted against others.\textsuperscript{162}

At Independence, regions of the country that were ruled separately during colonialism were suddenly brought together to form a federal government. It is thus no surprise, that even

\textsuperscript{159}Ibid., iii; *The Master Plan for Abuja, the New Federal Capital of Nigeria* [Hereafter Abuja Master Plan], (Lagos: Federal Capital Development Authority, 15 February 1979), 69.


after Nigeria’s Independence from the British on October 1, 1960, deep ethnic tensions existed amongst the people of Nigeria. The ethnic tensions eventually culminated in a brutal civil war, the Biafra-Nigerian civil war of 1967-70. In the year prior to the war, faced by violence and persecution against Igbos in the Northern region and unsatisfied with the domination of the Federal government by Northerners, Igbo seceded from the country to form the state of Biafra. The civil war was waged by the Nigerian government to restore the seceded state of Biafra. A new Federal capital city was thus sought to foster reconciliation, ensure stability and promote a strong national identity.\footnote{Abuja Master Plan, 30.}

The period following Independence had also been marked by political frictions. The major ethnic groups fought for political power while the minority ethnic groups complained of lack of representation and being dominated by the major ethnic groups. The largest ethnic groups in Nigeria consist of the Hausa, the Igbos and the Yoruba. With each regional leaders seeking greater regional autonomy, political clashes and corruption were rife in the Federal Government.\footnote{Moyibi Amoda. "Background to the Conflict: A Summary of Nigeria’s Political History from 1914 to 1964.” in Nigeria: Dilemma of Nationhood. ed. Joseph Okpaku (New York: Third, 1972), 49.} Thus, to quell claims for political power by the majority ethnic groups, it was decided to relocate the capital from coastal Lagos which is located in the Yoruba homeland and is primarily populated by people of Yoruba descent.\footnote{Abuja Master Plan, 27.}

The Committee undertook a number of steps in order to accommodate the needs of the different groups of Nigeria. To begin with, the committee sought the opinions of Nigerians on whether the Federal capital should be relocated from Lagos through a memorandum published in
the local newspapers. The Committee then consulted with various professionals and organizations on the matter in addition to consulting with traditional rulers and religious leaders such as Chiefs, Obas, Emirs and Imans.\textsuperscript{166} The Committee concluded that positioning the Federal capital in a “more central location would provide equal access to Nigeria’s great diversity of cultural groups.”\textsuperscript{167} Thus, in a bid to subdue ethnic tension and foster national unity, the Committee decided to locate the Federal Capital in an “ethnically neutral” territory, in a region that was not dominated by one of the major ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{168}

Overpopulation, insufficient land space and vast inequalities were some of the other challenges that the Committee identified with the former Federal Capital City. As a coastal city, a former slave port and the administrative center of the colonial government, British colonialists invested most in the economic infrastructures of Lagos than any other part of the country. The Northern regions of Nigeria, particularly were most deprived and underdeveloped in comparison.\textsuperscript{169} From colonial times until the present, Lagos remains the economic hub of Nigeria. Since Nigeria’s Independence, the city of Lagos had been growing at a rapid rate. With little economic prospects or infrastructure in the rural areas and other towns, thousands of Nigerians flocked into the city of Lagos with hopes of a better future. The population of Lagos

\textsuperscript{166} Nnamdi Elleh, \textit{Abuja: The Single Most Ambitious Urban Design Project of the 20th Century}, [Hereafter \textit{Abuja}], (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2001), 22.

\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Abuja Master Plan}, 27.

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., 27, 30

\textsuperscript{169} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 116-128.
grew astronomically from 230, 256 in 1950 to 665,246 in 1963.\(^{170}\) The Committee believed a new Federal capital would stimulate Nigeria’s interior development, promote economic infrastructure in areas other than Lagos and provide job opportunities for Nigerians.\(^{171}\)

Lagos was also cited by the Committee as a city of great inequalities in which Lagosians of lower classes experienced a poorer quality of life in contrast to their wealthier counterparts. Lagos boasted wealthy suburbs as well as some of largest slums in Africa. These inequalities however dated back to colonial times in which the wealthier, underpopulated “Island” of Lagos (consisting of multiple islands such as Victoria Island, Lagos Island, Ikoyi,) was exclusively inhabited by British colonialists and expatriates. Contrastingly, colonized Africans were restricted to mainland Lagos which bore slums that were overpopulated, ungoverned and bore little social facilities.\(^{172}\) After Independence, Lagos was no longer divided along race lines but by class. Suburbs such as Ikoyi that were formerly occupied by British colonialists were inhabited by wealthy upper-class Nigerians. Slums like Ajegunle continued to be resource-deprived and inhabited by lower class Nigerians.\(^{173}\) The Committee concluded that a new Federal Capital accessible to all Nigerians was necessary.\(^{174}\)

The Committee identified overpopulation and insufficient land space as further weaknesses associated with Lagos. With the 1973 discovery of oil reserves along the Niger Delta

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\(^{171}\) *Location of the Federal Capital*, 41-51.


\(^{174}\) *Abuja Master Plan*, 27.
cost, Nigeria experienced an oil boom. The 1970s oil boom drew an influx of Nigerians in search of economic prosperity into the city. Multitudes of oil tycoons rushed into Lagos to invest in properties and drove land prices up. Consequently, the city of Lagos has been challenged with issues of high rents, land speculation, housing scarcity and consequently the formation of slums. The issue of housing shortages could not be easily resolved as Lagos is a coastal city with little room for expansion except through the expensive process of land filling. The Committee characterized Lagos as a filthy, crowded, and overpopulated city. Her transit ways were perpetually congested with vehicles causing commuters to spend several hours in traffic.\textsuperscript{175} The Committee thus sought a new Federal capital with sufficient land area for future expansion.

Crime and moral degradation were other issues, the Committee associated with Lagos. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lagos notably had a high prevalence of corruption, organized crime syndicates and “Area boys” (youth gangs). In a study on crime in Lagos and Ibadan, historian Laurent Fourchard traces the rise of Area boys and organized crime to the Great Depression in colonial Nigeria. He argues colonial policies hampered social relations of Africans, restricted the economic opportunities of African urban residents and consequently produced more serious forms of crime that continued to plague Lagos after Independence. According to Fourchard, crime syndicates began to emerge in the 1930s in impoverished areas where unemployed African migrants from the rural areas settled.\textsuperscript{176} After the Nigerian Civil war, Lagosian crime syndicates became notoriously violence and increasingly unmanageable by

\textsuperscript{175} Lawrence J. Vale, \textit{Architecture, Power and National Identity} (New York: Routledge, 2008),160.

Indeed, the crime rates of Lagos provided suitable grounds to transfer the Federal Capital.

The Nigerian postcolonial government further justified the transfer of the Federal capital as a bid to counter Eurocentric dominance. The Committee believed Lagos was heavily influenced by European culture as evident from the city’s Eurocentric name. Originally named Èkó by its Yoruba inhabitants, the Portuguese renamed the coastal city to Lagos (Portuguese for lagoon) and thus began years of European imperialism and colonial domination by firstly the Portuguese and then the British. Districts and streets of Lagos were named after British figureheads and colonialists such as Victoria Island named after Queen Victoria and Lugard Avenue named in honor of Frederick Lugard, the first Governor of the Nigeria colony. Members of the Committee argued that a new Federal Capital City represented an opportunity for a fresh start, a city free from the colonial culture and problems associated with Lagos.178

The country’s newfound economic prosperity made the transfer of the Federal capital appear viable. In 1975, the Western world was still recovering from an economic recession. African countries like Tanzania suffered from financial destitution but, in the 1970s, Nigeria enjoyed a season of financial prosperity from her oil revenue. In his book *Abuja: The Single Most Ambitious Urban Design Project of the 20th Century*, leading authority on Abuja architectural historian Nnamdi Elleh, argues the decision to move the Nigerian capital from Lagos was a calculated move by Nigerian authorities to display the newfound wealth and riches

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178 *Abuja Master Plan*, 27.
of the country.\textsuperscript{179} Equipped with immense finances from oil revenue and faced with the deficiencies of Lagos, the 1970s Nigerian government viewed step towards dismantling harmful colonial legacies.

**Movements towards the Capital Transfer**

In 1976, the Murtala Mohammed administration began efforts to relocate both the Federal Capital and state capital from Lagos based on the recommendation of the Committees. In that year, the State capital of Lagos was transferred to Ikeja, a town in Lagos State. In addition, Mohammed ratified Decree No. 6, the Federal Capital Territory Act, and established a Federal Capital Territory modeled after the United States’ District of Columbia.\textsuperscript{180} Covering an area of 8,000 square kilometers, a Federal Capital Territory was carved from the States of Kogi, Nasarawa and Niger located in the central part of Nigeria. The new Capital City of Nigeria, located within Federal Capital Territory, was named after a nearby small rural town called Abuja. To avoid confusion between the new capital city, the rural town was renamed Suleja.\textsuperscript{181}

To oversee the development of the new Capital City of Nigeria, a Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) was created. The FCDA in turn enlisted two advisory panels: a Technical Assessment Panel of several Nigerian experts and an International Review Panel with noted personalities like Mr. M. N. Sharma, the Chief Architect of Chandigarh, India; Mr G.


\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 24.

Khama, the Director General of the Capital Development Authority in Dodoma, Tanzania; and Mr. F. L. Roche, the General Manager of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation. In addition to the advisory panels, urban planners, landscape architects, and professionals were commissioned from overseas to design the new city. In June 1977, a consortium of three American planning firms called the International Planning Associates (IPA) were commissioned to design the Master Plan for Abuja. The IPA consisted of the Planning Research Corporation, Archisystems, and Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd. Unsurprisingly, with the inclusion of American urban planners, several elements of the Abuja plan were very similar to the Mall of Washington, DC in the United States. The British firm Milton Keynes Development Corporation was enlisted to develop an “Accelerated District’ for upper and middle class residents whilst

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182 Abuja Master Plan, iii.

183 Ibid., i.
Greek engineering firm Doxiadis Associates were charged with creating a master plan for the Federal Capital Territory in its entirety.\textsuperscript{184} Japanese architect and member of the Congrès International d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM), Kenzo Tange also served as the lead architect and urban designer for the Central area in Abuja. Tange’s firm, Kenzo Tange & URTEC were awarded the contract for Abuja over the Canadian firm, Project Planning Associates who

\textsuperscript{184} Vale, \textit{Architecture, Power and National Identity}, 157.
designed the Master Plan of Dodoma, Tanzania. The plans of the central new Federal Capital of Nigeria featured modernist skyscrapers, ornate buildings and a highly sophisticated circulation system, which was modeled after Tange’s native Tokyo.

The Federal Capital Development Authority issued a twenty-year time line for the development of the Federal Capital City. Occupancy of Abuja was scheduled for 1986 with a planned initial population of 150,000 residents. The year 2000 was the target year for finished construction of the new capital. The city of Abuja was also designed for a targeted population of 1.6 million people and a maximum capacity for 3 million people which was similar to Le Corbusier’s City for 3 Million Inhabitants. This is unsurprising as Tange was greatly influenced by Le Corbusier. The Master Plan was completed in 1979, the ground was broken in 1981, and construction for the new Federal Capital City began. Shortly thereafter, the major infrastructures and first government buildings were constructed in 1982 and 1983. On 12 December 1991, Abuja was inaugurated as the new Federal capital of Nigeria. The following sections will explore the transfer of the Federal Capital in further detail.

Themes and Symbols in the Master Plan for the New Federal Capital City:

185 Elleh, Abuja, 38.
186 Ibid, 52.
187 Ibid., 24.
National unity, ethnic neutrality and equality were major themes in the Abuja Master Plan. The Committee concluded in their report the following:

(i) A New Capital in a more central location would provide equal access to Nigeria’s great diversity of cultural groups.
(ii) A New Capital is desirable that would be secure, ethnically neutral, centrally accessible, comfortable and healthful, and possess adequate land natural resources to provide a promising base for urban development.
(iii) A New Capital is needed as a symbol of Nigeria’s aspirations for unity and greatness.\textsuperscript{190}

Based on these key conclusions, Abuja was seen as an ideal site for a Federal Capital City. The new Federal capital Territory and City were purposefully located in the center of the country in a region that was populated by three minority ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{191}

Federal Government and the commitment to democracy are other major themes in the Abuja Master Plan. On 13 February 1976, Military President Mohamed was assassinated in a failed coup and was replaced by his deputy General Olusegun Obasanjo. Obasanjo handed over military to civilian rule and in October 1st 1979, President Alhaji Shehu Shagari was elected. The return to civilian rule was also marked by the publication of the Abuja Master Plan in 1979. In addition, a new democratic Constitution based on the American constitution was drafted that year. The new Shagari administration actively pursued the transfer of the Federal Capital. The administration notably contracted Tange as the head urban designer and architect of the central area of Abuja.\textsuperscript{192} The publication of the Abuja Master Plan, the draft of the new democratic

\textsuperscript{190} Location of the Federal Capital, iii.

\textsuperscript{191} Abuja Master Plan, 24.

\textsuperscript{192} Elleh, Abuja, 94.
Constitution and the election of a civilian government in the same year, all indicated Nigeria’s return to democracy.\textsuperscript{193}

The planners of Abuja were charged to design an administrative capital city that gave great emphasis to the Federal government. The founding purpose of the Abuja Master Plan was “to organize the principal elements of both the natural and the built environments to emphasize the symbolic aspects of the government of Nigeria.”\textsuperscript{194} Abuja was thus designed as a central city, with the Federal government buildings occupying the Central Area of the city: “[t]he Central Area Plan should acknowledge the special nature of the seat of Federal Government as a major symbol of Nigerian unity.”\textsuperscript{195}

To give significance to the Federal Government, the planners took advantage of the topography of the land. The planners believed that placing Abuja’s government buildings on hills, was consciously “[i]n contrast to the very formal malls of Brasilia and Washington, the New Federal Capital City Mall is structured in response to the natural environment and uses the chain of low hills and transverse shallow valleys to emphasize the key public buildings.”\textsuperscript{196} The focal point of the city of Abuja is Aso Rock, a large granite rock that towers over the city. At the foot of Aso rock lies the Three Arm Zone: the Presidential Complex, the National Assembly Complex and the Supreme Court complex.\textsuperscript{197} As a Federal republic, Nigeria’s three arms of

\textsuperscript{193} Vale, \textit{Architecture, Power and National Identity}, 162.

\textsuperscript{194} \textit{Abuja Master Plan}, 82.

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 102.

\textsuperscript{196} Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{197} Vale, \textit{Architecture, Power and National Identity}, 134-135; Elleh, \textit{Abuja}, 33-4.
power comprise of the President, the National Assembly (the Senate and the House of Representatives) and the Supreme Court. The three Federal government buildings were strategically placed at the foot of Aso rock: “[a] dignified location for the seat of National Government placed in a prominent location emphasized by an axial focus on the highest point of Aso Hill.”198 The careful consideration given to key Federal Government buildings was aimed at attributing significance to the Federation.

Another major focus of the Abuja master plan was the culture and different traditions of Nigeria. The planners sought to pay homage to the different religious, ethnic and cultural practices represented in Nigeria. They noted that the ‘major shortcoming’ in the planning of most postcolonial cities was the ignoring of indigenous architecture and urban patterns.199 Most of the planned cities that the Committee on the Federal Capital visited such as Brasilia were modernist

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198 Abuja Master Plan, 4.

199 Abuja Master Plan, 65.

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Figure 3.3 Axiality of Aso Rock. Three Arm Zone buildings are aligned along the Axis of Aso Rock (Source International Planning Association)
in nature with little reference of indigenous architectural practices. The planners thus set the following mandate for the Abuja Master Plan: “[T]he New Capital City of Nigeria must preserve

Figure 3.4 Model of Central Area of Abuja with Aso Rock in the background. (Source International Planning Associates)

\(^{200}\) Ibid., 27.
and build on that which is unique and valuable in Nigeria’s urban tradition.”\textsuperscript{201} To gain inspiration for the Abuja Plan, the planners visited multiple towns in Nigeria including savannah towns, forest towns and new towns (colonial towns).

The planners sought to incorporate traditional architecture and recreate the various observed urban traditions in the Abuja plan. One such tradition the planners recreated in Abuja was designing a central city in which districts consisting of residential areas and small industries were placed on the periphery and the seat of power, the Federal Government, were placed in the central area of the city. Most ancient Nigerian cities are single center cities with the ruling power of the city such as the Emir or the Oba, residing and ruling from the center of the city. The palace of the traditional ruler, however, would be enclosed in a wall.\textsuperscript{202} The Three Arm Zone in the Abuja Master Plan on the contrary was not enclosed in a wall, breaking with Nigeria’s precolonial urban traditions. Another tradition adopted by the Abuja planners was the incorporation of gateways into the central area of Abuja. Most ancient cities in Nigeria are

\textbf{Figure 3.5 Gateways into Central Area of Abuja.}
(Source \textit{International Planning Associates})

\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., 65.

\textsuperscript{202} Ibid., 102-4.
walled with gateways that restrict entrance into the city. Although the city of Abuja is not walled, planners of Abuja adopted their own gateways which consisted of roads from the residential areas and districts entering into the Central Area of Abuja (see figure 3.5).\(^{203}\) The entrance into the city of Abuja is marked by a modern free-standing gate (see figure 3.6).

![Abuja City Gate](atlantablackstar.com)

**Figure 3.6** Abuja City Gate (Source atlantablackstar.com)

**Comparison between Abuja and Dodoma**

The plans for Abuja can be contrasted with those of the new Capital of Tanzania, Dodoma. The plans for Dodoma were drawn up around the same time as those of Abuja and the planners were also Western (the Canadian planning firm Planning Associates of Toronto headed by planner Macklin Hancock led the design of Dodoma). Similarly, the plan for Dodoma resembled a city in the foreign planner’s homeland (Dodoma bore similarities with the Canadian *\footnote{Ibid., 12.}
town of Don Mills). The plans for Dodoma, however, were more modest than their Abuja counterpart and featured simple, single story buildings. Unlike Nigeria, Tanzania did not experience an oil boom, rather the Tanzanian President, Julius Nyerere, described his country as impoverished. Nyerere insisted that the new capital of his country would be built with minimum costs and built within the country’s means. As such buildings were limited to a maximum of four stories and restricted from having costly features such as air conditioning and elevators. Nyerere did not want investment in the capital city to come at the expense of development of the rural areas. Thus, Dodoma was designed as low cost city that would compliment and not overshadow the rural areas. His economic plans focused on socialism developing the rural areas over the city hence his reluctance to develop a grandiose capital city. In a bid to limit private property ownership, Dodoma’s circulation plan de-emphasized the use of automobiles in but instead featured bus lanes, bicycle lanes and pedestrian paths. The Abuja master plan on the other hand was less socialist and catered for private car ownership as noted by Omar Take a principal in Kenzo Tange’s firm: “Opinions differ, but we think that human nature is such that people working in this capital will want the social status of a car. It might not happen, but in the event that it does, it is already taken care of.” As is evident in this quote, the Abuja master plan was designed for a more prosperous resident, one who would own a car.

204 Nyerere, The Arusha Declaration, 15.
205 Ibid., 28.
206 Dodoma Master Plan, 137.
The Tanzanian postcolonial government also decided to relocate the Tanzanian capital from the coast to the center of the country. Unlike the case of Abuja, the transfer of the Tanzanian capital to the central region was not in a bid to mitigate ethnic tensions. Rather, the Tanzanian postcolonial government argued the transfer was in a bid to oversee the country’s economic development which Nyerere believed would only come through agricultural production. Nyerere’s government pursued a policy of *Ujamaa* (African socialism) which saw the formation of collective farms in a policy of rural and agricultural development. By relocating the capital to Dodoma which was located in the rural heartland, the government intended to monitor the implementation of the *Ujamaa* program. Furthermore, the Tanzanian postcolonial government argued that the transfer of the capital was motivated by a desire to develop the interior of the country. The colonialists had heavily invested in the infrastructure of the former capital, Dar es Salaam, and neglected other regions of the country. Similar to the case of Abuja, the Tanzanian postcolonial government also associated Dar es Salaam with the terrors of the colonial regime: the city’s un-African name, racial segregation, inequality, moral degradation and colonial exploitation. The new capital city of Dodoma was idealized as the antithesis of Dar es Salaam, an authentic African city of equality and hope. The *Arusha Declaration*, a state address given by President Nyerere, influenced the design of Dodoma. The major themes of the Arusha Declaration such as self-reliance and agriculture were used as pointers in the plan for Dodoma.

One major similarity between Dodoma and Abuja is the abundance of green space in the Master Plans. Based on the *Arusha Declaration* and the emphasis on self-reliance, rural development and land, the Dodoma Master Plan featured vast green spaces. The abundance of

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unoccupied land served as communal land for residents of Dodoma to grow their own food as well as to symbolize agriculture and the significance of land in Tanzania’s development. The inclusion of green spaces in the Abuja Master Plan was intended as a buffer to the growing city. This was a principle from modernist architects such as Le Corbusier. Tange, the urban designer of the Central Area, was a devotee of Le Corbusier and thus featured a National Arboretum at the foot of Aso Rock, dividing Aso rock from the Three Arm Zone: “the space between the crest of Aso Hill and the National Assembly building is proposed as a National Monument Area to protect it from development.”

In addition to the National Arboretum, the Abuja Master Plan featured multiple national parks and Wilderness Preserves to serve as both a buffer and a conservation space.

The British were supportive of the decision to transfer the Federal capital to Abuja. In a 1981 newspaper article, British Business projected the Federal capital move to be profitable to British contractors and businessmen. In a letter to the British Department of Trade, Gordon Duggan counsellor at the British High Commission in Nigeria wrote: “Abuja is a vast project of immense political importance and significant economic importance to Nigeria and potentially to British business. I think that we must take it seriously and not be overwhelmed by the sceptics who snipe at it from afar in the opinion of the FCDA staff.” Several British officers acknowledged the possibility for British businesses to be awarded contracts. The British Commission also sought to support Milton Keynes, the only British firm contracted by the Abuja Master Plan.

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209 Abuja Master Plan, 8

210 “Abuja will it be Britain’s Missed Chance?” British Business Sept. 1981

211 Letter, Gordon A Duggan, Economic and Commercial Department, British High Commission to Dennis R Ford, Department of Trade, File Nigeria: development of new federal capital city at Abuja.
Nigerian government for the construction of Abuja. On the other hand, the British were against the transfer of the capital from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma, seeing it as foolish, unproductive and a waste of resources.

The difference in British opinion towards Dodoma and Abuja, can be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, the British perceived different investment prospects in both cities. At the time of the decision to transfer the Federal capital, the oil-driven Nigerian economy was thriving and more economically viable to foreign investors. Tanzania, on the other hand was not experiencing economic growth and was not as attractive to British foreign investors. Furthermore, the British deemed the transfer of the Tanzanian capital as an anti-modern gesture. Nyerere’s views on self-reliance, rural development (as explored earlier in Chapter 2), were quite unlike the Industrial policies pursued by most Western countries and postcolonial countries in the 1970s. During that time period, neither the Nigerian military nor the civilian governments pursued economic policies similar to those of Tanzania. Similarly, the Abuja Master plan did not feature cultivation areas like those in the Dodoma Master Plan. Thus, the British equated Dodoma as one of antiquity modern

Were the Vision and Plan for Abuja realized?

The plans for Abuja were jeopardized and foiled by various military coups and dictators. Nigeria’s political history since the decision to transfer the Capital in 1976 was a very turbulent and complicated one. Shagari was an avid supporter of the decision to transfer the Federal

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213 *Dodoma Master Plan*, 137.
Capital. In 1981, under Shagari’s rule, construction of the Federal Capital began. In his zeal for the new Federal Capital City, Shagari moved into the city before the city’s completion. The Shagari regime, however, would not rule to see the Abuja Master Plan come into full fruition. In the early 1980s, world prices of oil began to drop and the Nigerian economy was weakened. In a 1981 study on Nigeria’s economic development, the International Labor Organization concluded that despite decades of economic growth stimulated by the oil boom, the standard of living in Nigerian were pitifully low. Nigerian citizens widely accused the Shagari administration of mismanagement of funds, corruption and greed. Most notably, Shagari’s administration were reported to have rigged the August-September 1983 election in which he was re-elected. In December, 1984, Shagari was overthrown and arrested in Abuja in the Shagari Presidential villa in a coup led by Generals Muhammudu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon. Buhari preferred to govern the country from the Dodan military barracks in Lagos. Furthermore, Buhari stalled the transfer of the capital. The Buhari regime associated Abuja with the excesses and corruption of the Shagari regime and construction stopped. Notably, the Shagari government had awarded several fraudulent contracts in the construction of Abuja with little to show for it.

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patronage and waste.” Buhari’s rule, however, was short lived and he was removed by another military coup led by Ibrahim Babangida in 1985.²¹⁹

Babangida was supportive of the transfer of the Capital to Abuja. Thus, in 1991, he transferred the Federal Government to Abuja and officially declared Abuja the Federal Capital City of Nigeria.²²⁰ As Shagari was arrested in the Presidential villa, Babangida stigmatized the Presidential villa and chose instead to erect a new presidential complex closer to Aso Rock and right in the middle of the national arboretum.²²¹ Thus began the various alterations and changes made to the plan of Abuja. Babangida awarded land to his supporters in the national arboretum. During Babangida’s reign, Tange was also displaced as urban designer and lead architect. In 1993, Babaganda stepped down from power, and chose Ernest Shonekon to take over his presidency. A year later, General Sani Abacha overthrew Shonekon in a bloodless coup. Abacha famously altered Tange’s design for the National Assembly Complex, this will be explored later in the chapter. Both Babangida and Abacha built military barracks in allocated green spaces and national parks.”²²² Both military leaders awarded land to their supporters in national parks.

With the sudden death of Abacha in 1998, democratic rule was restored. Abacha’s successor, General Abdulsalami Alhaji Abubakar paved the way for a new democratic constitution and multiparty elections in 1999.²²³ A political prisoner under Abacha, Olusegun


²²⁰ Elleh, Abuja, 94.

²²¹ Ibid., 48-50

²²² Ibid., 51.

Obasanjo was elected President, becoming the Nigerian head of state again. Obasanjo dedicated his rule to restoring Abuja to the original Master Plan.\(^{224}\) Obasanjo and Former President Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015), however, have also been accused of diminishing the green spaces of Abuja and fraudulently awarding land in national parks.\(^{225}\) The National Parks envisioned in the Abuja Master Plan were never realized. As of present, phase 3 and 4 of the Abuja Master Plan have yet to be realized. Contrastingly, the development of Dodoma went according to plan as Tanzania experienced single party rule and relative political peace. Nyerere ruled Tanzania undisturbed until his retirement in 1985. He picked his own predecessor, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, who ruled Tanzania unchallenged for 20 years.

Ironically, Abuja was expected to promote a national Nigerian identity, however, it featured mainly the architectural traditions of one ethnicity and religion at the expense of other cultures and religions. The architecture of Abuja bears strong resemblance to the architectural traditions of Northern Nigeria. A major example of this is the National Assembly building (see Figure 3.7). In 1996, the Abacha administration government rejected Tange’s design for the National Assembly Complex, viewing it as too modern. Instead, on 18 February 1996, Military President Abacha, a Muslim and Northerner, commissioned a Nigerian firm, I. T. B. Nigeria Limited, to design the National Assembly building.\(^{226}\) In 1999, the final National Assembly


Complex was finally constructed and featured a dome-like roof similar to that of the Great Mosque in Kano, Abacha’s hometown (see Figure 3.8).²²⁷

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Several prominent buildings in Abuja feature Islamic and Hausa architectural traditions to the detriment of other Nigerian architectural practices. A 2000 *New York Times* article on then US President Bill Clinton’s visit to the Nigerian Capital, noted “telltale signs of the dominance by Nigeria’s Muslim Northerners dot Abuja.” The newspaper article highlighted the National Mosque of Nigeria which occupies the central part of the city and arguably dominates the city’s landscape. Receiving double the funding allocated to constructing the National Church of Nigeria, the National Mosque constructed in 1984 is an elaborate building that stands out against the Abuja skyline (see Figure 3.9). Saudi Arabia donated $4 million towards the construction of


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the mosque. Another illustration of strong Islamic architectural influences is the design for the Federal Ministry of Finance Building which was started by Tange and completed in 1999 by Olajumoke Adenowo of Femi Majekodunmi Associates. The building, although modern, features glass and Islamic arches and pillars (see figure 3.10). One can draw comparisons to the prominence given to European cultures and figureheads in the colonial city. The dominance of one ethnic and religious group on the cultural landscape of Abuja complicated the mandate of creating an ethnically neutral city that was commemorative of Nigeria’s ethnic diversity.

Another major failure of Abuja is the vast inequalities that exist in the city. Ironically, Abuja is not segregated by race like colonial Lagos, it is segregated by class. Abuja is one of the most expensive cities to live in the continent. The price of property is exorbitant and the prices of rent astronomical. Healthcare and education are very costly with the city being home to most of

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the country’s elite private schools.\textsuperscript{231} The existing housing deficit for the lower and middle class in Abuja has been widely noted.\textsuperscript{232} As in Lagos, there are a plethora of slums in Abuja erected by lower class residents. The Federal Capital Development Authority controversially has taken a hardline stance against slums and is known to bulldoze slums.\textsuperscript{233} The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory from 1986 to 1989, Air Commodore Hamza Abdullahi, expressed his distaste at slums:

It is impossible for slums to develop here in Abuja. Every inch of the city has been predetermined. The way and manner of the structure does not allow anybody to go out of this original plan. If we give you a plot, you have a boundary for the plot and you cannot exceed that. There is what is called our land-use plan and this is our bible. We follow it carefully. There is absolutely no room for anybody to just start building substandard structures. It is impossible.\textsuperscript{234}

Nasir el-Rufai, the Minister of the Capital Territory from 2003 to 2007 also took a similar stance against the less privileged residents of Abuja: “We are not saying Abuja is not for poor people, but it is definitely not a city for idlers either.”\textsuperscript{235} Thus just as part of colonial Lagos were only made accessible to certain races, the city of Abuja has been made accessible to only those of a particular class.


\textsuperscript{233} Myers, \textit{African Cities}, 63-4.

\textsuperscript{234} “Abuja Is Now a Reality,” interview with Air Commodore Hamza Abdullahi, conducted by Okechukwu Ifionu, \textit{African Concord}, 5 February 1987, 17.

The Federal capital of Abuja was an ambitious project initiated by the Federal Government. It was intended to be a city free of the colonial legacies of ethnic and religious rivalry, socio-economic inequality and segregation. The city was thus hoped to unite Nigeria’s diverse ethnic and religious groups, promote a strong national identity and be accessible to all Nigerian citizens. Ultimately, Abuja was designed to avoid the pitfalls of Lagos, the former colonial capital. The different political ideologies, corruption and greed of several Nigerian leaders stood in the way of the Abuja Master Plan being fulfilled. The military dictators of the 1990s, particularly, made significant changes to the Abuja Plan. Quite contrary to the initial vision, Abuja is now a city of great inequality both culturally and socio-economically. The cityscape is dominated by Northern and Islamic architectural features and excludes other cultures. Moreover, the city is unaffordable and consequently inaccessible to most members of the Nigerian middle and lower classes. The dominance of one ethnicity on the city’s landscape and the prevalence of socioeconomic inequalities were all issues present in the colonial city. In the case of Abuja, the planned postcolonial city inevitably recreated some of these very challenges.
Conclusion
The case studies of Nairobi, Dodoma and Abuja highlighted several contradictions and raised numerous questions in the study of decolonizing the African city. How far has the decolonization process gone? To what extent have postcolonial elite’s ideologies for the city truly reflected a decolonization process? Have postcolonial urban plans effectively reversed the problems of colonization? Are Africans better off in postcolonial cities than in the colonial cities? The primary question in all of this is what constitutes as a truly decolonized African city?

One can define the concept in terms of overturning and challenging colonial ideologies that presided over the colonial city. In the case of colonial Nairobi, the colonial ideology was to create a white-settler city. Thus, the presence of and occupation of the city by Black colonized Africans arguably served as means of decolonizing the city as it defied colonial visions of the city. Equally, Myers’ argument that the defiant act of establishing informal housing and establishing Black neighborhoods in colonial Nairobi by Africans served as a means of decolonization also holds.

Consider when the colonial ideology was racist in nature and sought to privilege one race, ethnicity or class over another. The successful struggle for and attainment of rights by the marginalized group would serve as a means towards decolonization. Thus, the somewhat successful strikes held by Black residents of Nairobi for inexpensive, quality housing would serve as a step towards decolonization. Ideally, the establishment of Dodoma as a classless city in which all Tanzanians of all classes were equal was a trend towards the racist and classist colonial legacies prevalent in Dar es Salaam.

Another question raised by the study is whether one can correlate decolonization with the absence of Western influences. In the study of the planned, relocated capitals of Abuja and
Dodoma, one is surprised by the hiring of Western planners and architects to design the new capitals. Did the use of Western professionals reduce or hinder the decolonization process? To what extent did the backgrounds and perspectives of the Western planners influence the final urban plans of the postcolonial cities? Ultimately, one cannot look at the decolonization process in a vacuum but must look at the international trends that existed at the time. Whilst the plan for Dodoma reflected Ujamaa principles, the Dodoma Master plan also bore references to the Garden City movement that was also popular in various global cities such as Don Mills.

Another significant theme that arises from the study is that one cannot study the African city without considering the rural areas. The African colonial city did not lie in isolation and a lot of the challenges faced by the city were in direct relation to the rural areas. As the case study of Nairobi revealed, the disenfranchisement and dispossession of Africans in the rural areas led to a movement of the colonized Africans. Africans that had their lands taken from them, forced to live in crowded native reserves and forced to pay hut taxes found it extremely difficult to survive financially in the rural areas. To many colonized Africans, the colonial city was the primary source of economic hope and opportunity. Colonial authorities often saw colonial cities as sites of European inhabitation, the seats of colonial administration as in the case of Nairobi or the sites from which resources where transported to the metropole, as was evident in the coastal cities of Dar es Salaam and Lagos. The emphasis on the city, led colonialists to disproportionately invest infrastructure in urban areas over the rural areas. Whichever way, one looked at it there was a great economic disparity between the urban areas and the rural areas.

This economic imbalance continued to reign true post-independence amongst most African countries. In the 1970s and early 1980s, many postcolonial governments pursued
economic policies of industrialization at the expense of agricultural policies. These industrial policies were centered in the cities and subsequently government investment primarily directed to the urban areas. The cities as in colonial times remained the sites of great economic prosperity whilst life in the rural areas became increasingly less economically viable. As noted in Chapter 3, in the case of Lagos, the 1970s oil boom and rural migration drove up the city’s population.

Moreover, in most colonial and postcolonial territories arose the colonial legacy of the primate city. In which only one city is economically more developed, politically more established and far more populated than other regions in the country. Thus despite, the creation of new capital cities in many postcolonial cities in Africa, primate cities still remain. The primate city of Nigeria till this day is Lagos which is also Africa’s most populous city. In 2015, the National Population Commission of Nigeria estimated the population of metropolitan Lagos to be 21 million people.236 With the transfer of the national capital to Abuja, Lagos is no longer the seat of the Federal government. Lagos, however, still is the financial hub of the city. Despite Nyerere’s promotion of the rural areas and conscious downplaying of Dar es Salaam, the city still remains the primate city of Tanzania. In 2012, the Tanzanian National Bureau of Statistics estimated the city’s population to be 4,364,541.237 Despite the transfer of the capital to Dodoma, Dar es Salaam remains both the political and economic center of the country.238 Nairobi continues to remain unrivaled as Kenya’s primate city and is according to 2009 UN statistics is

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estimated to have a population of 3,133,518.\textsuperscript{239} Several problems of the African primate city that were identified by early postcolonial leaders have only been exacerbated. Overpopulation, housing shortages, high rent and congestion remain problems in Lagos, Dar es Salaam, and Kenya. It is not uncommon for Lagosians to commute 4 hours in traffic in order to work.\textsuperscript{240} Clearly, urban challenges are not easily resolved.

Postcolonial theorist Franz Fanon critiqued the postcolonial emphasis on the city at the expense of the rural area. In his book on the post-colony, Fanon argued that the focus on the city itself by postcolonial leaders simply mimicked colonial policies and was “[a] commercial notion inherited from the colonial period.”\textsuperscript{241} Fanon further argued that ideologies of the city did not change since most postcolonial elite desired to inherit and/or replicate the colonial space: “The look that the native turns on the settler’s town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses His dreams of possession - all manner of possession: to sit at the settler’s table, to sleep in the settler’s bed, with his wife if possible…there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler’s place.”\textsuperscript{242} Similarly, in his argument on the postcolonial space Achille Mbembe asks “have we really entered another period, or do we find the same theater, the same mimetic acting, with different actors and spectators, but with the same convulsions and the same insult? Can we really talk of moving beyond colonialism?”\textsuperscript{243} Bearing

\textsuperscript{239} UN Data. \textit{City population by sex, city and city type}. Last Modified January 22, 2016, \url{http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=POP&f=tableCode%3a240}

\textsuperscript{240} Emmanuel Akinwotu, “In Lagos, the traffic jams can add four hours to your commute,” City Metric, last modified September 21, 2015, \url{http://www.citymetric.com/transport/lagos-traffic-jams-can-add-four-hours-your-commute-1406}.

\textsuperscript{241} Frantz Fanon, \textit{The Wretched of the Earth}. (New York: Grove Press,2014), 5.

\textsuperscript{242} Ibid., 39

\textsuperscript{243} Achille, Mbembe. \textit{On the Post Colony}. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 73
reference to these postcolonial thinkers, can the problems of the colonial city truly be resolved by relocating the national capital? As Fanon argues, perhaps the problem is the focus on the city. That was the focus of colonialist. Perhaps postcolonial leaders should also seek to reform the rural areas in their bid to undo the colonial legacies of the African city.
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