



Parallel session C2

Land, accumulation and the “post-colonial suburb”

Monday 11 November, 16.00 – 17.30

IAS Room 20

Chair: **George Owusu**, Professor, Department of Geography and Resource Development, University of Ghana

Discussants:

Dr Rita Lambert, Teaching Fellow, The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL

Dr Paula Meth, Reader, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, The University of Sheffield

Un/mapping the suburban frontier: accumulation and authority at the state’s urban edge in Dar es Salaam

Prof. Claire Mercer, Professor of Human Geography, LSE

This paper extends our understanding of the historical dynamics driving changing urban land use by turning to the city’s edges to unpick the postcolonial politics of accumulation that takes place there. The ‘urban land grab’ in sub-Saharan Africa identifies the uneven distribution of urban land and wealth through acquisition and speculation by transnational elites, public-private partnerships, foreign and domestic companies and state agencies, as well as local elites, often resulting in evictions and displacements from downtown areas (Gillespie 2018, Goodfellow 2017, Mbiba 2018, Zoomers et al 2017, Steel et al 2017). Dar es Salaam’s northern suburbs are a palimpsest of colonial and postcolonial land law and customary practice that has been reshaped over the last two decades by the slow encroachment of a growing middle class on the city’s former rural hinterland. Based on qualitative fieldwork collected at intervals between 2012-2018, I trace how the accumulation of land and property by an emerging suburban middle class is taking place on a less spectacular scale and scope than the kind of land deals usually considered characteristic of ‘land grabbing’. Fraught with ambiguity and anxiety, middle-class accumulation is dramatically re-shaping the city’s edges.