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Local Realities and the Adoption of Piecemeal Planning Practices in Mlandizi and Sirari, Tanzania

ABSTRACT

Urban planning through local governments is constrained by challenges that place significant burdens on planners. Local realities have a profound influence on planners' implementation of urban planning policies. This paper draws on the concept of street-level bureaucracy to examine how local realities shape the adoption of piecemeal planning in two small towns in Tanzania. Data were collected through surveys, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, document reviews, and geospatial analyses of town planning drawings and satellite images. The findings indicate rapid and informal urbanization, evidenced by annual average population growth rates exceeding the national average. Additionally, the proportion of the population living in informal settlements is higher in small towns than in cities. Customary land rights and the informal land market have emerged as the primary drivers of informal settlements. Local governments exhibit low institutional capacity for urban planning, while local politics and market forces further influence the adoption of piecemeal planning practices. The results suggest that these local realities and their interplay create multifaceted complexities, compelling planners to implement urban planning policies in alternative ways. Consequently, piecemeal planning is employed as a strategy to navigate the complexities of urban planning in these two small towns. It is recommended that collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors are essential to integrate structure planning with piecemeal planning, thereby promoting orderly urban development.

Keywords: local realities, piecemeal planning, small towns, street-level bureaucracy

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INTRODUCTION

Urban planning practices are guided by universally advocated planning approaches, which, in turn, are grounded on diverse philosophies and in theoretical and conceptual contexts (Watson, 2016). The approaches typically include master planning, strategic planning and integrated urban development planning, which are generally referred to as general planning schemes. The approaches are aimed at guiding urban development and improving the liveability of urban settlements. The approaches are not static; they evolve in response to the changing social, economic and political conditions obtained in urban settings (Oldfield, 2014; Watson, 2016). One specific type of planning practice, namely piecemeal planning, is predominant in Tanzania, particularly in its small towns. Many small towns in Tanzania have been planned using the piecemeal planning approach to provide minimum planning solutions (Yamungu, 2022). Again, Yamungu (2019) found that piecemeal planning has a likelihood of advancing sustainability. Sustainability is used here to mean the ability of the urban plans to promote harmony with nature, promote place-based economies and provide housing built in planned areas. It draws on the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 to advocate comprehensive analysis as an integral part of the urban planning process. However, piecemeal planning has certain shortcomings, production of incompatible land uses, uncoordinated spatial organisation, urban sprawl and unfriendly environmental practices (Chigara et al., 2013; Sawyer, 2014; Yamungu, 2022). These shortcomings make piecemeal planning unsustainable; this planning approach also departs from the principles of urban planning which require the setting of future development goals which are based on past and current situations (Chigara et al., 2013; Keeble, 1964; Ryser & Franchini, 2015). However, piecemeal planning can be enhanced to provide practical planning solutions for small towns and emerging urban centres.

The criteria for categorising human settlements indicate that any human settlement with fewer than 30,000 people is considered a small town, provided it has the minimum required array of urban services and the potential to urbanise (Donaldson & Marais, 2012; Knox & Meyer, 2013; Satterthwaite, 2016). Small towns are generally ‘sidelined’ by research and urban development strategies, which put them on the periphery of the urban development agenda. Cottyn (2018) calls for the directing of efforts to address urbanisation challenges towards both cities and small towns. Therefore, the role of urban planning in achieving sustainable urban development cannot be overemphasized (Duminy et al., 2014; United Nations, 2015a). It is projected that the world’s urban population will reach 70% by 2050. The bulk of the global urban population increase will occur in developing countries whose combined population increase is expected to reach 80% by 2050 (UN-Habitat, 2022; Berdequé & Soloaga, 2018). Apart from these global projections, scholars have also noted that a considerable portion of the world’s urban population will be living in small towns and that intermediate-sized urban centres will have populations ranging from 5 000 to 100 000 people (Cottyn, 2018; Emran & Shilpi, 2018; Satterthwaite, 2018).



Small towns should be considered part of the global urban landscape as they play an important role in urban and regional, local, and economic development (Donaldson et al., 2012; Emran & Shilpi, 2018). They also serve as intermediary places for urban and rural settlements, thus helping to define functional relationships in human settlement hierarchies (Cottyn, 2018; Hsu, 2012; Mulligan et al., 2012). Small towns provide numerous services in the urban landscape including trading and market centres (Taylor et al., 2010; Satterthwaite, 2016; Berdegúé & Soloaga, 2018), as well as heritage and tourism destinations (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2024; Köbli, 2021). Such functions have the potential to reduce rural-to-urban migration. To effectively play their role, small towns need to be planned in a manner that ensures their sustainability. Thus, planned and managed small towns can lead to the development of orderly and serviced urban centres capable of reducing the rate of migration to larger urban centres.

Tanzania's planning procedure requires the preparation of general planning schemes (GPS) in the form of master plans or interim land-use plans for both large and small urban centres. Such comprehensive plans should then be implemented through a series of detailed planning schemes (DPS). It is a requirement that DPS conform to GPS to promote sustainable development (United Republic of Tanzania, 2007). The current planning practices in Mlandizi and Sirari small towns involve the preparation of DPS in the absence of GPS, which contravenes the country's urban planning policy (Yamungu, 2019). On the contrary, the two-tier planning approach is not adhered to, which raises questions about the contribution of local realities to the adoption of piecemeal planning in Mlandizi and Sirari and whether council planners have any discretion while implementing urban planning policies. This paper investigates the local realities that influence the adoption of piecemeal planning by the council planners in the Kibaha and Tarime district councils through the theoretical lens of street-level bureaucracy.

Street-level bureaucracy, developed by Michael Lipsky in 1969, is about the dilemmas of front-office workers which result from work pressure as the associated influence on policy implementation. According to Lipsky (1980), street-level bureaucrats are civil servants who interact directly with citizens during the discharge of their responsibilities. They have substantial discretion in that process, which impacts the way they implement policies. Lipsky's ideas are drawn upon to reflect on the local-level implementation of planning policy by the council planners. In Tanzania, the Urban Planning Act of 2007 provides planning responsibilities to local government authorities. Local government authorities have employed town planners to discharge planning responsibilities on behalf of the councils. This makes the planners responsible for translating planning policy into local planning actions and outcomes through interaction with the general public. The town planners in the local governments find themselves at the interface between institutional procedures and the perceived local realities (Hudson, 1997; Lipsky, 1980). Thus, as street-level bureaucrats, they invent new routines to cope with uncertainties resulting from their working conditions.

The adoption of piecemeal planning is one such new routine. Piecemeal planning results from planners' implementation of planning policy in the way they think makes planning better (Proudfoot & McCann, 2008; Yamungu, 2019). Besides, the new inventions by town planners constitute a new

policy which can have an impact on a given urban area. Scott & Stroper (2015) regard urban areas as containers with specific social, economic and political realities, which define their nature. Thus, local realities are not constant and are not the same in all urban planning contexts because “the specificities of any urban governing context are produced by the confluence of a locality’s institutional, political, socio-cultural and economic settings” (McGuirk, 2000, p. 654).

Understanding local realities and their influence on urban planning practices is central to examining the role of town planners in bridging the gap between planning theory and practice (Storper & Scott, 2016; Watson, 2002). This paper focuses on the planners working in local government because they constitute the largest proportion of registered town planners in Tanzania. Their interaction with the general public exposes them to what Watson (2012) refers to as stubborn realities. As planning authorities, local governments face certain challenges relating to urban planning. Such challenges fall on the shoulders of the responsible planning officer, who is subjected to a periodic performance review. Institutional challenges put such town planners in dilemmas that make the adoption of piecemeal planning as a coping strategy unavoidable. This is exemplified by the current planning practices, including those used in the Mlandizi and Sirari small towns. The discussion aligns with Buchanan’s (2024) discussion of the capacity and competency of local government in implementing built heritage conservation policy. Certainly, institutional expedience and professional discretion are significantly related. As such, they provide additional elements necessary for discussing the adoption of piecemeal planning by urban planners.

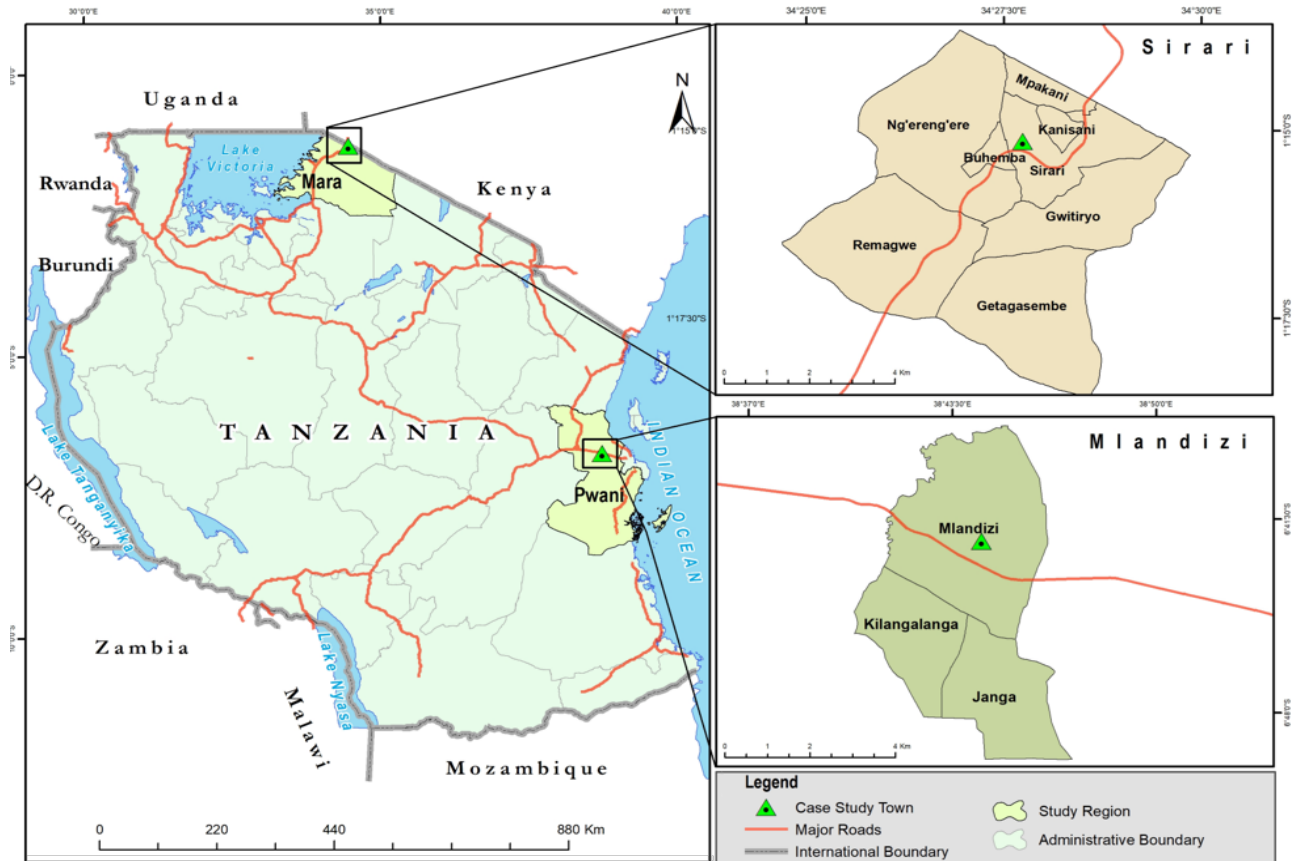
METHODS

A mixed-methods research design was adopted to integrate qualitative and quantitative methods based on multiple case studies. Two small towns were selected, namely Mlandizi and Sirari, (Figure 1) based on their exhibiting rapid informal urbanisation, being national strategic locations, being planning areas, adopting piecemeal planning practices, and their representation of local, political regimes. A list of the areas that were declared urban planning areas in 2001 (GN 217) was obtained from Kibaha District Council and all the potential case studies were ranked according to the criteria. Mlandizi and Sirari qualified, since they met all the criteria.

Qualitative data was obtained using in-depth interviews, which involved ten key informants. Specifically, the key informants were council planners, ministerial planners, councillors and private planners. Two focus group discussions were conducted with 14 ward and sub-ward leaders. Quantitative data was obtained using a household survey; 378 household interviews were conducted in the two small towns. A spatial analysis of layout plans was done to establish land-use compatibility and connectivity of linear infrastructure. A review of documents provided both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was transcribed and scripts were manually coded and analysed through pattern matching, while quantitative data was processed using the Statistical Package for

Social Sciences (SPSS). Finally, triangulation was used to integrate the results from both strands into themes that answered the research question.

Figure 1. Location of the study areas



Source: Based on spatial data from Tanzania

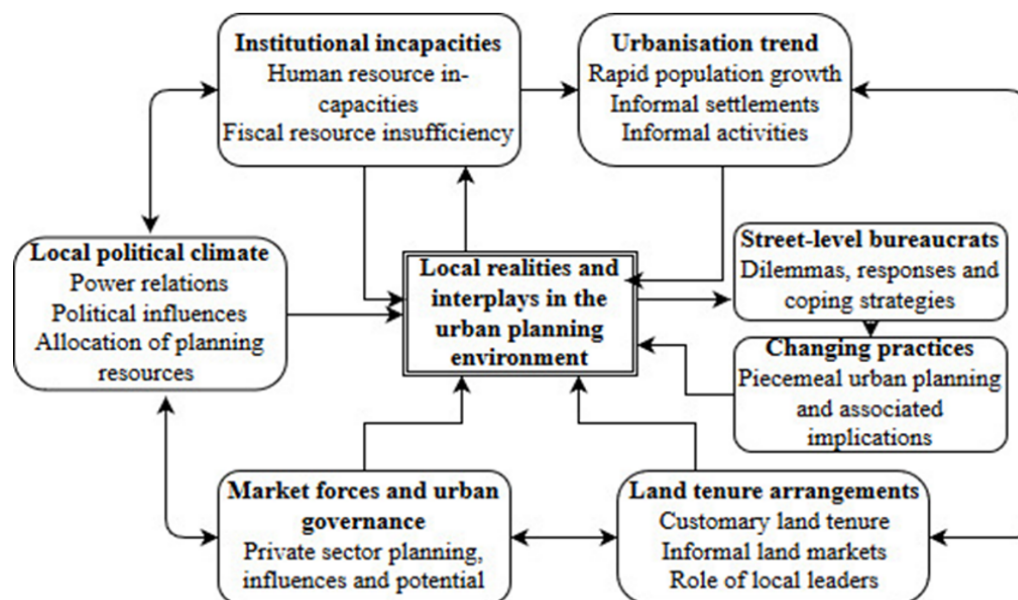
RESULTS

The planning context

Although the local realities in Mlandizi and Sirari are multifaceted, they are clustered in five themes, namely rapid urbanisation and spatial growth, planning institutional characteristics, local politics, market forces and land tenure arrangements. These factors affect the urban planning environment directly and indirectly. Indirect influences result from the interplay between factors which create webs of intertwined elements. In their totality, they form the conditions under which town planners in the two small towns do their jobs. The pressure exerted by the realities puts the planners in a dilemma. To cope with the dilemma, they adopt differential implementation of urban planning strategies. This is where piecemeal planning practices and associated implications enter the urban development picture. While piecemeal planning has become part of institutional planning practices, the implications add to

the realities in the planning environment. The interplay between local realities in Mlandizi and Sirari is shown diagrammatically in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Manifestation of local realities and their interplay



Source: Adopted from Yamungu (2019, p. 120)

Even though many factors are used to assess the growth potential of small towns (Donaldson et al., 2012), population and spatial growth have always been used to determine the rate of urbanisation. Population is used because it is a determinant of human needs like housing and social services. In turn, the need for housing and social services by growing populations determines the spatial development of small towns. The interplay of local realities in small towns and its complexity can be addressed by comprehensive planning interventions.

Population and Spatial Growth Trends

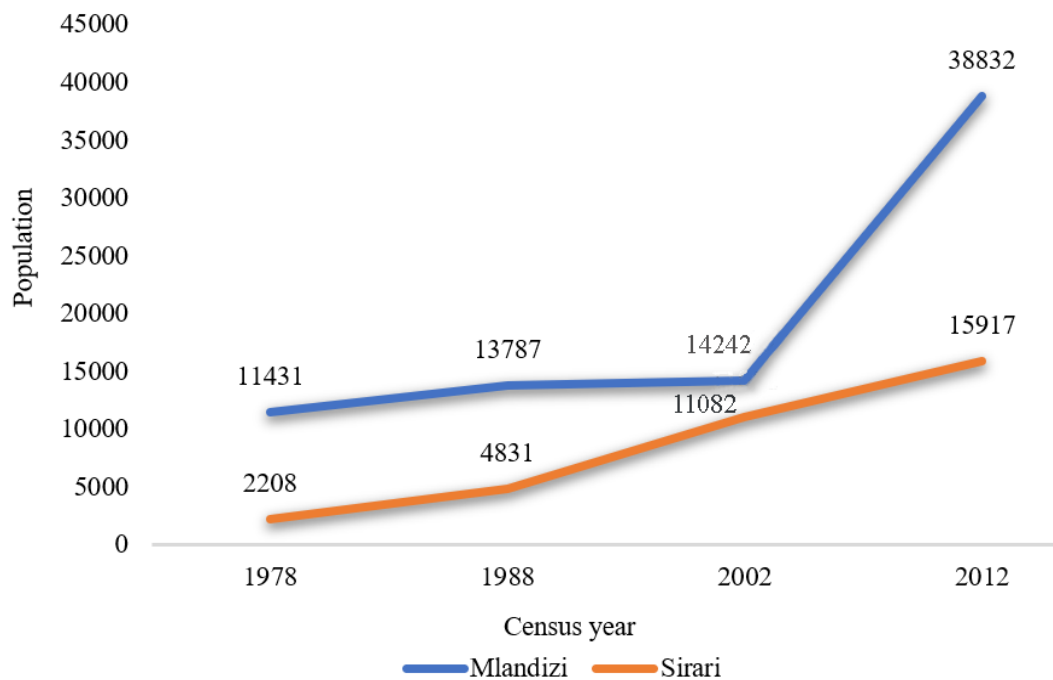
The populations of the two small towns have been growing steadily since 1978; Mlandizi's population doubled between 2002 and 2012. The two small towns experienced average annual population increases of 6.5% and 8.5%, respectively, from 1978 to 2012. This average annual population growth in Mlandizi and Sirari is more significant than the national, urban, annual, average population growth, which stands at 5.2% (Tanzania Urbanisation Laboratory, 2019). The result provides an indication of a more rapid urbanization rate in small towns than secondary cities except Dar es Salaam. Consequently, the rapid urbanization trend in small towns attracts planning attention if goal 11 of sustainable development is to be achieved. The towns' population growth is shown in Figure 3.

The population growth in the two small towns significantly resulted in a natural increase and migration. The findings from the household surveys indicate that 63% and 49% of the surveyed households had migrated to Mlandizi and Sirari, respectively. In addition, it is established that



migration contributes 70% to the population of Dar es Salaam and 50% to the populations of the other cities in Tanzania (Otieno et al., 2016; United Republic of Tanzania, 2013). This means that migration is the second contributor to urban population growth in both cities and small towns. The higher rate of migration to Mlandizi than to Sirari may be attributed to the former town's location along the central transport corridor and to its being very close to Dar es Salaam. The other small town is located on the border with Kenya.

Figure 3. Population growth trends of Mlandizi and Sirari



Sources: Summarised from population censuses of 1978, 1988, 2002 and 2012

Two main factors may explain the rapid population growth in Mlandizi between 2002 and 2012. The first is the enactment of Land Acts No. 4 and No. 5 of 1999 and the associated land commercialisation approach (United Republic of Tanzania, 1999a, 1999b). Before the enactment of the two land administration laws, it was illegal to sell land in Tanzania. The legal instruments eased land transactions and promoted informal land markets owing to the low pace at which the local authorities delivered land. Secondly, the declaration of Mlandizi as a township in 2004 fuelled in-migration (Kibaha District Council, 2007). The household survey revealed that the migrants came from the hinterland (18%) and other parts of the country (82%). The majority of immigrants came from outside the Kibaha District and Pwani Region. This indicates the attractiveness of Mlandizi to people from other parts of the country. In addition, the declaration made in 2004 enlarged Mlandizi by adding two more administrative wards, namely Janga and Kilangalanga (Kibaha District Council, 2007).

Migration to Sirari has an international face; its immigrants come from the hinterland (44.6%), other parts of the country (44.6%) and other countries (10.8%), mainly Kenya, which it borders. The rapid population growth in the town is one of the planning challenges faced by the town planners in the effort to provide planned shelter and curb the development of informal settlements. However, ad

hoc and piecemeal solutions to urbanisation challenges create more problems than solutions (Berke & Conroy, 2000; Hills & Schleicher, 2015). Unless there is a careful implementation of piecemeal practices, Mlandizi and Sirari are likely to have “urbanisation without growth” (Rakodi, 2005, p. 50). Piecemeal planning is reactive and, as such, does not provide a long-term vision for promoting an urban economy and the well-being of the urbanites. In short, the findings presented in this section show a close relationship between population growth and the spatial development of the two small towns.

The extent of spatial development

Satellite images for 1995 and 2016 were used to determine the spatial extent of urbanisation in Mlandizi over the past two decades. The area increased in size from 219 hectares in 1995 to 1099 hectares in 2016, i.e. an increase of 401.8%. Other forms of land cover are farming (93%), bushland (44%), grassland (-20%), water resources (-77%) and woodland (-98%). Urbanisation involves converting areas initially covered by grassland, water bodies or woodland into urban land uses. The urban area of Sirari increased from 87 hectares in 1995 to 160 hectares in 2016, which is an 84% increase. For the other land cover types, the percentage point increases or decreases were farming (48%), grassland (4%), bushland (-11.5%) and forest (-34%). Sirari has nearly doubled in size over the past 20 years and is likely to expand further, considering the observed population growth rate. Rapid urbanization in the context of piecemeal planning is likely to lead to the expansion of informal settlements.

Informal urbanisation in the small towns

Informal settlements characterise the urbanisation trends in the two small towns. The findings indicate that 90% and 97% of the people in Mlandizi and Sirari, respectively, live in unplanned settlements. These figures are considerably higher than the national and regional percentage points (70%) of urban residents in developing countries in general and in the sub-Saharan region in particular (Boanada-Fuchs et al., 2024; UN-Habitat, 2022; Cockhead & Hemalatha, 2016). During an interview, the town planner in Mlandizi acknowledged that the local authority supported the preparation of layout plans in a piecemeal manner as a strategy for controlling the development of unplanned settlements. He further insisted that, where layout plans had been prepared and implemented, the development of informal settlements was controlled. The development of informal settlements was controlled in Kisabi, Vikuruti, Kilangalanga and Misufini.

Customary land tenure and informal land markets

The interplay between customary land rights and the informal land market is evident in the two small towns. Land legislation in Tanzania recognises formal land ownership (granted right of occupancy) and informal land ownership (customary right of occupancy). The findings from the household survey



indicate that the proportion of land under granted rights was 31.8% and 9.4%, and that of land under customary rights was 68.2% and 90.6% in Mlandizi and Sirari, respectively. The findings show the dominance of customary land tenure in the two small towns. While the transfer of the granted right of occupancy is subjected to strict legal procedure, customary rights were not strictly legally bound to any established procedure.

The land owned under the customary arrangement is normally transferred through an informal land market. The size of the land owned by the respondents varied as already indicated. However, about 76% of the respondents owned plots which are smaller than one acre in size. The process involves subdividing land for those with large plots, and then transferring land ownership rights to the new owners. In addition, piecemeal planning made a significant contribution to the transformation of the administration of land in Mlandizi (31.8%) more than in Sirari (9.4%). This contribution should be integrated with other development aspects to promote sustainable development. This requires a planning approach which provides an appropriate spatial structure and land-use distribution and has the potential to produce efficient transport networks, compatible land uses and environmental protection (Dai et al., 2010; Song & Zheng, 2002).

Facilitation of land transactions by local leaders

Local leaders at village and hamlet levels play a major role in facilitating informal land transactions. Local leaders play a facilitation role in transacting land under granted and customary rights. However, their role is important for the land that is under customary tenure. Their role includes site verification, which involves confirming ownership, boundaries and third-party interests, as well as witnessing and certifying sale agreements. The confirmation of third-party interests involves establishing whether there are any claims on a piece of land before the sale agreement is concluded. This verification process can be undertaken by one local leader or may involve the committee responsible for land administration.

In such transactions, local leaders are normally paid 10% of the transaction value as administration fees. The fees are contributed to by the buyer and the seller at some agreed proportion. The money collected from a land transaction is supposed to be used to support local development initiatives. However, such money was not fully accounted for and sometimes ended in the pockets of local leaders. The practices about the transaction of the land under the granted right of occupancy are different from those about the transaction of customary land. Their differences are in legalities as the transfer of the land under granted rights must follow the procedure established by Land Act No. 4 of 1999. The procedure requires statutory payment of fees and taxes to the government. This process is in most cases done by the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and legal practitioners. As such, the role of local leaders is minimal, and so there is limited opportunity for them to pursue personal gain. Consequently, the local leaders focus on the land under customary rights, which contributes to the development of informal settlements in many areas.

Land tenure and piecemeal planning practices

Landowners take advantage of Land Act No. 4 of 1999 and Urban Planning Act No. 8 of 2007 to enter the formal land market by preparing layout plans for their parcels of land. The current laws allow for land commercialisation and the involvement of private planners in the preparation of urban development plans. They hire planners to prepare layout plans for them and, in the process, determine and influence land use by designating land uses which are economically beneficial to them. It was revealed in an interview with a town planner in Mlandizi that, out of the 109 layout plans that were obtained, 104 (95.4%) of piecemeal land plans were prepared by private practitioners, while only 5 (4.6%) were prepared by the LGA. The preparation of layout plans by the private sector was normally through partnerships between landowners and planning or real estate agencies. However, the proposed layout plans are submitted to the planners in the local government for scrutiny and submission to the council meetings for approval. The town planner also mentioned that the local government cannot stop the preparation of layout plans by private sector actors because the practice is legally acceptable and helps to provide a minimum planning solution for controlling the development of informal settlements in small towns.

The contribution of customary land tenure to piecemeal planning in Mlandizi and Sirari is noteworthy. The layout planning process is considered to be easier and smoother for customary land than for the land under granted rights of occupancy. Planning on the latter involves a long process, which includes revoking the previous survey on which granted rights were given as well as changing the existing land use to allow for a new plan and multiple uses to be introduced. The revoking of the survey and the land-use change process are subjected to cumbersome and time-consuming bureaucratic procedures, which are unfavourable to private sector planners. Private sector agencies have facilitated the institutionalisation of planning and formal land delivery in small towns like Mlandizi, where 31.8% of the area is planned. This is a substantial contribution to the efforts to control the development of informal settlements and improve formal land delivery (Kasala & Burra, 2016). Since the practice provides both planning and business opportunities, the private sector can be used to facilitate master planning processes so that layout plans become more coherent than they currently are.

The contribution of the private sector to planning in Mlandizi and Sirari provides the potential to strengthen urban planning in the two small towns. However, this potential is not tapped for improving planning in the small towns. A comparison between the number of surveyed plots and that of plots proposed in the existing layout plans for Sirari provides evidence of the deficiencies of the local governments. It was found that, out of the 3850 plots proposed in the layout plans for Sirari, only 145 plots (3.8%) were surveyed and that the remaining 3705 (96.2%) had not been surveyed and had been informally developed. The role played by private planners in piecemeal planning can be transformed to facilitate the preparation of master plans or structure plans. The planning potential in the private sector is not tapped into by local governments. Again, the presence of informal settlements in piecemeal planned areas shows a major weakness in urban governance. Local governments are

unable to tap into urban planning resources from non-state actors to strengthen planning capacities for the two small towns.

Low institutional capacity for urban planning

The study looked at the sufficiency of fiscal resources, the availability of appropriate skills and the experience of town planning professionals. Institutional capacities are a prerequisite for local authorities to operate within their institutional frameworks.

A shortage of human resources

The availability of skilled personnel is at the heart of the functioning of an institution. Capacity needs assessments for Kibaha and Tarime indicate that the two district councils have more than 65% of the required human resources that can have a meaningful planning impact. Local government authorities are responsible for planning. In that case, the district councils of Kibaha and Tarime are responsible for planning in Mlandizi and Sirari, respectively. About one-third to nearly three-quarters of the two district councils' planning personnel requirements have been met (Table 1). However, the low capacity seen is attributed to a lack of master planning skills and experience among the town planners in the two district councils. Town planners said that it was the reason for the inefficient delivery of planning services. However, the town planner was expected to be open-minded to address the capacity challenge by engaging with the private sector through Public Private Partnership (PPP). Thus, planners in the two small towns were supposed to transform the engagement of the private sector from the preparation of a layout plan to at least a structure plan.

Table 1. Human resources at the two local planning authorities

Profession	Kibaha District Council			Tarime District Council		
	Required	Available	Deficit	Required	Available	Deficit
Town planners	3	3	0	2	1	1
Other land sector professions	9	5	4	8	7	1
Supporting staff	8	5	3	4	2	2
Total	20	13	7	14	10	4
Percentage	100.0	65.0	35.0	100.0	71.4	28.6

Source: Field survey conducted in 2017

According to the capacity assessment conducted for the Tarime District Council, the council needed two town planners, while they had only one. The town planner in the two local councils holds a Bachelor's degree in urban and regional planning and has four years of working experience. Apart from fulfilling the town planning responsibilities related to Sirari and three other small towns, she also serves as the head of the department. In addition, she assists with planning responsibilities in the

newly established Tarime Town Council, which does not have a town planner. Like the planners in Kibaha, this town planner could not do master planning. During the interview, she stated that she had neither master planning skills nor planning experience.

The lack of master planning skills and experience can be attributed to a paradigm shift, i.e. from rational comprehensive planning to collaborative planning, which has affected planning practices and training. The paradigm shift towards collaborative planning, which started in the 1990s, resulted in a change in planning practice from master planning to strategic planning. Accordingly, accordingly Ardhi University (University College of Lands and Architectural Studies) changed its curriculum to a strategic planning curriculum. As a result, the planners who were trained during the period of strategic planning, that is, from 1995 to 2018, lacked master planning skills. This shortcoming affects planners' abilities and those of their respective local governments, so they cannot properly guide the master planning process.

Shortage of financial resources for urban planning

Apart from the shortage of human resources, town planners in Mlandizi and Sirari pointed out the shortage of financial resources as being among the constraints on the preparation of master plans. In small towns, urban planning activities are underfunded because of the failure to comprehend the contribution of urban planning to council revenue and local economic development. In the two local governments, urban planning activities received less than 17% of their set budget in five years, from 2013 to 2017 (Table 2). This is partly attributed to dependence on locally generated revenue (the council's sources), whose allocation is politically motivated.

Table 2. Summary of a planned budget and provided funds

Local Council	Budget set (in TZS)	Budget set (in USD)	Funds provided (in TZS)	Funds provided (in USD)	Percentage of funds provided
Kibaha DC	1,207,388,196	533,063	31,554,000	13,931	3 %
Tarime DC	351,812,434	155,326	55,820,000	24,645	16 %
Total	1,559,200,630	688,389	87,374,000	38,576	19 %

Sources: Extracted from the district councils' budgets for 2013–2017

The presented figures were extracted from the council's Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks, specifically sub-vote 512E, which is the budget item for urban planning and rural land use planning. The intention here is to compare the budgets set with the actual amounts of money provided. The results indicate variation in different years but, on aggregate, less than 17% of the money requested was provided from July 2013 to June 2017. According to the town planner in Tarime, the funds were not enough even for hiring a consulting planner to facilitate the preparation of a master plan for Sirari and the other three small towns in the district. The hiring of a consultant would have been an alternative for enhancing planning capacity for the preparation of the master plan in the two small towns. This was impossible due to the inadequate financial resources.



Furthermore, decisions on the allocation of resources are made at council meetings, where bureaucrats' proposals are either accepted or rejected. Bureaucrats and councillors consider the shortage of financial resources as the main reason for not preparing master plans for Mlandizi and Sirari. Problems exist in the councils concerning the allocation of locally generated revenue. The two district councils have resources for doing socio-economic development activities. The Tarime District Council receives an average of 1.2 billion shillings a year (equal to USD 550 000) in in-service levies from the North Mara Gold Mine. These financial resources are normally used to provide social services to the communities. By contrast, the Kibaha District Council receives 10% fees charged on each plot of land sold in partnership with private sector companies. Although the actual amount of the fees was not disclosed, the volume of private sector planning and land delivery in Mlandizi suggests that this is the main source of local revenue for the council.

Political influences on planning

Both in Mlandizi and in Sirari, urban planning activities were affected by politics, particularly the power relations between councillors and the council's staff. Councillors and bureaucrats are two opposing sides and are involved in making decisions on urban planning. As a result, the decision-making process concerning urban planning is deeply rooted in this political environment. The political system and the administrative structure adopted by the Kibaha and Tarime district councils give decision-making powers to councillors because they are representatives of the people. This system regards street-level bureaucrats as advisors to the council through the council director (Figure 4). The relationship between the district councils' decisions and politics puts the street-level bureaucrat at the centre of the local political environment.

Institutional arrangements require that street-level bureaucrats' opinions and proposals to the councils be channelled through the director, who is the chief executive and secretary of the council. This requirement enables the councils to make rational and informed decisions. The extent to which the proposals are considered depends on the political rationality of the councillors and the chief executive. The conflict of rationalities was very intense in Tarime, where by the time of this research the council was ruled by an opposition party, while the council directors are appointed by the President. As presidential appointees, the directors are perceived by the opposition councillors to be submitting proposals favouring the interest of the ruling party.

Again, street-level bureaucrats, who implement public policies, are at the centre of the political environment. Their opinions and proposals are accepted or rejected without interfering with the council's decisions. The rationality of this system is based on the belief that the councillors will make decisions which are beneficial to their electorate. The town planners in Kibaha and Tarime pointed out that, sometimes, the technical proposals submitted to the council meetings for endorsement are rejected on political grounds. Street-level bureaucrats, therefore, face internal and external political pressure, which sometimes results from the councillors' and chief executives' give-and-take political



quarters of its local revenue base. Yet, the resources that the council is defending are not used for planning activities in Mlandizi, where the largest share comes from. Certainly, the lack of financial resources for executing planning activities has made town planners face problems which, in turn, have caused them to adopt piecemeal practices.

Sirari qualifies to be a township authority. The criteria applicable to this small town are the town having a population of 10,000 people, having at least one health centre, a secondary school, 20 licenced shops, a primary court, and being the headquarters of a ward or division. According to the classification of human settlements, a township is a transitional status before rural settlements become urban settlements. Small towns, most of which are rural settlements, must go through the re-classification process before they become urban settlements (then Local Government District Authorities Act No. 7 of 1982; Urban Planning Act No. 8 of 2007). When the process of establishing the Sirari township authority was initiated, it involved expanding the township's boundary so that there would be three wards in the area, namely Sirari, Gwitiryo and Legicheri, and not just Sirari.

As with the declaration process for Mlandizi, the declaration process for Sirari was also frustrating on political grounds related to struggles between the ruling party and the opposition. Government officials in Tarime say that solutions to the problems related to the establishment of the Tarime Town Council must be sought before Sirari is turned into a township authority. The councillor for Sirari, who is a member of the opposition, disputed the reason for delaying the declaration, saying that because the two local councils are currently under Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA), the ruling party thinks that making Sirari a township will be a piece of political credit to the opposition. In addition, the opposition party leaders in Tarime maintain that the issues surrounding the establishment of the Sirari township authority are government actions to frustrate any development initiatives championed by the opposition party.

When compared, the declaration processes for the two small towns are different. While the Mlandizi process is for establishing an independent council, the Sirari process is for establishing an interim township. More importantly, the declaration processes show the relationship between politics and institutions (Pierre, 1999; Tang, 2011). The establishment of urban planning institutions has been turned into products of political processes. As a result, politics has been one of the factors influencing planning, and power is a basic political element which controls societal organisation and actors' relations (Birkland, 2015; Watson, 2012). The power relations between the actors affect the nature of decision-making, which defines urban governance outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has discussed the urban governance challenges faced by the Mlandizi and Sirari small towns. It has focused on the local realities and their influence on the adoption of piecemeal planning practices by the planners in the local governments. The realities constrained the implementation of urban planning and development policies by the town planners in Mlandizi and Sirari. The realities

and their interplay are multifaceted and create a web of challenges facing the town planners in doing their job (Figure 1). Mlandizi and Sirari are characterised by rapid urbanisation as the population has grown exponentially throughout the past four decades. Rapid urbanisation influenced the development of informal settlements and urban sprawl. The percentage of the population living in informal settlements is higher than those in the cities. Urban sprawl fuelled land use and land cover changes from the natural landscape to human-induced land cover, which affects sustainable development in two small towns. There is a clear relationship between customary land rights, the informal land market and the development of informal settlements, while local politics and associated power relations influenced decisions on resource allocation and the upgrading of the two small towns to higher categories of human settlements.

The role played by local leaders in the informal land market gives assurance of the right to buyers based on the land sale agreement they witness. These constitute the contextual conditions and realities which influence the adoption of piecemeal planning practices by council planners. Besides, the role of private planners in the preparation of piecemeal plans has untapped potential for improving the capacity necessary for planning in small towns. However, private planners' actions are attributed to council planners because they facilitate the approval process of the layout plans. Given the complexities affecting planning in small towns, piecemeal planning has the potential to continuously be used as a planning strategy in small and emerging urban areas. Thus, it requires integrating with the town-wide structure for defining main infrastructure way-leaves and broad land use designations. In this manner, we can achieve some level of orderly development, which is likely to promote socio-economic development in small towns.

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