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## **Informal Land Management in Tanzania and the Misconception about its Illegality**

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### **Abstract**

Tanzania represents one of the countries with the fastest growing urban agglomerations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Rapid urbanisation amidst acute public resource deficits has given rise to peculiar urban housing land development patterns inexperienced before. Over the past three decades, policy makers and researchers have consistently witnessed poor performance of formal (public) land management in providing land for housing, registering titles and land transfers, regulating access to and use of urban land as well as providing basic infrastructure services. The deficits of the public sector have, however, been largely compensated by the increasing importance of an informal subsystem in housing land development.

While acknowledging the inevitable role the formal sector has in urban land management, this paper reports on the actors, norms, procedures and competence inherent in informal land regularisation. It demonstrates with empirical evidence from the settlements recently studied in Tanzania the active role accepted by Subward (*Mtaa*) leaders and organised community groups in authenticating and registering land rights, arbitrating land disputes, checking land-use development and spatial orderliness and providing basic services. These socially controlled regulatory mechanisms are playing an active role in guiding or regulating urban housing land development. They are deploying norms and institutions which are closely linked with the formal sector.

It is therefore argued that the ‘illegality’ notion that is often used by bureaucrats and policy makers to question the legal status of informal or ‘unplanned’ settlements is a misconception that largely seems to stem from unawareness of the regulatory systems involved and from ignorance about the mechanisms and norms underlying informal housing land acquisition, security of tenure and subsequent settlement development. The paper points out the need for policy reform necessary to appreciate the potentials, including the social capital, which the informal sector deploys. It also underscores the unavoidable need to enable the informal housing subsystem to complement the ailing formal system.

### **Introduction**

The literature on informal housing land development has grown considerably in the last decade. The research on the economic, social, and political forces that generate and sustain the formation of informal settlements is abundant. This includes work by Payne (1989), Satterthwaite et al (1989), Arche (1992), Rakodi et al (1993), Kombe (1995), Durand– Lasserre (1996), Habitat (1996), and Kombe and Kreibich (2000).

In many Third World cities, the information available on informal urbanisation remains inadequate. The deficit is about our understanding of the internal organisation including institutional arrangements and the process of the informal self-regularisation. There is also lack of consensus regarding the status of informal settlements, especially the nature of their legality or illegality. The often cloudy statutory nature of the settlements is further complicated by a muddled policy environment and a often lukewarm stance by most Third World governments (Kombe 1995). The fact that the majority of settlers in informal housing belongs to the economically and socially marginalized (poorer) groups seems to have worsened the reputation and increased the alienation of the informal housing subsystem.

Government responses have ranged from passing tough, stringent regulations to excluding informal settlements from infrastructure extension plans to barring their integration in urban or municipal services (Zaghaloni 1994) to outright demolition.

Although bias of public policy towards the formally planned and developed areas persists, hostile attitudes against informal settlements are gradually weakening. More governments are now shifting from hostility towards viewing informal house builders as 'real builders and designer of large parts of cities' (Cheema and Shabir 1993). On the other hand, the difference in infrastructure provision which in the past distinguished formal from informal housing neighbourhoods is gradually giving way in the wake of the poor economic performance and the subsequent deficits of the public sector. A large section of formal housing in many Third World countries including Tanzania is already lacking basic community infrastructure services.

Irrespective of their status (legal or illegal) the following are common characteristics of most informal settlements:

- They are built by the inhabitants themselves and their proportion continues in spite of frequent eviction threats from public authorities. The houses are built with the intent of owner-occupation, renting or both.
- They are built, for the larger part, by low-income urban dwellers for whom the existing formal housing systems or markets are hardly realistic options.
- The houses are built primarily with informal financing methods, i.e. family savings, capital from inheritance, sales of inherited land or savings from informal credit associations.
- The builders employ local building materials, skills, designs and indigenous technology.
- Often builders do not adhere to formal/legal building codes and planning standards.
- The informally built houses exhibit high variations in types and quality of construction, ranging from traditional construction materials (e.g. mud and pole or thatch) to modern quality components (concrete blocks, corrugated iron, aluminium, zinc, or tin roofs).
- They are built and serviced incrementally, ensuring flexibility on the part of builders and owners.
- They can exhibit unique urban designs with significant variations in lay-outs and spatial arrangements.
- Their densities are normally increasing rapidly up to a saturation or over-densification stage.

- The land use patterns are highly mixed, including small industries and urban agriculture.
- Especially in the initial stage of growth social cohesion is strong.

Presently, two thirds of urban housing in Tanzania have to be classified as informal. This sector is already leading in reducing the housing pressure resulting from rapid demographic growth, rural-urban migration and increased household formation. Less than 10 per cent of the land demand for housing is presently provided by the formal housing land delivery system. So far there is, however, no impetus to invest in or adapt the potentials inherent in the socially regularised housing sector.

In the subsequent sections of the paper two cases from a comprehensive empirical investigation of the potentials and constraints of socially regulated land management in Tanzania are briefly presented (see Kombe/Kreibich 2000 for details). The evidence collected in the settlement of Kihonda in the city of Morogoro and in a large informal suburb of Chang'ombe in Dodoma Municipality revealed surprising potentials and a sound competence of regularising the provision of housing land with good prospects for an adoption on a larger scale

The land regularisation attributes analysed include the spatial structure and the settlement lay-outs, land transfer agreements, security of tenure mechanisms, dispute arbitration mechanisms, and land servicing.

### **The settlement of Kihonda in Morogoro**

At present Kihonda settlement in Morogoro Municipality has over 5000 residents. It is located along the Morogoro - Dodoma highway in a suburban location. Owing to its proximity to the main industrial area and good access to the city centre which is only about 3km away, Kihonda has in recent years become one of the most attractive informal housing areas in the Municipality. Besides Kihonda, there are several other informal settlements in the Municipality, putting the contribution of this housing subsystem at over 50 percent of the total housing stock. Most of the housing originated from informal subdivision, and sale of unserviced by customary or quasi-customary landowners. The subdivision mainly refers to the former rural villages, which were incorporated into the municipal area following the extension of their administrative boundaries. These settlements are often referred to as 'squatter' housing by Municipal Officials, ostensibly because they have developed without the permission from the Municipal authorities. Besides, the land use development in these areas does not conform to the town planning standards and Municipal land use zoning plans<sup>1</sup>.

#### *Background to the land regularisation*

Between 1953 and 1964 the land, which now constitutes Kihonda Subward (*Mtaa*) was part of the Kihonda sisal farm estate which was under a long-term lease of 99 years. In 1975, the farm was designated as an area for resettling villagers from within and outside the region who were shifted under the villagisation programme.<sup>2</sup> Elderly settlers, some of whom were ex-sisal farm labourers, reported that during the villagisation period the Kihonda village government was responsible for the allocation of land for residential and

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<sup>1</sup> Discussions with Municipal Planners, Morogoro, June 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Operation Villagisation was conducted in the country in order to resettle the rural population into viable socio-economic units, which were to operate under a socialist mode of production.

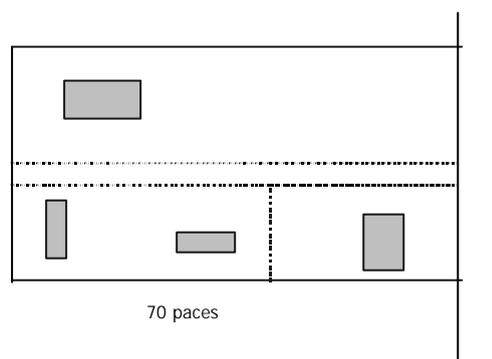
farming purposes. With the support of a ‘barefooted surveyor’, a semi-skilled technician, the village leaders allocated each household one acre (about 4000m<sup>2</sup>) for residential use<sup>3</sup>. The village government was responsible for scrutinising applications from persons who wanted to join the village as well as seeing to it that land allocation was fairly done and land development proceeded in an orderly and organised manner.

### *Spatial regularisation*

Today, Kihonda settlement exhibits a fairly orderly housing layout pattern with an elaborate traffic circulation system consisting of footpaths and several access roads (fig. 1). What is striking particularly in relation to spatial orderliness is that the procedures for land subdivision and spatial development have adapted the pre-settlement fixtures, namely the linear tracks and paths, which were created by the sisal estate owner.<sup>4</sup> The ‘barefooted surveyor’ could take measurements with reference to these tracts or other land marks in order to demarcate plots.

A Village Construction Committee (VCC) established during villagisation directed and guided home builders to phase out and set their houses in such a way that those houses built with temporary materials would be sited at the rear end of the plot whereas the front part would be reserved for a permanent structure. The idea was that the latter would be built as the household economy improves<sup>5</sup>. Today one can still see a number of plots where the front part is still vacant (fig. 2).

**Figure 2: Individual land parcelling in Kihonda**



The dominant land buyers are retrenched employees and immigrants from the various areas of the Municipality, most of whom are tenants aspiring to own a house. When interviewed, most of them said that they prefer the area because it is easily accessible, and the land is cheaper than in the planned areas. Some respondents added that they prefer informal areas because the hurdles associated with formal plot acquisition and development are non-existent. With increasing land values and demand the number of land buyers who are acquiring land for speculation purposes is increasing. A significant number of indigenous (former village allottees) landowners have subdivided land and allocated it to their children.

<sup>3</sup> He was called a barefooted surveyor because he was only trained to measure land parcels using a sisal rope and a bush pole for marking boundaries.

<sup>4</sup> The tracks were initially used by trucks hauling sisal.

<sup>5</sup> Discussion with Juma Madole, Subward leader, Kihonda (Kilombero B) on November 10, 1996.

The motives for selling land and the perception of ownership rights is illustrated in the following quote from an interview in which an informant narrated why and how she had sold her land:

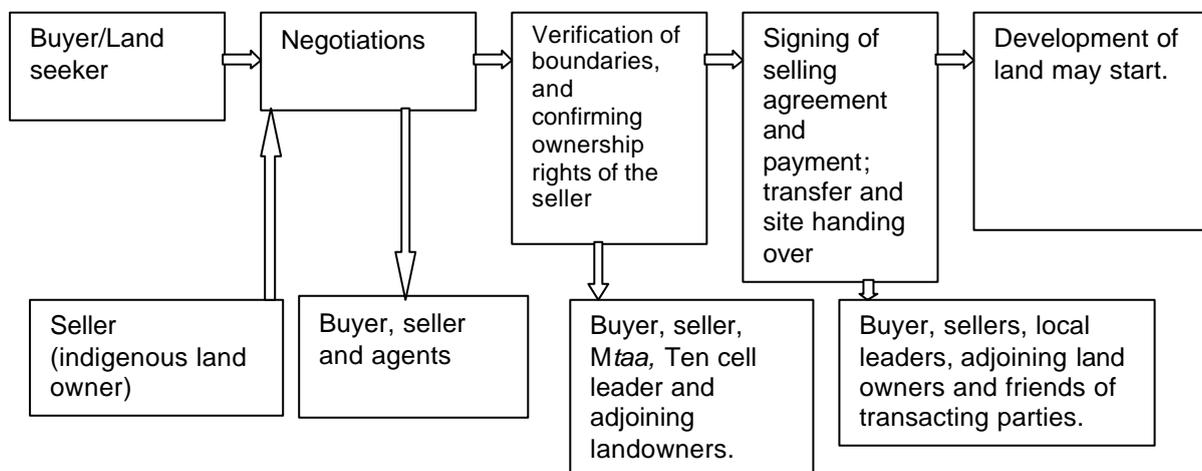
*“I moved to this place in 1977 when my husband was allocated land by the village committee. In 1993 I sold an acre to an immigrant from Morogoro town. I used the money to meet hospital costs and fees for my children after the death of my husband. I later subdivided my land into three pieces and allocated two of the pieces to my elder sons. You can see each one has built a house on his plot.”*

Informal land transactions in Kihonda are highly decentralised, all decisions and processes being undertaken and concluded by the grass-roots actors (fig. 3). The adjoining property owners, community leaders (e.g. *Mitaa* and Tell Cell units) and relatives or friends are involved as witnesses. They are also called upon to participate in the arbitration in case there are disputes.

#### *Security of tenure and land disputes arbitration*

The legitimacy of a land occupier or buyer to own and use land in Kihonda is, like in most other informal settlements in the country, guaranteed through social recognition, which refers mainly to the acknowledgement of the individuals' right to land by other residents in the area, particularly adjoining landowners, local leaders, relatives or friends. The possession of a land transfer or selling agreement form, which bears the signatures of the seller, buyer and witnesses also contributes towards guaranteeing an individual his or her rights on land.

**Figure 3: Land transaction processes and actors involved**



The Ward office at Kihonda maintains a Land Transfer Registration Ledger. The procedures for registration require that an individual wishing to purchase or transfer land consults with the Ward Executive Officer (WEO) to confirm or authenticate the rights of the transferee over the land in question before the land is registered. Normally the WEO counterchecks with the respective *Mtaa* (Subward) leader before the transfer is registered. In order to facilitate easy reference, particularly the location of the land, Kihonda settlement has been divided into several housing blocks. Each plot or piece of land is given a block reference number alongside the name of the occupier or owner.

Figure 4: Land transaction form used in Kihonda (translation)

WARD EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
KIHONDA WARD  
P.O. BOX 166, MOROGORO  
18 - 9 - 97

**RE: SALE OF A PLOT FOR HOUSING LOCATED IN KILOMBERO  
SUBWARD AREA**

I, Mr. EMIL JOHN have sold my land which is located in Kilombero Subward area in Kihonda Ward to Mr. ABASI A. SADALA. The price for the land is TShs. 180,000/= paid in cash.

Payment and agreement has been undertaken in the presence of Subward leadership and authenticated by the Ward office.

**SELLER'S SIGNATURE** .....[fingerprint].....

**BUYER'S SIGNATURE** .....[signature].....

**WITNESSES:**

[Stamp & Signature:]  
The Chairman  
of Subward 4  
Kilombero, Kihonda

1. *Subward Chairman Hassan Rashidi*

2. *Richard Emil - R. E.*

APPROVED  
[Stamp & Signature:]  
Ward Executive  
Officer,  
Kihonda Ward

A close examination of the selling agreement forms in all study areas revealed that a several issues are documented (fig. 4):

- the names and signatures of the seller and the buyer;
- the location of the piece of land being transferred; often reference is made to plot numbers which have been issued by the Municipal Council for property tax collection purposes and also to the respective block where the plot is situated;
- the price for the plot and the amount paid including the mode of payment; and
- the name of witnesses, e.g. local leaders, friends or relatives of the transacting parties.

Permanent fixtures such as trees or sisal plants, are often used to demarcate plot boundaries. At times a narrow trench is dug around a plot to mark the boundary. Overall, most property owners trust and respect these physical fixtures or marks.

Most land disputes are resolved by community leaders namely the Ten Cell, *Mtaa* and Ward leaders. Each *Mtaa* and Ward has established a Dispute Resolution Committee. Cases that are not resolved by these institutions are referred to the higher state organs including the police and courts of law. In resolving referral cases, the Primary Courts often study the evidence tendered by the grass-roots institutions and call the witnesses who were involved during the signing of the selling or transfer agreement. The *Mtaa* and Ward authorities (e.g. the Dispute Resolution Committees) are therefore linked with the formal judicial system, implying that the informal housing land regularisation subsystem has forged functional institutions in the settlements and engendered viable linkages between the various institutional levels.

The Ward leaders reported that most defaulters prefer to have their cases heard and settled at the community level where penalties are modest and proceedings take shorter time than advancing disputes to the courts of law.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Land servicing*

The socially regulated 'bottom-up' planning system in Kihonda was able to provide for basic infrastructure, including the designation of land for community services and facilities, such as a market, shops, a dispensary, religious facilities and a park. Today, the settlement is equipped with a primary school, a secondary school, a vegetable market and two churches. Piped water is supplied from two water kiosks located in the settlement.

In 1969 the Ministry of education provided a primary school in the area which was extended and renovated in 1994 by the residents in collaboration with the Catholic Mission in Morogoro. At present, 725 pupils are enrolled at the school.<sup>7</sup>

Temporary market stalls are located near the Ward office. There are also two rooms for a restaurant and butchery. Most residents, however, commute to the market at the Municipal centre, where they purchase most items for their domestic needs.

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<sup>6</sup> Discussion with Ward leaders on November 7, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Discussion with Sr. Theresia and the school head teacher on November 15, 1996.

## The settlement of Chang'ombe in Dodoma

Chang'ombe settlement is located in the Tanzanian Capital Dodoma alongside the road to Arusha. It accommodates about 38,500 inhabitants living in 5,234 houses. According to the 1976 Capital City Master Plan, the land on which this settlement has developed was part of the Capital City Afforestation (landscape) Plan<sup>8</sup>. Before this area was designated a green belt in 1976, it was a smallholder agro-pastoralist village at the periphery of the town cultivating seasonal crops such as maize, beans and millet. Following the incorporation of the village in the Capital City, the few indigenous landowners who were occupying the land were compensated for unexhausted development including their houses which consisted predominantly of temporary structures.

Even though the Capital Development Authority (CDA) embarked on an extensive tree planting programme which included the area of Chang'ombe and even established a horticultural nursery along the southern boundary of the settlement, most indigenous settlers continued occupying the land. Many argued that they were dissatisfied with the amount of compensation paid and decided not to vacate the area.

Following the demolition of an unplanned neighbourhood in the central business area in the late 1970s<sup>9</sup>, most displacees migrated to Chang'ombe where they easily managed to access housing land<sup>10</sup> and to put up houses of affordable quality. Intensified land subdivision and influx of new settlers from the central area and other parts of Dodoma to Chang'ombe started in the early 1980s. According to the elderly settlers, the main motivation for the indigenous landowners to subdivide and allocate land to the immigrants was to attract and marshal the support necessary to withstand the CDA eviction order.<sup>11</sup>

### *Spatial regularisation*

The trees for the green belt were planted by the Horticulture Department of the CDA in a fairly orderly pattern which was carefully observed and adopted by the indigenous landowners when they subdivided their land. They even directed and guided land allottees homebuilders not to uproot the trees. It was also reported that in order to ensure that no trees were affected during the construction of houses, adjoining home owners often assisted newcomers to site their houses so as to ensure compliance with the set-backs which were generally respected by their predecessors as road reserves. The pattern of access roads which emerged from this self-imposed planning norm followed the existing rows of trees and provided the initial spatial structure for the settlement and the housing lay-out (fig. 5).

The number of houses in Chang'ombe had increased from merely 12 houses with less than 100 inhabitants in 1980 to 751 units accommodating more than 9,000 inhabitants

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<sup>8</sup> In 1973, the Government of Tanzania resolved to shift the national capital to Dodoma. A Master Plan for the Capital City to be was prepared in 1974.

<sup>9</sup> Tambuka-Reli

<sup>10</sup> It is reported that the displacees were allocated land in Chamwino, an area close to Chang'ombe, but they sold the surveyed and planned plots and went for cheaper land in Chang'ombe.

<sup>11</sup> In 1983 Chang'ombe residents marched to the Regional Commissioner's office protesting against the CDA's forceful eviction order and against the demolition of some houses in their area.

by 1988. Starting from the mid 1980s, the community leaders, particularly the Ten Cell (TCLS) and ruling party (CCM) leaders, had joined the landowners in monitoring and assisting home builders to adhere to the linear pattern and avoid uprooting of the trees. In order to ensure an orderly development, the community leaders used sisal ropes and bush poles to measure, demarcate and site houses. According to the interviews with settlers, the main motivation for maintaining an orderly house arrangement and avoiding displacement of the trees which had been planted by the Capital Development Authority was to try to appease the CDA. The solidarity or spirit of co-operation that evolved among the local leaders and residents to guide land development and maintain a united front against the CDA eviction pressures continued until 1986/87 when the central and regional governments intervened so as to ease the tension between the CDA and the Chang'ombe residents.

Following the government decision to declare Chang'ombe settlers lawful occupants, the role of the local leaders in guiding the siting of houses and monitoring land development suddenly came to an end. The legalisation of ownership thus marked the beginning of 'unguided' housing land development. The demise of the institutions and grass-root actors which had played active roles in lay-outing the houses in an orderly pattern is depicted by the sporadic nature of the housing clusters which ensued the government intervention.

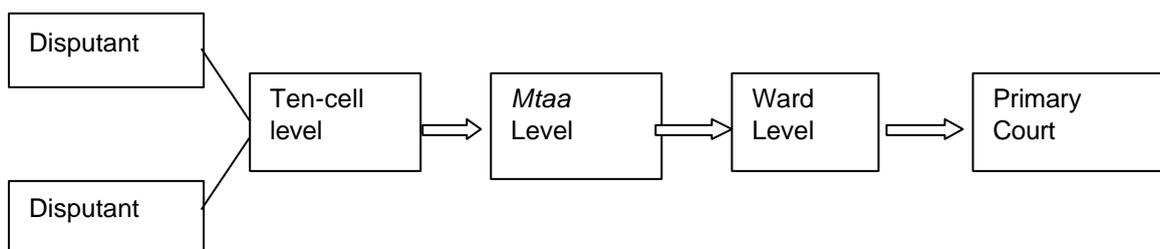
#### *Security of tenure and land disputes arbitration*

Like in Kihonda and the other informal settlements studied, 'social-recognition' of an individual's rights on land by other settlers, especially the adjoining landowners, by local leaders and relatives or friends is the key factor guaranteeing security of tenure.

The settlers in Chang'ombe also designed and apply land transfer agreement forms with attributes similar to the ones observed in Kihonda. Some forms even show the selling price and the mode and date of payment. Chang'ombe is, however, not divided into housing blocks. The plot area is, therefore, often defined with reference to the adjoining land owners or to permanent land marks or dominant features in the area.

In Chang'ombe more land disputes were recorded than in Kihonda resulting from a higher demand for land and a more rapid increase in land values. Most disputes were associated with trespassing on private land, e.g. plot boundary disputes, and with encroachment on semi-public or public areas like roads and footpaths. Like in Kihonda, most of the disputes are resolved by grass-roots institutions at the *Mtaa* and Ward levels. When the Ward Disputes Resolution Committee fails to resolve a dispute, the cases are referred to the Primary Court (fig. 6).

**Figure 6: Conflict resolution path**



The position taken by the government in favour of the residents in their conflict with the CDA was understood by land seekers in the region as a signal towards higher security of

tenure and thus increased the demand for land and land values. With the heating-up of the local land market which is still not formalised according to the prevailing legal norms, the solidarity among the residents was weakened and the role of community leaders in guiding land development and resolving land disputes declined.

### *Community services*

Like in Kihonda, residents have strived and mobilised local and external resources required for providing basic community infrastructure in their settlement. The facilities and services provided include market stalls, religious facilities, water supply, electricity and telephone services. The key actors involved in providing the services and facilities are summarised in table 1.

**Table 1: Community services and facilities and key actors in Chang'ombe**

	<i>Services/Facility</i>	<i>Actors</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1	Piped water	World Vision	Residents' own initiatives and contacts; residents contributed labour.
	Bore holes	Italian Government	Residents contributed labour.
2.	Electricity	TANESCO	TanESCO provided service lines, while private individuals paid for house connection charges.
3.	Telephone	TTCL	TTCL provided service lines. Individuals paid for house connection.
4.	Market	Land donated by an indigenous land owner.	The area accommodates a market, a bus station and kiosks.
5	Religious facilities:		
	- Church	Anglican Church	The land was purchased by the church.
	- Mosque	Local Muslim community	The land was donated by residents.

### **Main findings**

The observations presented are not limited to the cases studied. Experience on informal housing land development in other cities in the country as well as literature from other developing countries are substantiating the position that the socially regularised housing subsystem is often based on institutions and guided by norms and procedures which are substituting the deficiencies of the formal public sector to a surprising degree. The commonly agreed and respected institutions and procedures assist individual households to access land, secure or protect their tenure rights, arbitrate land disputes, guide spatial organisation and land development and provide basic infrastructure services.

Land transactions are highly decentralised (fig. 2). All necessary procedures are accomplished at the Ward or *Mtaa* (Subward) level. Registration of individual rights as well as resolution of conflicts is accomplished by the grass-roots institutions or actors.

The process of land purchase or transfer involves closely related or socially linked community or family members.

Witnessing and authentication of land transactions by local government institutions at the grassroots level (viz. Ten Cell, *Mtaa* or Ward leaders) increases the authenticity of the transactions as well as security of tenure. The use of neighbourhood-based institutions to resolve disputes is a practice which has been also reported in other countries, e.g. de Soto in Peru (Mabogunje 1992: 200) and Farvacque and McAuslan (1992: 41) in Venezuela.

The achievements in regularising settlement lay-outs recorded in the two cases are largely attributable to physical fixtures installed before settling. They constituted the framework on the basis of which local leaders guided land parcelling and siting of buildings. The strong social cohesion among the Chang'ombe settlers was a critical factor that engendered compliance with community agreed land development norms. This, in turn, facilitated the orderly growth of the settlement. Without this social capital the common concern deployed by the residents in protecting and furthering spatial orderliness and respect of individual rights on property would not have been possible. The sporadic housing development that ensued the demise of the leading role of grass-roots institutions in land regularisation is indeed a logical consequence of the displacement of social capital.

The cases presented also revealed that land required for basic community facilities could be secured freely, i.e. without compensation, as long as the land markets had not heated up.

The involvement of Subward and Ten Cell leaders in land transactions and development control is a voluntary activity, because in Tanzania these institutions do not have explicit statutory powers or a legal mandate to regulate land development in their areas of jurisdiction. They are, however, urged by the settlers to accept this responsibility and to link up with the higher level administrative and political system. Public utility agencies are also neglecting the illegal status of informal settlements when they play an active role in providing basic community infrastructure services.

The role played by informal institutions as discussed in the foregoing does, however, not mean that the grass roots are persistently efficient in checking externalities arising from the informal land market or systematically exercising the land regularisation procedures outlined. The studies revealed that the role attributed to grass-roots institutions and their capability to regulate local land management issues wither out as the land markets heat up. As the land disputes intensify and spatial disorganisation is no longer checked, uneconomical land use and development patterns ensue. State guidance and intervention are, therefore, indispensable as soon as the local regulation is withering.

### **Reconciling informal and formal land management**

The findings presented together with empirical evidence from other African states support an agenda for the reconciliation of informal and formal institutions and procedures of urban land management in developing countries. They suggest that progress can be made in overcoming the wide-spread deficits of the formal land management system by a gradual integration of the informal sector into political decision-making and administrative institutions concerned with housing land supply, security of tenure rights, lay-out regularisation and land servicing.

### *The ailing state*

In the least developed countries the public sector will - for many years to come - not be able to provide the resources necessary for 'legal' (abiding to the law), 'planned' (according to the principles of land-use planning) and 'serviced' (in terms of a sufficient range of infrastructural services) urban growth and development. The state will often not even have the power to establish and execute a stable and reliable institutional framework.

### *The potential of social regulation*

In the absence of the state local land management actors, including the poor settlers who invest their dear savings, are creating institutions which can replace the public sector to a certain degree. The evidence presented from Tanzania has proven that community based land management systems are indeed able to shape institutions and procedures to secure property rights, arbitrate land disputes and devise and guarantee functional settlement lay-outs. They are socially regulated and thus dependent on socially defined resources and limitations.

### *Reconciling socially regulated and public land management*

The potential of socially regulated settlement growth and development is still largely neglected if not suppressed by public authorities in most developing countries. It is considered illegal, interest bound and little effective. In reality, however, it is already partially filling the deficit which the resource-strained public sector is leaving. With a positive attitude, more awareness and proper guidance it could be assigned a functional role in the administrative system and thus reduce the gap in public development control and service provision which will grow even further with rapid urbanisation.

Bridging the deficits of formal land management would require the recognition of existing informal institutions, the statutory decentralisation of land management responsibilities and the extension of current urban planning legislation to cover such situations.

This strategy could be based on the close linkages which have been observed to exist between the two sectors. In Tanzania and other African countries, local administrative institutions are taking over responsibility in securing property rights, arbitrating land disputes and guiding settlement growth, while the courts of law accept land ownership documents produced under social regulation.

Such a rational stance towards informal urban land management would enable the public sector to economise on its limited financial and regulatory resources by concentrating on critical phases of the urbanisation process. When investments in the initial stage of settlement development could be replaced by soft interventions according to the concept of 'guided growth' relying on the illustrated potentials of social regulation, the public sector, especially the municipalities, would be enabled to strategically concentrate their scarce investive resources on critical issues and phases of urban growth like the transition from social regulation to interest-bound and group controlled development in high density neighbourhoods. There, only the state with its statutory organs seems to be able to provide the necessary guidance and intervention.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The authors are preparing for new research into this issue with a proposal "Strategic Planning for Urbanisation in Poverty - Managing Growth in Informal Settlements" which they have presented to the German Volkswagen Foundation for funding.

### *Research tasks*

In the light of these observations the agenda for urban research in developing countries would have to be complemented. Newly emerging issues are e.g. the scope and limitations of social regulation, appropriate interfaces between the formal and informal sector of development control, adequate concepts for their strategic reconciliation, and - last but not least - the resulting needs for training and consultation.

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Figure 1: Spatial lay-out of Kihonda



Figure 5: The regular settlement lay-out in Chang'ombe based on spatial fixtures of a green belt

