

# A SWOT analysis of strategic urban development planning: The case of Dar es Salaam city in Tanzania

Francos Halla\*

*Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture and Planning, University College of Lands and Architectural Studies (UCLAS) (A Constituent College of University of Dar es Salaam), P.O. Box 32911, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania*

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## Abstract

Preparation and implementation of urban general and detailed planning schemes, according to respective legislation, preoccupies most practitioners of the profession of urban and regional development planning and management worldwide. For a century lasting from 1850s to 1940s the professional practice was guided by the urban design paradigm, which embodies architectural concepts and principles of municipal engineering. For the following half a century lasting from late 1940s to early 1990s the professional practice was guided by the procedural or master-planning paradigm, which embodies the concepts of technocracy, bureaucracy, rigidity and comprehensiveness. Since 1990s, the professional practice has been guided by the political-economy or urban management paradigm, which embodies participatory, transparency, flexibility and being strategic. Whereas urban design continues to be applied in preparation and implementation of urban detailed planning schemes at sub-city level, urban management has continued to replace the procedural or master planning approach in preparation and implementation of citywide general planning schemes. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) surrounding the procedural or master-planning approach have been widely but negatively analysed in the existing literature. Thus, in this paper a SWOT analysis is done regarding the urban management approach using the case of Dar es Salaam City in Tanzania. Participant observation and documentary reviews have been adopted in capturing and analysing the available data. Main findings lead to a conclusion that the urban management approach is stronger than the procedural or master-planning approach in planning and managing cities, generally, and planning and managing Dar es Salaam City, specifically.

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## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyse strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the profession of urban and regional development planning and management (URDPM). The line of argument presented in this paper is that strengths and opportunities of URDPM, while adopting the concepts of being strategic and participatory, exceed its weaknesses and threats. As such, URDPM is aimed at preparing and

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\*Tel.: +255 22 744 596560.

E-mail address: [ffhalla@uclas.ac.tz](mailto:ffhalla@uclas.ac.tz).

implementing a strategic development planning framework (SDPF) that guides developers in executing their day-to-day activities. It is a framework for planning, not a plan, because of its inherent diversity of actors and dynamics of action. SDPF becomes SUDPF for a strategic urban development planning framework and SRDPF for a strategic regional development planning framework. In this way URDPM would only stop when critical issues of interaction between development and environment have been addressed exhaustively. In this paper emphasis is put on SUDPF.

Hence, preparation and implementation of SUDPF entail the coordination by “planners” of key profession stakeholders in identification and analysis of critical development–environment interaction issues as well as action programming and resource mobilization for addressing them. Addressing a critical development–environment interaction issue entails either solving a problem related to servicing land or resolving a conflict related to use of land. Critical development issues obtaining in cities of developing countries like Tanzania include the following:

- Dynamics of urban spatial expansion in terms of both vertically manifested redevelopment and horizontally imposed encroachment of city fringes
- Proliferation of socioeconomic informal-sector activities including petty trading and urban farming
- Misuse or abuse of open spaces, recreational areas and hazard land spaces
- Inefficiencies of urban and public transportation with their inherent air pollution
- Substandard waste collection, transportation and disposal
- Progression of unplanned and un-serviced neighbourhoods
- Sustained harnessing of environmental resources
- Fostering the urban–rural continuum.

The features of a critical development–environment interaction issue in the preparation and implementation of SUDPF include the following:

- Dominance or prevalence or recurrence
- Quite pressing and, hence, of top priority in getting addressed
- Crosscutting in terms of sectors of society (i.e. the general public, business, and government) and levels of society (i.e. from local to global)
- Pivotal in that once addressed, other issues related to land-servicing and land-use conflicts get also addressed.

Profession stakeholders in preparation and implementation of SUDPF fall under the following three categories:

- Development stakeholders at the levels of a plot, street, neighbourhood, human settlement, district, region, country, continent and the global village—who include active individuals, households, business entities, civil society organizations, and government units
- Issue-specific stakeholders involving the general public as the affected, the business sector as the effectors, and government units as the interveners
- URDPM stakeholders including “planners”, utility agencies, major land developers, major investors, major pressure groups, local authorities and the central government.

In practicing URDPM, relevant pieces of legislation are considered at both levels of general and detailed development planning schemes. Together with legislation, economics and politics constitute the forefront attributes of the context of practicing URDPM—and, hence, the term political-economy conception of the profession has been adopted. The legislative context necessitates URDPM to heed to requirements of the rule of law, which is a basic condition of good governance. The economic context necessitates URDPM to abide by dictates of the principle of opportunity cost, which is a day-to-day human characteristic of choice making between unlimited wants against scarce resources leading to tendencies of egoism or selfishness. The political context necessitates URDPM to blend well with realities of a human condition of nurturing vested interests,

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