

# **Towards a Socially Just Urbanization in Tanzania: Political Participation and Social Cohesion**

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# Towards a Socially Just Urbanization in Tanzania:

## Political Participation and Social Cohesion

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### BACKGROUND

Tanzania's rate of urbanization is estimated to be about 5%, and the urban population will grow to 35.5 million in 2030, and 76.5 million in 2050. Dar es Salaam, the biggest commercial city, will have a population of over 10 million people by 2030, thus will be, by definition, a mega-city. Urbanization is often taken as an indicator for development: historically, industrialization and urban productivity, with its significant changes in the structure of a society, led to urbanization. This is not the case in Tanzania today. How exactly does rapid urbanization in Tanzania affect good governance and deliberative democracy? This policy brief specifically examines how citizens in Dar es Salaam have access to decision-making processes. It is hoped that findings inform policymakers on how to critically improve ongoing urbanization processes towards social justice – in Dar es Salaam, and in Tanzania.

### Key findings

- Two-thirds of respondents (63%) reported that democracy in Tanzania has some issues.
- The majority of respondents (84%) participate in decision-making and decision implementation processes when they are not satisfied with the services provided. Many of the respondents (77%) prefer contacting their leaders, especially street leaders, over demonstration or protest.
- To some degree, there is more political space – citizens participation in political decision-making processes – in urban area (40%) than in rural areas (17%).
- Two-thirds of respondents identify strongly as Tanzanians, but their level of trust amongst themselves is minimal: most of them (97%) are very careful in dealing with others. Also, most respondents (88%) were not interested in joining social, political, and economic groups.

## Methodology

A questionnaire survey and observational research were used. The survey sample comprised 2,014 adult Tanzanians living in Ilala, Kigamboni, Kinondoni, Temeke, and Ubungu districts in Dar es Salaam, Karatu district in Arusha, and Makete district in Njombe. The Dar es Salaam sub-sample, which was used to write this brief, consisted of 1,005 adult Tanzanians. The data were collected in April 2021. Respondents' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics are gender, age, education, income, and marital status. There were as many males as females, and half of them were youth (defined as between 15-35 years). The majority of respondents (96%) acquired formal education at different levels. Half of them had primary education, one-third were secondary school leavers, while one in ten studied beyond secondary education. Of these, nearly two-thirds (65%) were male respondents. The majority of respondents (74%) fell in the low-income category (Tanzanian Shillings TZS 0-300,000), while almost one in ten was not ready to disclose their income. Three in four men and one in three women fell in the income band ranging between 300,001–1,300,000 TZS. Moreover, as Table 1 and 2 depict, across gender, and age, many respondents had low household incomes. A simple majority of respondents (57%) were married, while one-third never got married. A handful of them were separated/divorced (6%), and widowed (6%). Of the widowed, the majority were female respondents (76%).

**Table 1. Respondents' income by gender, and age in Dar es Salaam**

	Men's Income			Women's Income		
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High
Age <35	85	13	2	93	7	1
Age 36+	74	25	1	90	9	1

Note: Figures are in percentages; Low = 0-300,000 TZS; Middle = 300,001–1,300,000 TZS; and High = above 1,300,000 TZS

**Table 2. Respondents' income by Dar es Salaam districts**

Area	Income		
	Low	Middle	High
Ilala	87	13	0
Kinondoni	85	14	2
Temeke	88	12	0
Ubungo	82	15	3
Kigamboni	85	14	1

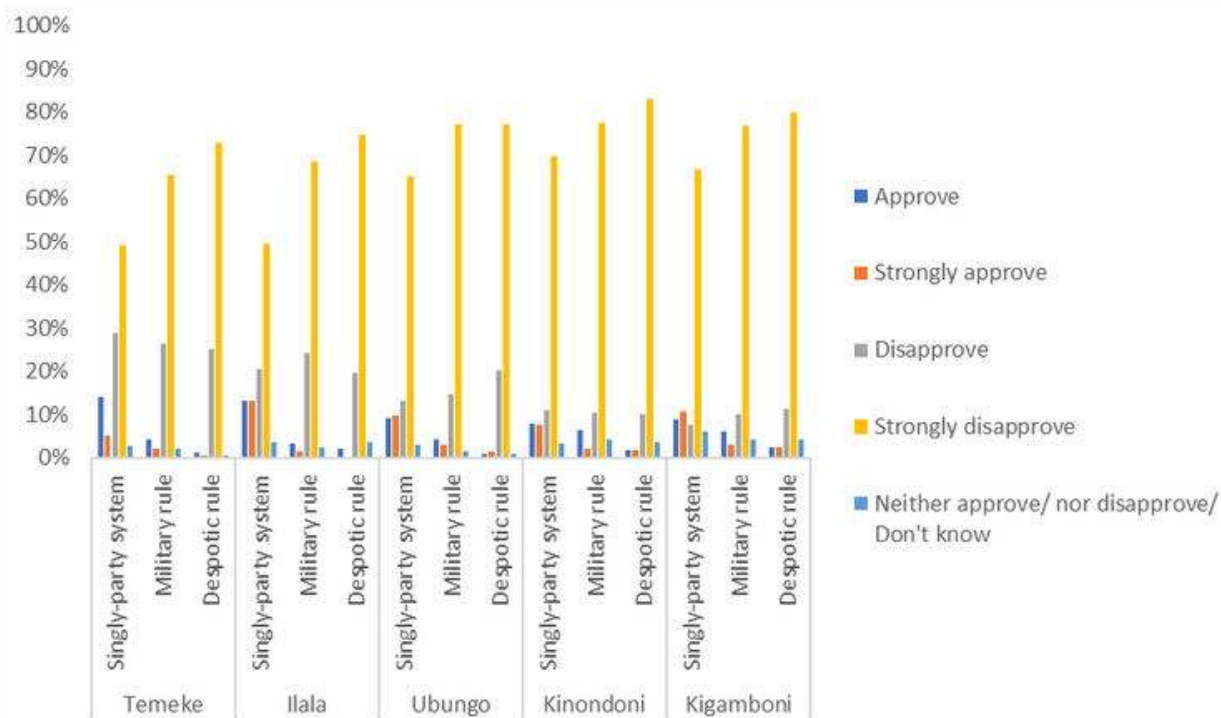
Note: Figures are in percentages; Low = 0-300,000 TZS; Middle = 300,001–1,300,000 TZS; and High = above 1,300,000 TZS

### Attitudes towards Political Participation

A democratic system of government gives citizens an opportunity to participate in decision-making processes to improve public services and transform the city into a better place. Most respondents living in Dar es Salaam city are in favor of a democratic government, and specifically denounced a single-party system, military, and one-person rule (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Opinions of participants on ways to govern a country**



Question asked: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives? A. Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office, B. The army comes in to govern the country, and C. Elections and parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.

Participation in decision-making processes and implementations can be done in different ways. For the purpose of this analysis, actions citizens could take to express dissatisfaction range from contacting a government official or media, filing a petition or participation in a demonstration or protest. The findings indicate that people do not opt for action against the government when they are dissatisfied with its performance. For example, most of them (88%) would never demonstrate or protest (see Table 4). Similarly, three-quarters (77%) were not willing to demonstrate and/or protest for improvement in public services, including tax increase (see Table 5).

The chosen option by the majority of respondents (77%) when dissatisfaction arose was to contact their local government leaders such as street leaders.

**Table 4. Actions that citizens take when dissatisfied with government performance**

Action	Response (%)					
	Yes, often	Yes, Several times	Yes, once or twice	No, would if had the chance	No, would never do this	Don't know
Join others in the community to request action from government	3	7	8	27	51	5
Contact the media	2	3	3	29	58	5
Contact an NGO	1	3	2	31	58	6
Contact a government official	3	6	7	30	51	5
Refuse to pay tax or fee	1	1	1	5	88	6
Demonstrate or protest	1	1	1	5	88	5
Petition	1	2	3	22	66	6

Question asked: Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens when they are dissatisfied with government performance. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things in the last three years. If not, would you do this if you had the chance?

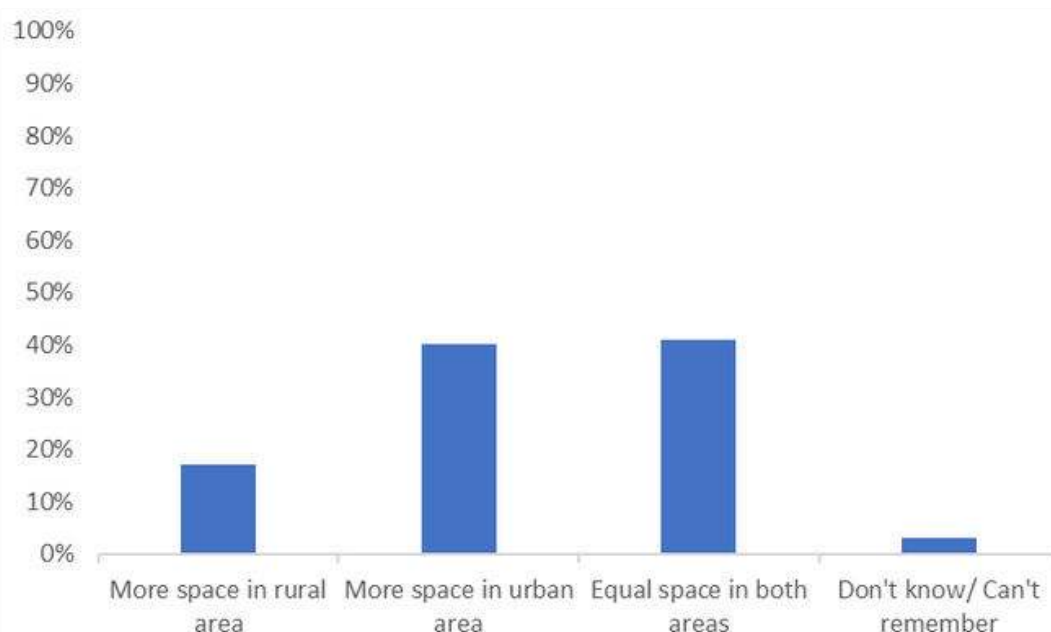
**Table 5. Willingness to demonstrate and protest**

Action	Response (%)				
	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't know
For higher wages	88	2	5	4	1
For better working conditions	82	4	8	5	1
For improvement in health care	72	7	10	11	1
For improvement in education	72	8	9	11	0
To defend democratic rights	76	6	10	8	1
For improvement in water and sanitation	72	7	10	10	1
For improvement in public transport	79	6	9	6	1
For improvement in security	77	5	10	8	0
Against massive unemployment	78	6	8	8	1
Against increases in food prices	73	7	10	10	1
Against increases in transportation costs	78	6	10	6	0
Against threat to security of tenure	77	6	9	8	1
Against runaway corruption	72	6	10	11	1
For improvement in housing	80	5	8	6	1
Against tax increase	76	6	8	10	1
Against threat of eviction	81	5	7	6	1

Question asked: How willing would you be to demonstrate and protest.

Respondents had conflicting views on the degree of political space in urban and rural areas, i.e., space given to participate in political decision-making processes, including contesting for political positions. As Figure 2 shows, two in five respondents thought that there was much more political space in urban than rural areas, while one in five thought otherwise. The other two in five respondents thought urban and rural political space was equal.

**Figure 2. Respondents' views on political space in rural and urban areas**



Question asked: Looking at participation in politics in urban and rural areas, where do you think citizens have more political space to participate?

## Social Cohesion

Social cohesion and belonging are likely to be influenced by urbanization which brings people together. Despite having many ethnicities, two-thirds of respondents felt only Tanzanian, while a quarter of them felt both Tanzanian and a member of an ethnic group. Most respondents (86%) liked to live near people with different religions; two in three respondents liked to live near immigrants or foreign workers, while one in four did not care about that.

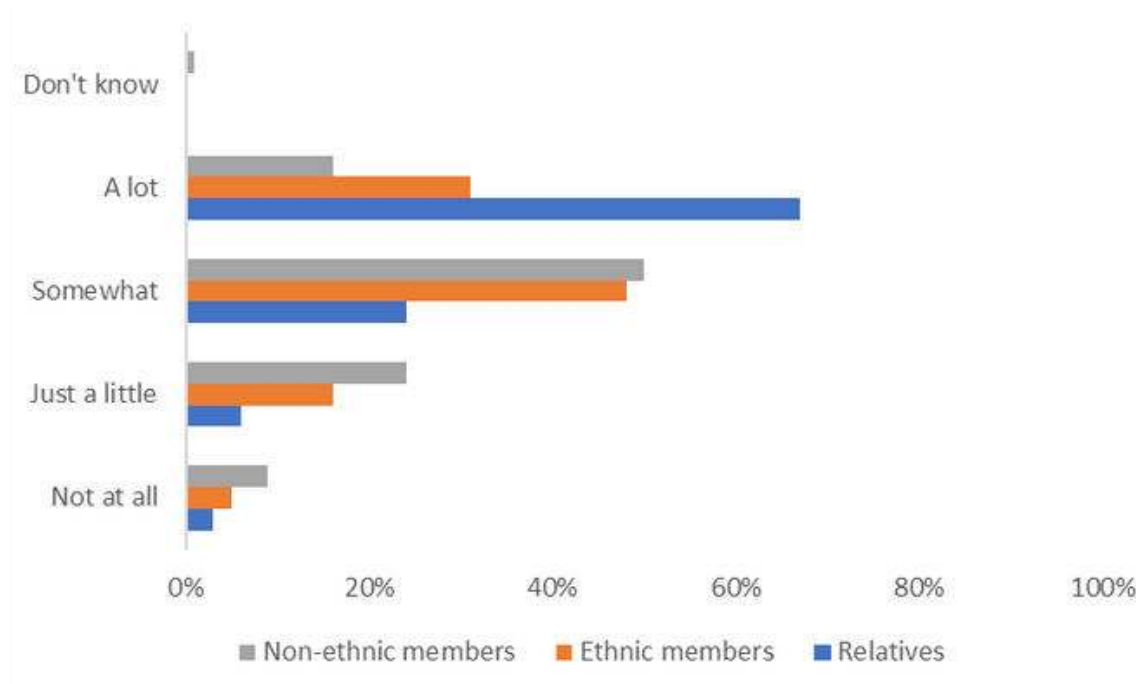


Likewise, three in four respondents liked to live near people who support a different political party, while one in four did not care. However, most respondents (91%) did not have tolerant attitudes (proxy used: gender and sexual orientation).

Three in four respondents would choose a representative of the government to ensure every citizen has access to public services without considering tribal or party affiliation. In conjunction with that, most respondents (96%) believed that the main responsibility of the government has been to provide services to all citizens.

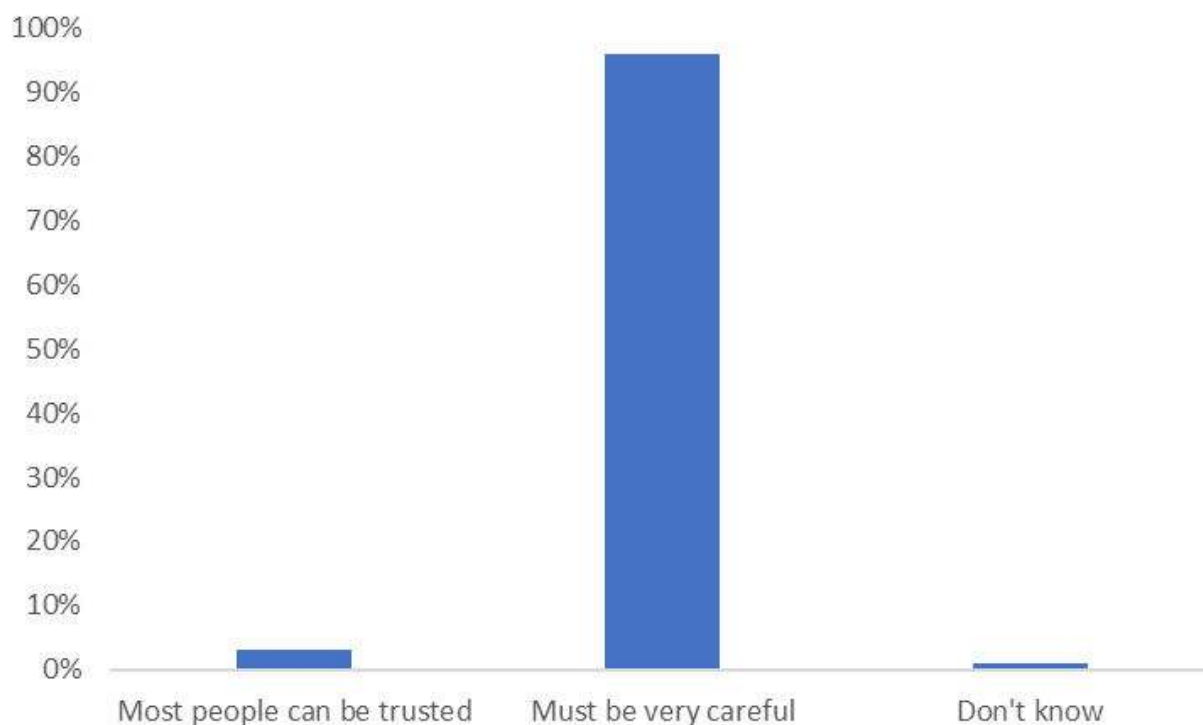
Although the level of trust of the majority of respondents (77%) in other people was high, it decreased as relationships became distant (see Figure 3). Figure 4 shows that most respondents (97%) cautioned that someone must be very careful in dealing with others.

**Figure 3. Respondents' trust in groups of people**



Question asked: How much do you trust each of the following groups of people? A. Your relatives, B. People from your own ethnic group, and C. Tanzanians from other ethnic groups

**Figure 4. Trust when dealing with others**



Question asked: Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you must be very careful in dealing with people?

The analysis further showed that, averagely, most respondents (88%) did not join social, economic, and political groups such as Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOS), and Village Community Bank (VICOBA) (see Table 6).

**Table 6. Respondents' group membership**

Group type	Response (%)			
	Active member	Inactive member	Not a member	Don't know
A religious outside worship service	11	1	88	0
Neighborhood - residents	13	1	87	0
Voluntary – co-ethics	8	1	91	0
Investment (SACCOS, VICOBA)	14	0	86	0
Political affairs	8	2	90	0
Trade Union	3	0	96	0
Social Media, e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook	17	3	81	0

Question asked: Looking at the groups that you belong to, how frequently would you say you meet physically or online?

## Conclusion

The findings show that most respondents preferred democracy over other forms of government. Involvement in decision-making and implementation processes when dissatisfaction with the provision of a public service arose, was common, for example by contacting street leaders. There was no inclination to protest or join a demonstration. Social cohesion seemed very strong, but the level of trust was low: the majority of respondents cautioned that someone has to be very careful in dealing with others. Also, most of respondents were not interested in joining political, social, and economic groups. These findings cannot be generalized, as they only throw light on the time of study and the environments of studied areas. However, they may be transferred to areas with similar conditions to the studied places.

## Policy Recommendations

All stakeholders, including the central government should:

- Take actions to promote social justice.
- Engage in democratization processes.

The municipal/ city council should:

- Engage with ICT stakeholders and citizens to get good quality public data while pushing for digital sovereignty.
- Create a people-centered city by building trust and by ensuring citizen participation by effectively following the Improved Opportunities and Obstacles to Development (O&OD) planning approach guidelines.

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