In the Shadow of the Sheraton: imagining localities in global spaces in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
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Young, Mobile and on the Move: The Search for a More Meaningful Life

Kasheshe ya Wamachinga, Wamachinga, Wamachinga
Kuhangaika mitaani
Kasheshe ya Wamachinga, Wamachinga, Wamachinga
Polisi na Wamachinga
Kupambana mitaani
Laiti pembejeo zingepatikana kirahisi
Kuna maeneo mengi
Vijana tungefanya kilimo
Laiti michezo ingepewa kibao mbele
Wako vijana shupavu wangehimili vishindo
Nani apendae kuhangaika mchana kutwa
Kutembea maeneo yote ya mjini kutafuta riziki
Sababu ya msukuma wa maisha ya sasa
Maisha ya kijijini na mjini hayatofautiana sana tena

Violence surrounding the street vendors, the vendors, the vendors
Struggling to make a living in the streets
Violence surrounding the street vendors, the, vendors, the vendors
The police and the street vendors, the vendors, the vendors
Fighting in the streets
If only the promises could be easily had
There are many regions (in the country)
Young people we should practice agriculture.
If only the games could be played on a level field,
There are obstinate youth who could endure the contest
Who would like to struggle day after day?
To travel to every regional city in search of life's necessities?
As a result of the pressures of modern life
Village life and city life will never differ very much again.

–Justin Kalikawe, Wamachinga
Introduction

Just as urban space is defined and transformed through the occupation of specific locales by informal economic endeavors, so, too, is it transformed by the movement of individual laborers into and through that space. The preceding chapters of this book have focused on examining how people are able to renegotiate the ways public spaces such as street corners and sidewalks are utilized by making use of various tactics. In some cases, spaces are physically transformed when semi-permanent business structures are built on them or sign art is displayed to mark areas as places where business can be safely conducted. In other cases, spaces are transformed through language and a rhetoric of peace that works to set social norms and behavioral expectations for those spaces. Through these mechanisms, spaces of seeming disorder, chaos, and violence are turned into places where unwritten rules are established and peace becomes a possibility. In this chapter and the one that follows, I turn my attention to the ways that the movement of people from the rural areas of the country into the city has brought about large-scale change to urban space. At the same time, I examine the ways movement within the city, specifically the movement of street vendors, has transformed the way they and the consumers of their goods imagine the city.

By focusing on movement, I hope to create a tension between the tropes of transience and locality that will challenge commonly held beliefs about the incompatibility of these two possibilities. Young people living and working in the streets are often imagined as being adrift in the world without families or a place to call home. Though migrant workers have always formed a significant portion of the population of Tanzanian cities, it has only been in recent years that young adolescents have begun making their way to urban areas in search of employment. This is partially so because of national-level legal and structural changes related to the introduction of liberalization in the late 1980s, but it is also related to regional changes taking place throughout the country connected to processes of de-agrarianisation and land shortages (e.g. Bryceson 1997). These factors, when added to an increase in the number of children who have lost one or both of their parents to AIDS, have combined to produce a situation in which thousands of young people are flocking to the cities with little hope of finding formal labor. In Dar es Salaam, it is largely assumed by long-term urban residents, as well as by developmental organizations, both state- and non-state based, that those who earn on the streets have few permanent ties to the city. This is a result of their youth, their seeming lack of responsibility toward anyone but themselves, the informality of their labor strategies and their lack of domicile.

Generally speaking, notions of stability, permanence and belonging are not normally associated with migrants, hawkers, prostitutes, or street youth. And yet, all of those I worked with had roots and relations within the city that they considered important.¹ Their social networks were accessible and fathomable to anyone who was willing to take the time to ask about them. It was
through working within these networks in Dar es Salaam that I was able to conduct my research. While I primarily focused on the ways these networks worked within the city, I also asked those who agreed to work with me to supply accounts of their reasons for coming to the city, as well as of the circumstances that made their migrations possible. It became apparent that their networks extended well beyond the city limits to stretch across the entire country and region, and in some cases, across the globe.

Destination Bongo

Often, those who come to Dar es Salaam first pass through urban centers in their own regions of the country. Many leave their villages in search of a way to make a living and to create a future life for themselves only after completing some schooling. When discussing motivations for moving, people inevitably speak of "kutafuta maisha," or looking for a life. Opportunities for economic advancement in the rural areas of Tanzania are minimal. Given that it is thought to be necessary for a young man to earn a decent income and to have his own housing before he is able to marry, have children, and fully enter adulthood, many see migration to urban areas as the only reasonable way of making a life for themselves. Having said this, however, it must also be stated that young people who come to the city are usually much too young to really be thinking about marriage. Most of the young men I worked with left their natal homes between the ages of ten and twelve, and none planned on getting married before reaching their mid- to late twenties. So, while it is possible to point toward economic reasons when attempting to explain rural urban migration, it must also be acknowledged that there are other complex forces at work. Since most people who live in the rural areas of Tanzania do not end up on the streets of Dar es Salaam, there must be specific factors that encourage specific individuals to migrate.

In the previous chapter, I suggested that one of the main reasons people gave for leaving home was the desire to escape physical violence. Nearly everyone I worked with made their initial departure from their homes after deciding that they could make a better life for themselves than the one being offered to them by their abusive caretakers. As I stated, they usually headed for the closest town or city. Most of them came from the areas around the town of Arusha and made their first stop there, others originated from the areas surrounding the towns of Mwanza, Bukoba, Moshi, Tanga, Kigoma, Dodoma, Iringa, Mbeya and Mtwara. For some, Dar es Salaam was the closest urban center to their homes. Few of those making a living on the streets were born in the city itself. Most spent a couple of months or years working in one of the regional capitals, making friends, building social networks and making enough money for subsistence purposes. In most cases, their parents or other family members knew where they were, and sometimes small remittances were even sent back to the village. More often, though, financial help would be extended to other friends and family members also trying to
establish themselves in town. As will be made clear in the examples I provide later in this chapter, most who chose to migrate to urban centers had the names of people from their village or family who might be willing to help them get started, and that the first thing they did when they arrived was to search those individuals out. People who eventually decided to take the next step and move to Dar es Salaam usually did so because they either felt limited by the economic opportunities available to them in the regional capitals, or because they were in trouble with the local police; often it was a combination of both.

As they had when they first migrated to the cities in their respective regions, those who decided to move to Dar es Salaam would often come with a general knowledge regarding the places they should go in order to locate friends, family and other contacts who may have recently made the big journey to Bongo. Their aim, of course, was to re-establish themselves in social networks as quickly as possible in order to ensure that they would not go hungry, but also to limit their chances of being physically abused. Most of those who reported being sexually abused in Dar es Salaam stated that it had occurred during their first few days in the city before they had made sufficient contacts to protect themselves. A few reported they would sometimes wait by the bus or train station for young men coming from their home regions whom they would pretend to befriend in order to take advantage of them, steal their money and sometimes even rape them. Most who came to the city did so by bus, train, lorry or in the case of Mtwara and the southern coast, by boat, paying fares when they had the money, and stowing away when they did not. Factors such as the steady improvement of Tanzanian roads and the increase in the number of vehicles on them help to explain why there has been such an increase in the number of people recently making their way to Dar es Salaam. The road and railways have long been the arteries connecting people to the cities in Tanzania.

It is not only young Tanzanians, however, who make their way to Dar es Salaam. Over the years there has been an increasing number of youths coming from Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo seeking refuge from the wars in their respective homelands. Many Kenyans have also made their way south to Bongo in search of a more hassle-free and less competitive business environment. Most of the young people I spoke with who ended up in Dar es Salaam from other countries reported experiences similar to those reported by Tanzanian youth, but they also had the additional problem of having to worry about being deported or removed to a refugee settlement if they were picked up by the police.

Although this is not the subject of this chapter, it should be noted that many of those I spoke with did not consider Dar es Salaam their final destination. They had dreams of eventually making it to South Africa and a few had already attempted that. One man I knew had tried to get there on five different occasions and despite almost making it a few times, each time he was caught by local police and returned to Tanzania. Despite these setbacks, he
still has his dream and hopes that six will be his lucky number. Some dream of emigrating to Ulaya (the West), while others talk of going east to India or Pakistan as drug runners. A further exploration of these dreams and imaginaries will be the subject of Chapter Nine.

The roads in Tanzania are not unidirectional and young people freely and willingly move between localities. Returning home is quite common, for short visits, for funerals, when ill, and when on the run from the police. For these reasons, young people seem to strive to maintain trans-local identities rather than multi-local identities. They embrace movement as the best way to achieve this objective, making both the process and the possibility of movement centrally important for understanding the way they imagine their worlds. One could argue that young migrants are bodily re-mapping the nation through movement, and that individual maskanis in towns and cities throughout the country, by serving as loci for both social and labor activity, become the most important points of reference on maps that every young person struggling to get by carries around in his or her head.

Poetic Geography

Once in Dar es Salaam, a different sort of movement becomes important. Simply put, the more willing one is to embrace mobility in the pursuit of labor within the city, the better are one’s chances of economic success. David Harvey, summarizing and building on the work of Henri Lefebvre (1974), tells us that “command over space is a fundamental and all-pervasive source of social power in and over everyday life” (1990:226). Harvey’s argument stems from the idea that “the intersecting command of money, time, and space forms a substantial nexus of social power,” and that “command over spaces and times is a crucial element in any search for profit” (Ibid.). In On the African Waterfront: Urban disorder and the transformation of work in Colonial Mombassa, Cooper (1987) deftly illustrates the way in which Mombassa’s working class was established precisely through the transformation of local notions of space and time into notions more in line with capitalist production needs. During the colonial period, workers were encouraged to settle permanently in Mombassa and to commit themselves to steady employment. In Chapter Two, I suggested that Dar es Salaam working classes were formed in ways similar to those outlined by Cooper, and further, that current class differences, which disparage those who do not participate in the formal economy, are a contemporary manifestation of the class structure introduced under British colonialism. People who engage in informal economy endeavors do so not only as a challenge to Tanzanian middle class norms regarding what is considered the proper and preferred way to labor but also as a challenge to capitalist ideals of time and space as formerly introduced by the British. This analysis, however, is further complicated by the fact that contemporary capital seems to encourage the development of flexibility among workers as a way of increasing profits. Harvey
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argues that this flexibility, which is often imagined as "post-modern," is merely the most recent manifestation of the eternal effort to compress both time and space in the attempt to increase capitalist profits. Young people living and working in the streets of Dar es Salaam exemplify these so-called post-modern ideals of flexibility and mobility, intuitively improving upon capitalist modes of marketing. In so doing, they confront the modernist ideals of the Tanzanian state and the Dar es Salaam middle classes, which seem to stubbornly cling to the belief that respectability is tied to settling down and working a nine-to-five job. Although such objectives are still desired by many young marginalized workers as well, especially when it comes to eventually establishing some sort of domestic permanency, most recognize that the best way to make money is to create niches for themselves in the currently expanding capitalist economy by remaining both flexible and mobile.

In The Practice of Everyday Life, Michel de Certeau (1984, especially chapters seven and nine) expounds on what he refers to as "spatial practices." In an attempt to understand the city through the experiences of the "ordinary practitioners of the city" who "live 'down below,' below the thresholds at which visibility begins," he focuses his attention on the relationship between the way they walk the city and the way they impose meaning on it (1984:93). As a point of departure, he is writing against voyeurism — the act of looking on the city from above, of subjecting it to a totalizing gaze. Rather than searching for an ordered way of understanding the city, he is celebrating disorder, seeing in it the potential to disrupt. Challenging Foucauldian assumptions about the absolute "order of things," de Certeau advises those who wish to grasp a fragmentary view from below to:

[follow the swarming activity of these procedures that, far from being regulated or eliminated by panoptic administration, have reinforced themselves in a proliferating illegitimacy, and combined in accord with unreadable but stable tactics to the point of constituting everyday regulations and surreptitious creativities that are merely concealed by the frantic mechanisms and discourses of the observational organization (1984:96).]

He refers to the re-writing of the city's landscape through walking as a "poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning" (1984:105). Following this line of thought, I would like to posit that those who walk the city's streets in an effort to make a living, like the street vendors called Wamachinga whose stories I explore in this chapter, are the contemporary poets of Dar es Salaam. Through their movement — "their pedestrian speech acts" — (1984:97) they re-inscribe city spaces with meanings that challenge modernist ideals of the city as put forth by both the state and the "respectable" classes. As was made evident in the preceding chapters, young people wishing to enter into the formal economies of Dar es Salaam must negotiate for spaces in which they can conduct their business activities. For some this means negotiating with other entrepreneurs but for
most it means negotiating with the police as representatives of the state and the status quo, a status quo that is further enforced by middle class notions of space, labor and respectability. In efforts to re-map the city in ways that are more conducive to the workings of such informal economic activities, official names are replaced with unofficial names, traffic is slowed or stopped completely, and detours are established to benefit those on foot. Markets are moved or become totally mobile, while sidewalks serve as the paper on which these poetic cartographers draw and redraw their maps.

In this chapter I focus on the way that Dar es Salaam is being gradually reshaped from a city of civil servants and formal laborers who are engaged in respectable income-generating activities in support of the socialist state to a city made much more complex by informal economic endeavors designed to re-create the market economy in ways that are more reflective of capitalism. Through mobility and flexibility, young businessmen and women are re-drawing the boundaries of the city, of labor and of respectability, whether they are street vendors, prostitutes, beggars or bus touts.

Kutembea Kama Daladala, Or To Travel Around The City Like a Commuter Bus

One evening, as quiet and calm were beginning to overtake the city, I sat at Maskani with a group of young men waiting for the traffic toward the suburbs to die down. As we sat talking, we were approached by a young mkahawa, or coffee seller. These vendors, icons of Swahili culture, traverse the city by foot in the morning and early evening selling small cups of freshly brewed Arabica coffee along with kashata, a sesame sweet. In the course of a day they can cover huge distances on foot. If they own their own coffee pots and coal braziers, they may make up to 5000 shillings a day (± 10 USD), but many who work for others are only provided with food and a place to sleep. When the mkahawa approached us at Maskani we waved him over. For about 25 US cents it was possible to buy everyone a round of coffee, and neither I nor anyone else found this expensive. He put his pot of coffee down and poured espresso-size cups for each of us before offering us his tray of kashata. It was more or less up to him to keep track of how much everyone ate and drank, though at the end there would inevitably be an argument over exactly how much was owed with each person announcing how many cups he or she had drunk and how many pieces of kashata had been eaten. While he was standing there waiting for us to finish drinking so he could retrieve his cups, Athumani, one of the car washers, engaged him in a discussion asking him where he had walked that day. In his response, the Mkahawa seemed to go on and on, prompting Athumani to exclaim to us, "huyu anatembea kama daladala," or "this one, he travels around like a commuter bus," playing on the double meaning of kutembea, which can mean both walking or driving on.3 We all laughed at the image this young man walking the city streets all day long, but Athumani’s comment also encouraged me to start thinking about
how the mobility of workers within the city allows them to increase their profits. By employing their own physical labor they both transverse and transform the city, carrying mobile markets on their backs, in their bags, or in the case of the mkahawa, in their coffee pots.

Most of the car washers I worked with at Maskani did not partake in this sort of labor, though some of them had in the past. In fact, they mostly depended on the increasing (auto)mobility of the upper and middle classes to make their money. But many of the street vendors working along the intersection formed by the roads that come together at Maskani were taking advantage of their own mobility, walking up and down the sides of the roads all day long with their merchandise, chasing after vehicles carrying interested customers, and knocking on the windows of potential ones. The young men whose primary mode of merchandise marketing involves walking the city streets in a manner that both allows them to display their goods and to expand their customer base are now collectively known as Wamachinga (machinga, sing.) in Tanzania (Fig. 6.1). This type of labor is most often referred to as biashara ndogondogo (small business), or biashara za mikono (business of the hands) by those who practice it. Mchinga is a small town near Lindi in the south of the country, and it is believed that the first petty traders to come to Dar es Salaam originated from that area. They were known as watu wa Mchinga (the people of Mchinga), which neighboring peoples shortened to Wamachinga. Even though the people from that region are for the most part (Tanzanian) Makonde, their identity came to be associated with location rather than ethnic background. Similarly, people living around Arusha are often collectively referred to as Waarusha regardless of ethnic background. Gradually people began using Wamachinga to refer to petty traders coming from the south and, over the course of time, to all petty traders in general. Even though today’s entrepreneurs come from all over the country, they are now collectively referred to as Wamachinga in the newspapers, by government representatives, and among most people living in the city. In the beginning, the term Wamachinga reportedly had extremely derogatory connotations, but it has now become so normalized that even the traders themselves use it. As one young man told me, “you might be Chagga or Luguru, but if you are walking the city doing small business (biashara ndogondogo) then you are called Makonde or Machinga. These days it is not a tribe (kabila), it is a type of work, just like all prostitutes are called Wahaya regardless of where they come from. Prostitutes come from all over the country, but in the beginning it was mostly Wahaya from Bukoba and people remember that.” Despite the normalization of the term, however, to be called either Makonde or Machinga in the domain of petty trading may still be interpreted as a slur with implications of dishonesty and untrustworthiness, something that may be surprising given that prior to the late 1990s the majority of house guards working in Dar es Salaam were Makonde men specifically employed because they were believed to be more trustworthy than locals. Those who worked as watchmen, however, were related to the Makonde peo-
pies from Mozambique who sought refuge in Tanzania during the war and not to Makonde peoples living north of the border in Tanzania. Nyerere welcomed the Mozambique Makonde to Dar es Salaam, granting them undeveloped plots of land in the Msasani and Mikocheni sections of the city, and allowing them to establish a carvers’ village in Mwenge where they sold their ebony goods. By the time that Tanzanian Makonde began migrating to the city, Makonde from Mozambique were already established in Dar es Salaam. Not wanting their reputations tarnished by the newcomers, they publicly distanced themselves from the Tanzanian Makonde, while preferring to call them Wamachinga rather than Wamakonde.

Although in the beginning most traders were men, increasingly young women are also taking up this form of entrepreneurship. Rather than walking the city streets, however, they are more likely to be seen visiting office buildings where they target a specific clientele and offer high-end merchandise for sale. The increasing number of women working as petty traders throughout East Africa seems to have captured popular imagination in recent years as is illustrated by the several editorials that have appeared in the newspaper The East African discussing this peculiarity of modern urban life. With titles like “With No Jobs Around, Hawking Gains Respectability” (3 April 2000), and “Everyone Knows a Lady’s Handbag is Her Shop” (15 May 2000), both articles try to make a connection between the growing respectability of petty trading and increasing numbers of highly educated women who seem to be entering the field instead of other professions more traditionally considered respectable. Despite the lip service being paid to “respectability,” however, the few female Wamachinga I was able to speak with stated that they were continually subject to the same sorts of harassment as young men working on the streets, though perhaps a little more refined at times.

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One of the five focus groups I regularly worked with in Dar es Salaam was comprised of a group of four Wamachinga who sold new and re-conditioned auto parts at Maskani (Figs. 6.2, 6.3). Though I worked most closely with these four, there were many more Wamachinga working at Maskani. Because their numbers changed constantly it would be difficult to give an exact figure, but there were between fifteen to twenty working at the corner during business hours. Financially speaking, they were one step above the car washers. Most were in serious relationships or were married, and several had children. Unlike the car washers, most Wamachinga had permanent housing and few
slept on the streets. Although their type of business usually involved standing alongside their merchandise on the side of the road for most of the day, all of them had previously been involved in the sort of physically mobile labor characteristic of Wamachinga and had sold merchandise ranging from plastic bags and cashew nuts to sunglasses and T-shirts on the streets of Dar es Salaam. Because I think they can best illustrate several of the points I would like make in this chapter, I now present abbreviated summaries of the life histories of these four entrepreneurs. Although I recount their stories in the second person and in a linear way, they were told to me in the first person. I have altered the stories only in terms of readability. I start with the story of Rungu, a nickname meaning “police baton.” When I began my research at Maskani, Rungu worked there selling new and used car parts for luxury automobiles. Positioned on the side of the road directly opposite the Sheraton, he and his co-workers would display their goods in such a way as to attract the attention of people as they drove into and out of the city every day on the way to and from work. I used to refer to Rungu jokingly as “the king of the Wamachinga,” a title that usually earned a laugh, but was never really accepted. When I decided that I wanted to work with a group of street vendors from Maskani, Mbelwa and I first approached Rungu who then suggested others whom we should invite to participate. Despite his discomfort with the title of king, Rungu was clearly in charge of activities relating to the acquisition, reclamation, and selling of auto parts (Fig. 6.4). Everyone was more or less in business for himself, but at the end of the day they needed Rungu’s approval to continue working at Maskani and to be included in my research. Those who sold auto parts were expected to conform to certain norms and values similar to those who were engaged in car washing activities. In general they were expected to behave in a manner that would not disrupt business, to keep a clean and neat appearance, to speak respectfully with customers, to conceal illegal activities from the police, and to not challenge the atmosphere of “peace and love” that pervaded the corner, at least in theory. Rungu, given his age and status as one of the first to begin working at Maskani, considered it his prerogative to confront younger men who failed to live up to these standards, and for the most part this went unchallenged.

**Rungu**

Rungu, the oldest of those included in my research, was born in 1967 in a small village 15 miles from Mtwara in the south of the country. Unlike the other young men who did not even bother to mention their ethnic backgrounds, Rungu identifies as Makonde, though he says his speech and way of life have become so Swahilified that when he goes back home no one believes he is really Makonde. His parents divorced in 1969 at which time his father moved to Dar es Salaam, leaving him to stay with his mother in Mtwara. In 1974 his father came and took him to Dar es Salaam for one year. He returned to his village in 1975 to go through jando – a
Makonde initiation camp - then returned to Dar es Salaam in 1976 to be with his father again. In 1977 he started primary school in Korasini. He continued school in Dar es Salaam until 1983 when he asked to return to Mtwara to finish his primary school. In 1984 he completed Standard 7 then began what he called “elimu ya dunia,” or education of the world.

After finishing school he stayed in Mtwara for another year helping his mother on the farm. Life was very difficult in the village and they had nothing, so in 1987 he decided to return to Dar es Salaam to try to make some money to help his mother. His first job was frying fish in the ferry fish market on the waterfront. The only pay he received for this dirty and exhausting work was food for the day. Next he managed to get a job helping some Chagga women make mbege, a local banana-based alcoholic drink originating from the Kilimanjaro region. At this job, he only managed to get 800 shillings a month in pay. A friend then invited him to start working in Kariakoo, selling merchandise for someone else (kupiga winga) in 1988. By 1989 he had finally raised enough start-up capital to begin his own business. He invested in sunglasses, which he then began selling along Samora Avenue in the city center. At that time there were very few people selling sunglasses and the tourist business was really starting to take off in Tanzania. He would buy the glasses for 300 shillings wholesale then sell them for 1000. He could make nearly the same amount of money selling one pair of sunglasses as he could work for a month making banana beer. Business was great, but he gave it up after the Dar es Salaam regional commissioner herself grabbed him one day while he was doing business and told him to leave Samora Avenue or risk being thrown in jail. So, in
1991 he changed his business technique and began walking the streets to sell his merchandise.

In 1992, he met a Zaramo woman and decided to settle down with her. They had their first child not long after moving in together. In the same year he moved his business to Maskani along with two friends around the time that the Sheraton was being built. They were the first to set up business there and in the beginning it was only the three of them. He reported that business was much better then and there was much less competition. His expenses at home were much lower too. In the beginning his wife used to require 500 shillings a day for household expenses, but by the year 2000, she needed at least four times as much. Along with increased competition came increased harassment from the police. As the number of vendors in the city grew, police began stopping them more often and asking them for identification (kitambulisho). Since it is impossible to get an official identification card without being formally employed there is no possibility of meeting this request. Rungu stated that he did not think that he should have to answer to the government anyway since the government had never provided anything for him. He came to realize that his family was much more reliable and important to him that the government or the police would ever be. He wonders why the nation's leaders tell young people to go back to their villages when there is nothing for them there. He insists that they are not being sent there to help themselves (jitegemea), but so that the leaders can keep the wealth of the city for themselves. He says that coming to the city has expanded his mind (kupanua mawazo) and that he would not even consider returning to the village unless the social services there were improved. Not only has it become difficult to make a living in the villages, but it has also become much more expensive. He would have trouble supporting his mother if he had stayed in the village. He wonders why the city council did not drive them away from Maskani in 1993 when there were only three of them. He says that now the police have turned them into their money-making project (mradi). Now that there are close to 100 people making a living at Maskani, there are police who are able to support themselves solely off the bribes they make there. He finds the government slogan "vijana taifa la kesho," "youth, the future of the nation," especially hypocritical, and says he has been hearing this his whole life and now his son is hearing it (Fig. 5.19). He wonders if the country will ever belong to his son. Aside from the police, he says, the only bad part about working at Maskani in recent years is the increase in insults flung at them from passing cars. He says people actually slow down, roll down their windows and yell out to them, calling them thieves. He wonders how it is possible to defend himself from such insults.
Zameah

Zameah was born in 1973 in a small village near Mtwara in the southeastern part of Tanzania where he lived for the first ten years of his life. When he was ten, his parents divorced and he remained with his mother who then remarried and moved to a new village in the same region. He lived on the coast and learned how to fish from his maternal uncles. After three years working as a fisherman a woman came to his village and invited him to come to her village to work as her domestic helper, a job he kept for three more years. The father of the woman who employed him was impressed with him and eventually invited him to come to the city of Mtwara to take care of his cows, but after only six months Zameah was tempted to go to Dar es Salaam where he was convinced he could make more money.

In 1993 he came to Dar Salaam by way of the ferry. His brother was already in Dar es Salaam and Zameah came with the intention of finding him, even though he had no idea where to start looking for him. When he arrived in Dar es Salaam he took a taxi to a small guesthouse in Kariakoo and paid for a room for a week. Right away he began looking for his brother but, worried about how far his money would go, he also began looking for work. He befriended another young man who was selling plastic bags near his guesthouse who then took Zameah to a local wholesaler where he could buy some bags for himself. He bought 3000 shillings worth of bags at first, but as he sold them before noon he decided to go back and buy more. It only took him a couple of days to find his brother who invited him to move in with him. He stopped selling plastic bags and went into business with his brother who was selling recycled children's clothing (mitumba) in the Kariakoo market. He invested 40,000 shillings in this business and then in 1994 he and his brother decided to hire two other young men to sell their merchandise for them. The two of them then joined up with another one of their brothers who was also living in Dar es Salaam and the three of them began selling kargas (women's cloth) also in Kariakoo. He continued in this business for about a year and was making quite a bit of money. Then in 1995 the city council gave the police a mandate to clean up Kariakoo and to round up all the Wamachinga. The police confiscated his merchandise and beat him up. He tried to run away and hide among the butcher stands in the area, but they just turned him over to the police. He was tied to another vendor to

Figure 6.4 Rungu balances on a hubcap and reads the newspaper at Maskani while awaiting customers. Dar es Salaam. (2002)
await transportation to jail. Zameah had a razor in his pocket and tried to convince the other young man that they should try to cut the rope, free themselves and run away, but the other man was afraid of what the police might do if they caught them and so prevented Zameah from trying to escape. On that day, three big lorries were filled with Wamachinga and then taken away to Keko jail. He was in jail for a year without a formal case being drawn up. Eventually, he was tried along with 35 other vendors, but then the case was dropped and he was released.

Following their release from jail, a group of them went to their maskani/kiji-weni on Kongo street where their fellow workers took up a collection for them. Each was given 15,000 shillings to rest up and maybe start over again. Zameah says that during that time he was always scared, afraid the police would arrest him again and send him back to jail. Whenever he saw the police he would run and hide. He tried to find his brothers and went back to the place where they had lived together, but they had since moved away. One of his in-laws agreed to take care of him for a couple of days until he could rent a room and find his brothers again. By early 1997 he was back in business, though just barely. He was selling furniture cushions for someone else, walking the whole city in the hot sun day after day and making very little money. On most days he made just enough to eat before going to bed at night, and only rarely did he have enough money to pay for public transport. Selling merchandise for someone else is called kupiga winga and people only resort to it when they have absolutely no start-up capital.

Those were his most difficult days in Dar es Salaam and he seriously considered returning to Mtwara. He and his brothers persevered, however, and eventually they began to get ahead. They pooled their money and at Christmas time they bought their own goods and began selling handkerchiefs. In a short time they made 150,000 shillings between them, which they split three ways with the understanding that each would start up his own business. Zameah took his money and purchased a wholesale lot of Mike Tyson T-shirts. It was the first time that Tyson shirts were available in Tanzania, and Zameah was one of the few selling them. Business was very good; everyone wanted a Tyson shirt. One of his brothers was not as fortunate. He wasted his initial capital on alcohol then came to Zameah for help. Believing that blood is thicker than water (damu uzito kuliko maji), he gave his brother 15,000 shilling to invest in goods that were almost immediately confiscated by representatives of the city council. Zameah gave him another 10,000 shillings and his brother was finally able to get back on his feet. After his success with the Mike Tyson T-shirts he began selling a type of lamp that was also very popular. He says that all the women were making their husbands and boyfriends buy these lamps for them, but there were not enough to go around. He believes the
police targeted him at that time because he was selling the lamps that all of their wives wanted. They confiscated his goods one day without pressing charges and when he went to the station to claim his goods he was told they were missing.

Eventually Zameah decided to start selling spare car parts at Maskani where he did not have to walk in the hot sun all day and where the profit margins were fairly good. He could buy car jacks for 28,000 shillings from an Asian wholesaler then sell them from Maskani for a minimum of 35,000, which was still half of what the Asian-run retail shops were selling them for. At Maskani, it became important for him to start developing relationships with his customers, many of whom came back for business. Because his customers were mainly wealthy automobile owners from the northern suburbs, it also became important for him to keep himself neat and clean. Once he had firmly established himself in business he decided to get married. They have a son, but he says that he still does not have everything he wants and that it is difficult for them to get ahead because there are always unexpected expenses that make it almost impossible to save money.

**Nduki**

Nduki was born at Ocean Road Hospital in Dar es Salaam in 1981. His father, who was a driver for the army (JKT) built a house in the Tandika area of the city where they lived until 1982 when his father was transferred to Iringa, which was also his home region. They stayed there for five years before his father was again transferred again, this time to Mbeya (his mother's home region) where Nduki started school in 1989. In 1992 he returned to Iringa where he stayed until he completed primary school. In the meantime his parents returned to their house in Dar es Salaam. His father died in 1993 and when Nduki finished school in 1995 his mother asked him to come to Dar es Salaam to take care of their house so she could go to Iringa. His brother went on to secondary school, but he chose to start his own business in the Temeke area of Dar es Salaam in 1996. He started out walking through residential areas of Temeke, selling cooking utensils door to door. In 1997, someone broke into his house and stole his money and his goods. Disheartened he applied for a job at a local Asian-owned ebony-processing factory where he only worked for five days. He was appalled at the working conditions, the machines were unsafe and it was not at all unusual for people to have their fingers cut off in the machinery. To make matters worse, they were only being paid 650 shillings a day. He tried to organize the workers to strike, but the factory owner quashed the action, firing most of those who had agreed to strike. Following that experience, he decided to go back to selling kitchen utensils in Makumbusho, on the other side of the city from where he lived.
Since he had very little money, he walked to work carrying all of his goods. He was to have no luck in Makumbusho though, and it was only a matter of time before his goods were confiscated by the city council. At that time, he reported, he was feeling his way in the dark (*mkono kisani*), not sure what the next day would bring. In time, he made connections with those working at Maskani and decided to join them in the selling of auto parts.

**Juma**

Juma was born in 1980 in Kilosa, a village near Morogoro, where his parents were farmers. His father died in 1986 and soon after his mother enrolled him in primary school in Kilosa. In 1987, she told him she was going to Dar es Salaam to see an uncle and never returned. In 1989 he got the message that she had died. When he was in standard five he had a friend in Morogoro who was going back and forth to Dar es Salaam on business. With 70,000 shillings in his pocket from the harvest and his friend’s assistance he decided to head for Dar es Salaam with his brothers’ blessing and the intent of finding his uncle who he did not know. When he arrived in Dar es Salaam he ran into someone from his village who invited Juma to come to his business stall in Buguruni and to help him with his business. He decided to rent a room together with the other young man with whom he came to the city. His friend had a job at an Asian-owned factory making iodized salt. The friend then met a schoolgirl who he eventually got pregnant. Scared, he ran away leaving Juma with the rent to pay. Around this time, Juma finally tracked down his uncle who was living in Kigogo. The uncle encouraged him to return to Kilosa, asking him what kind of work he would be able to get without an education. His uncle even offered to pay his bus fare back to Kilosa, but Juma decided to disregard this advice and then rented a room on his own. In the beginning he had very little money and was forced to sleep on cardboard boxes on the floor of his room. His friend, who he thought had abandoned him, then returned and was able to help him out with the rent. Juma gave him 50,000 shillings to start a business and the guy disappeared once more, never to be seen again. During this time he walked the city selling things. He would start everyday in Kariakoo and walk all the way out to Mwenge (about 15 kilometers). He used to eat lunch at Maskani and slowly began making friends with the people working there. Eventually, he began bringing his things to Maskani to sell. He quickly got used to the 4,000 to 6,000 shillings a day he was making at Maskani, and it became difficult for him to imagine taking a job where he would only get paid once a month.

There are many similarities in the stories of these young men, several of which seem to challenge commonly held beliefs about people engaged in informal economic endeavors. All of these men came to Dar es Salaam with
the first big wave of informal laborers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, during the period that Tanzanians refer to as the Ruksa Period, when Ali Hassan Mwinyi was President and economic and political liberalization was beginning to be embraced by the state. People almost uniformly argue that it is much more difficult to get started in the city now that competition is higher and the police are tougher. Despite this, their stories are in many ways similar to the stories told by more recent migrants to the city. All of them had received some sort of minimal primary education before coming to Dar es Salaam and, as is quite common, three of them decided to come to Dar es Salaam only after finishing primary education (standard seven), the point when most people who are educated in Tanzania cease going to school. When Juma showed up in Dar es Salaam only having completed standard five, he was rebuked by his uncle who wondered what sort of work he would be able to get without an education. What Juma realized, and what his uncle did not, was that the new forms of labor becoming available in the city did not require the same degree of education as did jobs in the formal sector. Many people younger than Juma agreed with this and, not surprisingly, in recent years it seems that the number of younger people, especially young women, coming to the city with less education is increasing. With the exception of Rungu, all of them also came to Dar es Salaam with start-up capital in their pockets and the intention of going into business for themselves. Contrary to popular expectations, the majority of those who decide to come to Dar es Salaam do so with at least a small amount of money, and many come with the blessings and even minimal financial support from their family members who, no doubt, consider such support an investment for their own futures. In many cases, it was clear that people chose to go to regional centers closer to home in order to raise enough capital before going on to Dar es Salaam. In a few cases, people reported committing major robberies before making the journey in order to guarantee they would have enough money to make the transition. Additionally, it would be highly unlikely for anyone to come to Dar es Salaam without having some contacts through a family member or friend. During my time in Dar es Salaam, I was always meeting family members of the young men who agreed to work with me, sometimes in the streets and sometimes in their homes. Despite the regularity of these occurrences, it was quite some time before I realized how rooted most of the young men were in the city, since I had chosen to focus on their mobility.

None of these four young men ever mentioned physical abuse at home as a reason for deciding to come to Dar es Salaam, though all of them had either lost a parent to death or had parents who were divorced, facts they introduced to discussions relating to how and why they came to Dar es Salaam. The fact that they did not mention abuse in the home does not necessarily mean that it did not occur. I never developed the sort of rapport with these men that I had with some of the others at Maskani, most of whom did mention abuse as a reason for leaving home. So, although abuse in the home was never a subject of discussion with the Wamachinga, all of them...
introduced topics related to what they considered to be abuses perpetrated against them by the police, the state and, in some cases, society as a whole. They all reported having had goods confiscated at one time or another. Rungu especially held the government and the nation’s leaders accountable for the difficulties both he and his son continue to face in spite of the state’s hypocritical promises. Whenever he initiated critical evaluations of the state, however, the others were quick to join in.

A continued connection to home is also a theme that runs throughout the stories the Wamachinga chose to share with me, especially in the case of Rungu. People usually chose to leave home in order to fund themselves and to better assist their families in the pursuit of maisha, or life, and it was not uncommon for them to send remittances home once they were firmly established in Dar es Salaam. Yet, even for those younger men who had yet to achieve the sort of stability characteristic of this group of vendors, providing financial assistance to family members in need was an accepted responsibility and unless ill, none of them would consider returning home for a visit without gifts and money for their families. Rungu’s stinging indictment of village life was typical of what I heard throughout my time in Dar es Salaam. Since the days of Nyerere, national leaders have been encouraging youth to return to the land, to invest in agriculture, and to remain in the villages. What Rungu’s analysis illustrates, however, is the absurdity of making such suggestions when it is extremely difficult to make either a decent living or lead a decent life in the rural areas without access to the cash economy and the consumer goods of the cities. During another discussion Rungu emphasized the issue further, offering the following example. As pointed out, to raise 500 shillings in the village it would be necessary to sell two big grain sacks full of cassava, but you could make the same money unloading one truck of cassava for someone in the city. With that 500 shillings one could buy a pair of jeans in the city, but most likely it would not even be possible to find a pair of jeans for sale in the village, and even if you could find them they would be much more expensive. It has been the way of Tanzanian politicians to talk of the nation being “united by poverty,” and to discourage indiscriminate consumption of consumer goods, especially imported goods. This argument, which had a certain degree of believability when made by the slightly built Nyerere who himself resisted the lure of consumer goods, becomes weaker and weaker as the governing classes steadily become more and more corrupt and corpulent. The economic and material divide between urban and rural Tanzania has always been great but never as great as it is right now.

With the exception of Rungu, the vendors chose to speak very briefly and vaguely about how they came to be working at Maskani, a fact that I believe indicates that their presence at the corner was in some way contested, at least in the eyes of someone like Rungu who saw himself as the one of the first to capitalize on the location. Although all the young men seemed perfectly willing and able to talk about other aspects of their work lives, it was left to Rungu to present the history of work at Maskani, as well as to outline
current issues related to work. He never specifically dissuaded any of the younger men from speaking but he was their spokesman on certain matters because of his seniority at the corner or simply as a result of him being a few years older than the other men. Regardless of the reasons, he was rarely challenged by the others during our discussions, a privilege they certainly did not enjoy.

Several of the stories offered by the Wamachinga also contained criticism of the fact that Tanzanian-born Asians controlled the majority of wholesale and retail outlets, as well as a great many of the factories that might offer alternative work for Tanzanian youth were they not so exploitative. When I first heard this criticism I was not too surprised because they resonated with stories I had heard from several upper and middle class Tanzanians I had interviewed. Outsiders to the world of informal trading would often perpetuate common stereotypes regarding both Asians and street vendors. They would tell me that it was terrible the way that predatory Asian businessmen took advantage of the poor, defenseless Wamachinga. The common perception was that most of those who earned their living on the streets came to the city penniless and in desperation and that Asian businessmen employed these young men to sell their merchandise in exchange for a mere pittance. In these stories it was assumed that the vendors were victims who had no choice but to accept the terms as dictated by the Asians. The relationship between Asian businessmen and Tanzanian street entrepreneurs is not as clear cut as I had been led to believe in my conversations with members of the Tanzanian middle class. In time I began to see that, in fact, Wamachinga often worked together with Asian wholesalers in ways that were not immediately visible to the general population. As the stories of all four of these young men show, few Wamachinga are willing to let themselves be taken advantage of for too long.

To begin with, it must be understood that there is a divide between Asian retailers and Asian wholesalers and it is often Wamachinga who bridge the space in between. The complaints filed to the city council against Wamachinga generally originate with retailers who dislike the fact that they are being undersold by young men who add insult to injury by clogging up the sidewalks in front of their shops, blocking the entrances and enticing customers to make alternative purchases before they can even make it inside their stores. The wholesalers gladly do business with Wamachinga, however, often giving them better prices than retailers for the simple reason that the street vendors are able to purchase larger quantities. Since the street vendors have lower overhead, do not to pay rent, transportation fees, or VAT, they are able to sell more at much lower prices than retailers. Their mobility also helps them to increase profits as most people would rather not wade through the markets and busy city streets to buy inside retail stores if they have the option of pulling over to the side of the road on their way home and buying goods through the window of their car. Of course, as many of the vendors I spoke with pointed out, it is the same people who praise the convenience of
buying their merchandise in this way who also complain about the unsightli-
ness of Wamachinga at every intersection. It is believed that they are the
ones who are shout insults at them on the days they are not buying. Whenever I asked Wamachinga about the popular belief that they were being
taking advantage of by Asian businessmen they would laugh at the absurdity
of the idea and explain that wholesalers never fronted merchandise to any-
one without capital. If there were people selling merchandise for other peo-
ple (kupiga wingu), then they were most likely selling it for other Tanzanians,
and if Asian wholesalers were taking advantage of anyone then it was most
likely their brothers in the retail business.

Weka Mji Safi: ‘Keeping the city clean” for Dar es Salaam’s respectabe classes

The above example illustrates, besides the complexity of Indo-African rela-
tions in Dar es Salaam, that it is primarily due to mobility and flexibility that
street vendors are able to undersell traditional retailers while also making a
profit. Further, the same mobility and flexibility challenge middle class ideas
related to both capitalist and socialist modernities, as well as to the relations-
ships between labor and respectability. This was made evident by the resist-
ance shown toward street vending by retailers — Asian and non-Asian alike
— as well as by those in the “respectable” classes who were quick to
express misplaced liberal concern for the “poor exploited vendors” whose
worlds they clearly knew very little about, while simultaneously buying their
consumer goods from them at a discount and complaining about the unsight-
ly transformation of city space. I came to realize through my conversations
with young people struggling to make a living that what I first perceived of as
a resistance to capitalism was, in fact, a reinvention and refining of it.

Recent attempts by the state to control and tax various informal economies
suggest that the state is becoming aware of the profitability of the sector.
This is also true for the “respectable” classes who are beginning to demand
that their children be taught skills at university that will allow them to start
their own informal economy businesses after graduation (Sunday Observer, 5
Dec. 1999), as well as demanding that the city council reserve sidewalk
space for the children of long time residents of Dar es Salaam instead of
allowing migrants from the rural areas to monopolize the informal sector
(Guardian, 7 Feb. 2002). In the words of Hussein Omar, resident of Kariakoo,
“How come our own children lack working space while petty traders from
upcountry crowd our houses? A time will come when we will have to use
force. If blood is spilt (sic), then let it be so.” In line with the “rhetoric of
peace” that so often characterizes public responses, Ilala mayor Abuu cau-
tioned that it was “not advisable to use threats, especially in a community
that cherishes love and unity” (ibid.). Despite the fact that some
“respectable” citizens of Dar es Salaam are starting to refashion their views
on street vending (especially if their children are permitted to share in the
profits), there are still many city residents who share the views expressed by Picho Mbito in his letter to the editor of the Dar es Salaam based Guardian newspaper (26 Feb. 2000). Under the title, "Street Vendors are a Nuisance," Mbito declares, "I strongly protest against the police and city authorities for allowing food and music vendors to do their business in front of shops and residential buildings." He derides the city authorities for focusing their "clean-up" efforts on the city center while ignoring the parts of the city where "visitors from abroad" are unlikely to go. He complains of the noise, lack of parking space, congested sidewalks, dirt, refuse, and backed-up sewers, finally pointing out that the people who operate such establishments do not pay taxes nor do they carry operating licenses. In his mind, they pollute the city's streets and offer nothing in return to the communities in which they set up shop. Mbito's comments also point to the common awareness that official strategies employed for keeping order in the city center where Maskani is located differ from those employed in the less affluent areas of the city, and further suggests that the strong-arm strategies used to keep the center orderly for Western consumption should be deployed throughout the city to achieve the same effect. Such attitudes help to explain sentiments expressed by so many of the young people working at Maskani regarding the need to keep the area and themselves neat and clean, and to maintain an air of peacefulness at the corner in an effort to reduce their chances of being singled out by the police for both persecution and prosecution.

Weka Mji Safi, or Keep the City Clean, is the slogan employed by the city of Dar es Salaam to represent a whole host of regulations and practices aimed at maintaining sanitary conditions in the city. The slogan, in both Kiswahili and English is painted on the few trashcans scattered across the city, on the sides of refuse trucks, and on various billboards in the city. As was alluded to in Mbito's comments above, most efforts to keep the city clean are directed at either the city center or the affluent northern suburbs, while those living in other areas of the city are left to find out on their own the best way to discard trash and sewage. Although the campaign to keep the city clean is supposed to focus on environmental cleanliness, regulations relating to it are often employed to control petty traders whose business practices are thought to contribute to the degradation of the city's environment. Certain traders are targeted by police because their business endeavors lead to the production of too much garbage. For example, early in 2002 the police began targeting dafu, or coconut vendors who harvest young coconuts south of Dar es Salaam to sell to city dwellers wishing to quench their thirst with fresh coconut water. Because the beverage is served on the spot from the coconut shell, a large amount of waste is quickly generated. In the past, people threw the coconut shells in the street or on the sidewalk after finishing their drink and small mountains of coconut refuse would accumulate in the areas where vendors sold their produce. To put an end to this practice, hundreds of coconut vendors were rounded up along with their bicycles and their large baskets of coconuts. Most were released after paying a small fine and
promising to gather the coconut waste from their customers when they had finished drinking. This intervention appears somewhat reasonable but the problem could undoubtedly have been solved in other ways that would not have targeted the vendors. Individual fines could have been given to those consuming the coconuts and then discarding them in the street (most often middle class Asians in the city center), or refuse containers could have been positioned near the corners where coconut vendors are known to congregate. By targeting vendors without licenses, however, it was possible for the city to avoid spending the money on refuse containers and pick-up, as well as to avoid offending their middle class constituents. The vendors, most of whom live in southern Dar es Salaam and must take the ferry to the city center every day, were forced to carry the coconut waste back home with them at the end of the day.

The desire to “keep the city clean” was also offered as justification for efforts led to remove street children and beggars (waombaomba) from the city streets in January 2000 by the then regional commissioner of Dar es Salaam, Yusufu Makamba. Significantly, Makamba was the regional commissioner, rather than a city representative, and therefore not entirely dependent on the votes of the citizens of Dar es Salaam to stay in office. For years, city officials had unofficially tolerated the presence of beggars in the city, most likely because the topic was considered politically explosive. As much as the “respectable” citizens of Dar es Salaam may dislike their spaces being occupied by common beggars, for the most part they do not consider begging a crime in and of itself, especially when the beggars are elderly people, disabled, young children, or women with babies. When the regional officials stepped in to attack the problem of begging in the city center they had the backing of the national government. In a few days, the Dar es Salaam police managed to round up 495 beggars who were to be photographed and repatriated to their home regions at the expense of the state (The Guardian, 17 Dec. 2000). The “loiterers” and “prostitutes” among them, of whom there were 115, were turned over to the police for prosecution. Those who had family in the Dar es Salaam region were released into their custody, while those considered disabled were placed in a local facility geared toward assisting them. Children of school age were placed in schools. The remaining 155 beggars were escorted to their home regions with explicit directions not to return to the city (The Guardian, 21 Jan. 2000). The affair, which from the very start received a great deal of attention from the local press, became a public relations nightmare for Makamba when leaders from the union for disabled persons invaded the compound where the beggars were being kept and proceeded to beat up the police with their crutches, allowing thirteen beggars to escape. The union claimed that state facilities for the disabled failed to meet even the most basic needs of their client—a fact which Makamba conceded—and that they were forced into the street from these very facilities to beg for food (The African, 28 Jan. 2000). When we discussed these incidents at Maskani, people there tended to view the auda-
cious beggars with a degree of respect for having dared to stand up to the police and get away with it.

All in all, the campaign to clean the streets of beggars was a failure despite the fact that it was directed from the regional level. Importantly, however, the regional and national governments were held accountable rather than local city leaders. The operation itself seemed doomed from the beginning. The day after it began, *The Guardian* (17 Dec. 2000) ran an article in which it quoted an acquaintance of Mzee Matonya, Dar es Salaam's most notorious beggar "renowned for his peculiar style of begging, lying on his back with a tin on his side," as saying, "[i]f they take Matonya to Dodoma, he will definitely come back." Later in the week after he had in fact been returned to Dodoma, another newspaper carried a cartoon showing Matonya at his farm in Dodoma attending to his cattle while thanking the government for giving him a free trip home to check on his estate. The cartoon depiction of Matonya, which was in itself merely a representation of jokes already being told on the street, along with satirizing the government's attempts to keep the city clean, illustrates that beggars may make enough money to support their families, buy cattle and even operate a farm. Given this potential, it is not surprising that most of those I spoke to about begging indicated that it was considered a form of labor. In a matter of weeks, most of those who had been repatriated to their home regions were indeed back "working" on the streets of Dar es Salaam after having enjoyed a free trip home to visit their families. The only difference was that most of them received a little more respect for having fought a good fight against the police and earning their places on the city's streets and sidewalks.

One of the most interesting issues relating to this case was that "prostitutes and loiterers" were separated out for prosecution following the initial roundup. Their activities were considered illegal, while begging was not. I have no idea what criteria the police used to determine the difference between beggars and loiterers or prostitutes. Most of those with whom I worked at Maskani and Uwanja wa Fisi, for instance, would have easily fit into one of the latter two categories since most vendors without proper licenses and identification are considered loiterers and that most of them would have deplored being identified as beggars or street children. I am relatively sure they would have been singled out for prosecution had they been picked up that day.

In another regionally directed effort to "keep the city clean," Makamba ordered bus touts to clear away from bus stands because they were deemed a "nuisance to passengers, traffic police and bus operators" (*Daily Mail*, 9 Oct. 1999). Bus touts, also known as *wapiga debe*, work the start and endpoints of city bus routes rounding up passengers in a loud and boisterous manner. They shout out the direction and destination of individual buses, sometimes literally, sometimes jokingly as when they refer to buses headed to the northern suburbs as *wanene*, or fat people. Along with shouting they bang the sides of the buses producing a characteristic noise reminiscent of
the one made by banging on a tin drum, or debe, thus earning their names as *wapiga debe*, people who hit tin drums. They continue barking out the destination and rounding up customers until the bus is full, a procedure that can take up to twenty minutes. Once the bus is full, the driver usually gives the tout 100 shillings for his services but often he makes him beg for it or wait until later in the day. Every bus has its own driver and conductor. The job of rounding up passengers officially belongs to the latter, but over the years touts have inserted themselves into the system and many now consider themselves indispensable to the city’s orderly running. One tout explained to me how without people like him it would take much longer for buses to fill up and longer for people to commute between home and work. The bus drivers’ union, working together with the city, has tried to make it more difficult for touts to pass themselves off as conductors. Uniforms are now mandatory for both drivers and conductors. On hot days these are shed when the buses are out of view of the police and quickly donned again when approaching busy intersections where traffic police are likely to be standing. In 2000, the buses were also painted with broad bands of color to indicate the routes they are licensed to travel to make it easier for passengers to find the correct bus without the assistance of touts, as well as to prevent bus drivers with permits for one route from switching his course. Despite these efforts and the warnings issued by Makamba, *wapiga debe* continue to control the bus stops. A cartoon that appeared in the *Daily Mail* (9 Oct. 1999) depicted a frustrated looking Makamba pushing a broom over Dar es Salaam in an effort to keep the city clean (Fig. 6.5). To his dismay, a bus tout stands firmly on his broom shouting out a destination, while a beggar reaches out his hand and asks his “father” for assistance. The text below the cartoon reads, “It’s business as usual!” The accompanying article pointed out that Makamba’s failure to rid the city of *wapiga debe* was actually his second
failed attempt to clean up the city, having tried to remove beggars from the city already in 1998 before trying again in 2000.

Like beggars, wapiga debe are both despised and respected by residents of the city. Their unique fashion and linguistic innovations frequently influence emergent trends in popular culture. The general assumption is that most who work in this sector are heroin addicts trying to score enough money for their next fix. The majority of Tanzanians view heroin addicts as the lowest of the low, pathological thieves always looking for a chance to steal. Wapiga debe are exemplary street toughs and their belligerence, which is often attributed to heroin use, was admired by others working in the informal economy who seemed to appreciate their willingness to stand up for their right to earn a living. A story told to me by a young man living in Tandale illustrates the point. In a conversation about heroin addiction he told me of an event that occurred when he was on a bus headed toward the city center. The driver attempted to pull away without paying the tout (reputedly a heroin addict) who had filled his bus for him and in response the tout started yelling at the driver and threatened to beat him up. The driver, who had not been lying when he told the tout he had no money on him at the time, was forced to borrow it from a customer. The person who told me this story generally expressed very negative views toward heroin addiction, but he kept smiling throughout the story and at the end told me how he admired the tout for demanding what was rightfully his.

Wapiga debe, prostitutes, and beggars are through their very presence, like street vendors, disrupting modernist meta-narratives of the city. In many ways, Wamachinga serve as icons of movement, embodying flexibility and mobility through their daily economic activities, and more generally through their pursuit of life, maisha. Returning to de Certeau, “[t]he long poem of walking manipulates spatial organizations, no matter how panoptic they may be: it is neither foreign to them (it can take place only within them) nor in conformity with them (it does not receive its identity from them). It creates shadows and ambiguities within them” (1984:101). It is in these shadows, like in the shadow of the Sheraton, that shadow economies can flourish, such as the economies tied to (re)selling auto parts, washing cars, begging for money, facilitating transportation, the selling of flesh, and even the soliciting of bribes. The state continues in its efforts to observe, order and control these shadows. In many cases it succeeds. It moves vendors to designated business zones, it builds fences around bus terminals to prevent non-licensed vendors from selling to passengers, it requests foreign donors to build sanitary premises to house food vendors. In essence, it tries to formalize the informal, to throw light on the shadows, to turn poetry into prose. These efforts, however, rarely go uncontested and the poetics of mobility, of flexibility, continue to constitute one of the greatest challenges to the spatial strategies of those out to institute urban order.

notes
1 There is a rich literature examining long-term connections between urban migrant workers and their rural kin networks in Africa that dates back to Aronson (1971). For more recent work see, for example, de Bruijn, van Dijk and Foeken (2001), van Donge (1993), Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (1998), and Geschiere and Gugler's co-edited issue of *Africa* (1998) on the "The Politics of Primary Patriotism."

2 As explained in the previous chapter, Bongo is Kiswahili for brain and is often used to refer to Dar es Salaam because it is believed that one's brain must be highly developed to survive there.

3 Using the verb –tembea in conjunction with reference to a daladala also alludes to the practice bus conductors have of playfully shouting out "Tembea!" as an indicator to the driver that there are no passengers wishing to either board or disembark at a given bus stop. This practice allows buses to make better time on their routes and correspondingly greater profits since they do not have to come to a complete halt at every stop. By evaluating potential customers while "on the move," both bus conductors and coffee sellers are able to increase their profits.

4 Since the late 1990s more and more people have begun to show a preference for hiring Maasai and pseudo-Maasai as guards. Before this, Makonde from Mozambique were considered to be especially fierce and, being outsiders to Tanzanian society, were considered less likely to collaborate with local thieves. As they have become more entrenched in Tanzanian society, however, they have become gradually replaced by young Maasai men who have started to come to the city looking for work. Despite being Tanzanian, Maasai are still thought to be outsiders in Tanzanian society and therefore similarly desirable as guards. For more on recent Maasai migration to Dar es Salaam see May (2002).

5 For a striking comparison in Cameroon see Niger-Thompson (2000).

6 The monthly minimum wage at that time was between 1200 and 1300 Tsh. Tripp suggests, however, that at least eight times that minimum was necessary to support a family of four at the time (1997:41). Regardless of how you look at it, Rungu was barely earning enough to live.

7 Augustine Mrema's Tanzania Labour Party (TLP) has been using the slogan "vijana taifa ya leo," or "youth, today's nation" as a challenge to the CCM slogan. Mrema was extremely popular among the young people with whom I worked. Almost all who had voted in the 1995 election reported voting for him. By 2000, however, most felt that his reputation had become too battered for him to be considered a serious threat to CMM.

8 Forty thousand shillings was around 75 USD at the time, a sizable investment.

9 Following the custom of Tanzanians, I use the term Asian to refer to people living in Tanzania who trace their ancestry to the nations that are known today as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

10 I thank Andrew Burton for bringing this incident to my attention.