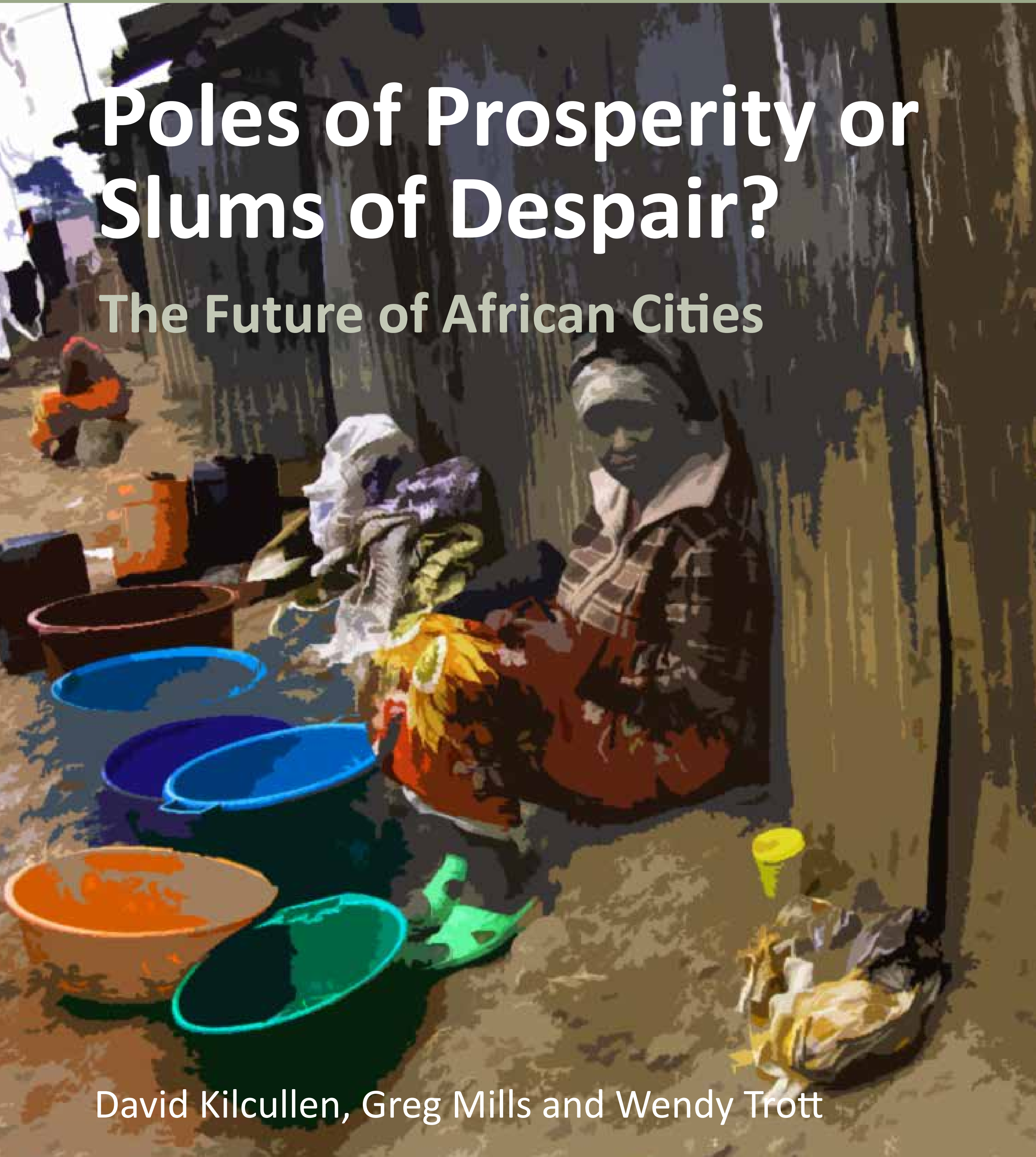
DISCUSSION PAPER 5/2015

Poles of Prosperity or Slums of Despair?

The Future of African Cities



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Strengthening Africa's economic performance

THE BRENTHURST FOUNDATION

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The Future of African Cities

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Executive Summary

By 2050, the majority of Africans and 66 per cent of the world's population will live in urban agglomerations. Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to more than double its population, adding one billion people, between now and then, and for its urban areas to grow by almost 800 million during this time.[1]

This is not bad news, far from it. Cities have been the engines of economic growth throughout modern history, and increasingly so in today's industrialised and globalised world, because higher density and greater connectivity allow for economies of scale in infrastructure and social services, and concentrations of workers for industry and other non-agrarian economic purposes. Such agglomerations also, however, amplify risks around health, sanitation, poverty, human insecurity and inequality, and create enormous bureaucratic and resource burdens for local authorities.

Nowhere is this contradiction more visible than in Africa's exploding urban areas. The three main drivers of African urbanisation – organic population growth, rural-to-urban migration and large-scale dynamics such as technological developments, connectivity improvements and globalisation – will fuel dramatic consequences for African societies. If these changes are unplanned for, the outcome could be developmentally and politically disastrous.

By evaluating four case studies and generating projections of possible scenarios, we can see that success or failure for African cities will hinge on five key factors:

- The extent to which economic expansion that facilitates inclusive growth can be fostered.
- The quality of governance, strength of institutions and commitment to prescient planning.
- Development of social connectivity and human capital.
- Management of geographical obstacles and assets and ability to generate balanced urban and rural growth.
- The harnessing of new technologies for financial inclusion and innovation.

Introduction: The Urban Dichotomy

Within the Kenyan capital of Nairobi[2] there exists two utterly contrasting worlds. In the first, one finds four-wheel drives, overseas educations, big homes and expensive suits worn by the elite, who hang out smoking cigars and sipping house ales in black-and-white chequer-chairs at Nairobi's swish Capital Club, where the annual membership is no less than US$10 000. Only 25 minutes away from the Capital Club as the Matatu flies, one of the ubiquitous barely-roadworthy minibus taxis (named after their original rate per passenger of just three [tatu] shillings), one comes across the other world – the township of Kibera.

Often the centrepiece of visits by furrow-browed foreign dignitaries, some 800 000 people live in Kibera's 16 square kms of dust, sewerage splash and stench. Metalworkers, cycle repair shops, electricians distinguishable by their throbbing music, shoemakers, drinking dens and smoky open-air grills, barbers named 'Scizor Cutz' and 'Lamborghini', and charcoal sellers, the bundles in small buckets of 60 and 50 shillings each, ply their trade on the dirt roadside. The site of much election violence in 2007–8, Kibera's walls and doors are daubed with signs like 'Peace maker is you' and 'Peace wanted alive'. Security is much improved, say the locals, with assault-rifle toting soldiers in camouflage on regular view, but it's still a tough, vulnerable existence. 'The rate of HIV is 50 per cent,' says Everlyne Shiangala, the chairperson for the 'Power Women Group' in Olympic near Carolina for Kibera, a small co-operative selling hand-made gifts to inquisitive tourists.

Still, Kibera is relatively upmarket: chaos to the uneducated eye but with detectable organisation and social structure. Conditions are far worse in the lesser-known Mukuru Kwa Njega slum in the capital's industrial area, a vicinity marked by spewing avalanches of litter including 'flying toilets', plastic bags filled with excrement. The sight and smell cannot be avoided, though the inhabitants appear invisible to government concern.

Just under half of Kenya's 44 million people live below the poverty line, an estimated 3.9 million of them in slums. Like much of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, the slums remain deprived of central and local government services, in part because of a lack of government planning and a failure to reform town planning laws. Kenya's city sprawls – the proliferation of unserviced, insecure and unstable urban slum settlements – are one possible future for Africa's cities.

Managing the 'bad contagions' of rapid urbanisation – water, sewage, electricity, crime and slums – will depend on how the 'good contagions' facilitated by urban density, including technology and economies of scale, take effect.[3] Ensuring a more positive outcome will depend, as will be argued in this Paper, on prescient government planning and prudent actions.

Africa is not alone in facing such challenges, but is certainly at the forefront of the struggle. As a preliminary conceptual Paper to a wider project on the global dynamics of urban growth, especially as they relate to the African continent, this work will identify and explore the key drivers, challenges and enabling factors of a sustainable and inclusive future for growing cities in the developing world.

As Nairobi illustrates, cities represent concentrated microcosms of all that is both good and bad about a country. Properly planned, they can be engines of national growth, fast-tracking development by serving as incubators of economic activity. Indeed, throughout history greater levels of urbanisation have correlated with improvements in public health, prosperity, technological innovation, gender equality and education. But urban growth is also a 'double-edged sword'. It amplifies what it produces, be that good or bad: growth, employment and development; or poverty, unemployment, deprivation and overcrowding.[4]

During 2016–18, The Brenthurst Foundation will run a multi-disciplinary policy project on African cities. By identifying best international practice and through a thorough understanding of local conditions and attitudes in nearly a dozen case-studies, the study aims to establish what policy interventions and partnerships might best ensure Africa's urban areas to best achieve the upsides of economic development while managing the downsides of violence and insecurity.

With this in mind, this Discussion Paper identifies the most significant general trends affecting urban areas around the world and their relationship to the African context. It also highlights a selection of the most dominant drivers of urbanisation, defined as the steady shift in population distribution from rural to urban zones.

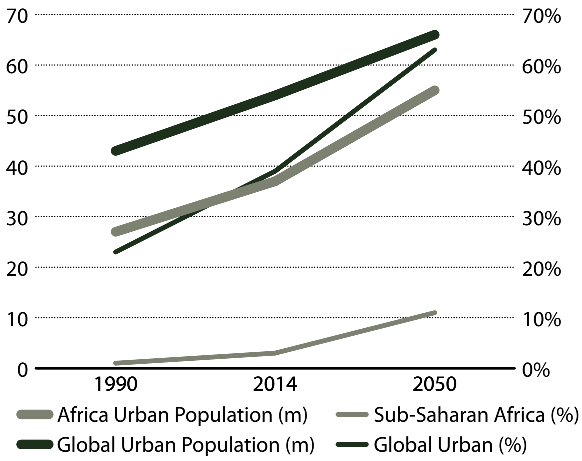
Conceptually, the drivers of this shift fall within three broader groups of processes: internal urban population growth, rural-to-urban migration, and large-scale global trends. The consequences resulting from these drivers determine to what degree a growing city can be deemed a 'success'.

How are sustainability, inclusivity, resilience and competitiveness enabled as urban growth gains momentum? African cities face an enormous challenge today: achieve this success in an age in which the consequences of these drivers and hence some of the clearest determinants of 'successful' cities; the known factors that enable sustainability, inclusivity, resilience, competitiveness and improved quality of life. The challenge for African cities today is to achieve all this in an age in which the move to high productivity and improved services must be achieved while simultaneously transitioning to low carbon intensity and more efficient resource usage.

Shifting Global Populations and the African Experience

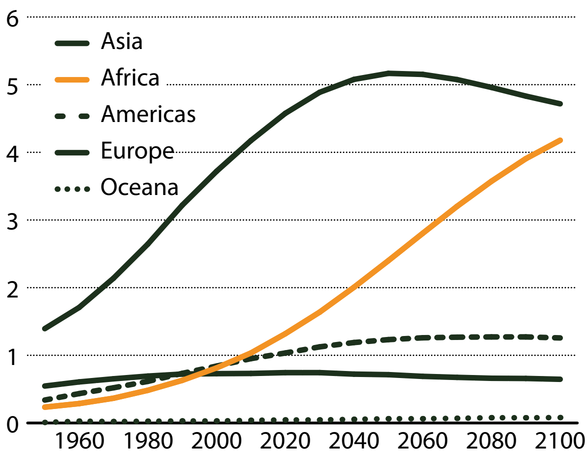
In 2007, for the first time in human history, more people lived in urban areas than rural ones, and by 2050 these urbanites will number almost seven out of every 10 people. The shift from the farm to the city has been a rapid process. As late as 1950, 70 per cent of the world's population lived in rural settlements, but the coming years will see a complete reversal of society's distribution.[5] In the process, an expected 2.5 billion people will be added to the urban population, with almost 90 per cent of this increase occurring in Asia and Africa. India, China and Nigeria are expected to account for 37 per cent of the projected growth of the world's urban population between 2014 and 2050, with India alone adding 404 million urban dwellers, China 292 million and Nigeria another 212 million.[6]

Figure 1: Shifting global populations[7]



In sub-Saharan Africa, the urban population is projected to rise from the current 36 per cent to over 54 per cent by 2050.[8] Given that it is currently one of the least urbanised regions of the world this may not seem surprising. But what these figures hide is the astonishing rate at which the transition will occur, far outpacing the historical urbanisation of developed regions. While the population of London grew at 2 per cent annually from 1800 to 1910, doubling every 25 years, Kigali grew at 7 per cent from 1950 to 2010 and doubled within only 10 years.[9] Even the rapid expansion of Asia's population pales in comparison: it will have grown by a factor of 3.7 between 1950 and 2050, while Africa's equivalent rate will be 5.18 from 2000 to 2100.[10]

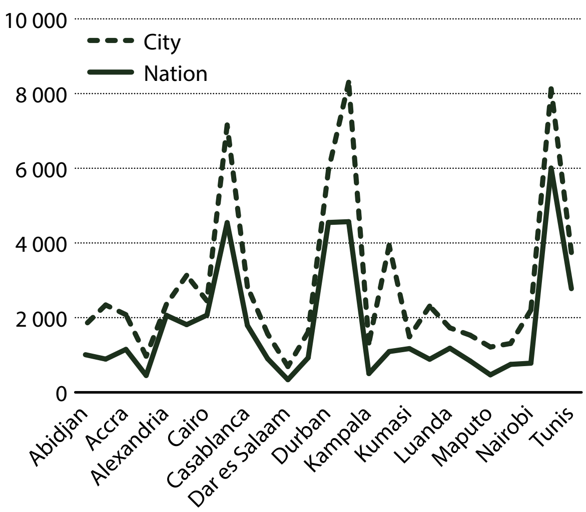
Figure 2: UN population forecasts (billions)[11]



Urbanisation does not, however, lead automatically to economic growth.[12] In sub-Saharan Africa the process will be overwhelmingly youth-driven, highlighting the importance of developing appropriate educational responses. Today about half of the African population is under 20, and they are rapidly moving to urban areas.[13] Numbering around 704 million in 2030 and more than 930 million by 2050, they will be a potent political and cultural force for change.[14] Without vision and faithful execution of policy strategies, the treat of political populism and associated radicalisation, of instability and insecurity arising from the unmet expectations of disaffected youth in particular – is dangerously real.

The second notable characteristic of the African urbanisation experience is that the fastest-growing agglomerations are not in fact megacities, but rather those of medium size with 500 000 to one million inhabitants.[15] Less than 10 per cent of current urban residents live in megacities of more than 10 million people.[16] It is cities like Abuja, Ouagadougou and Lomé that are predicted to have population increases of more than 50 per cent by 2050, while megacities like Lagos and Cairo will grow far more slowly.[17] Middle weight cities will propel not only population growth but economic growth as well. About 575 cities (with populations between 1 and 5 million) will contribute 50 per cent of global growth in the next two decades, while megacities will add only about 10 per cent.[18]

Figure 3: Per capita city-level expenditure vs nation-level expenditure[19]



Africa's rapid urbanisation means that the challenges policy-makers face for ensuring sustainable, equitable and inclusive growth for their citizens will be largely concentrated in urban spaces. The development of cities differs in various ways from that occurring on a national scale: they have different economic trajectories and demographic profiles, more concentrated infrastructure, and tend to have higher expenditure, consumption and service provision than other regions.[20] (see Figures 3 and 4) In addition, many of the policies that affect growth are under the authority of city-level governments, for example infrastructure, sanitation, educational and research institutions and the quality of public administration. Still, as the evidence from Cape Town shows, below, the tools are limited.

Most importantly, the dynamics of density make cities a special case for development. Economists have found that doubling a community's population density can increase productivity by as much as 28 per cent.[21] In the US, for example, one study concluded that more than half of the variation in output per worker could be explained by density, which was interpreted as a metric for social interaction, or how much smart people 'bump against each other'.[22] Other studies have found more modest results of around 2–4 per cent increases in productivity by doubling density.[23]

To take just one example, China's late 20th century growth was certainly built on a massive influx of people to urban areas. In 1980, more than seven out of every 10 people lived in a small village or in rural areas.[24]

Figure 4: Demographic profile of Lagos vs Nigeria[25]

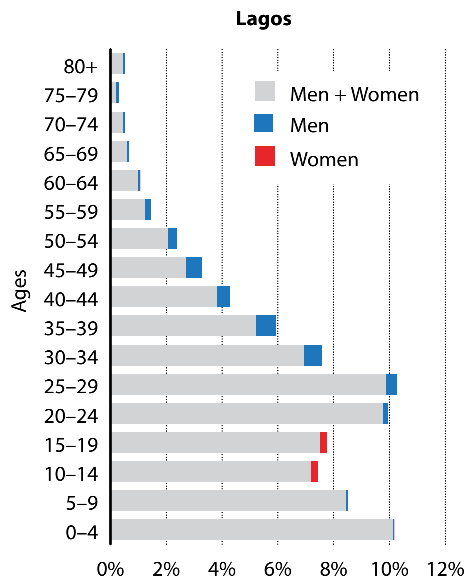
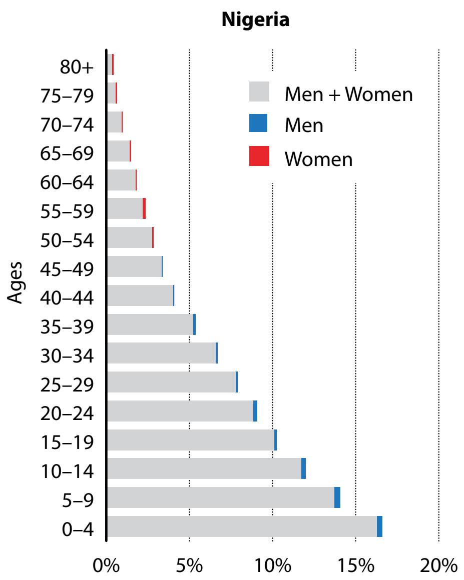
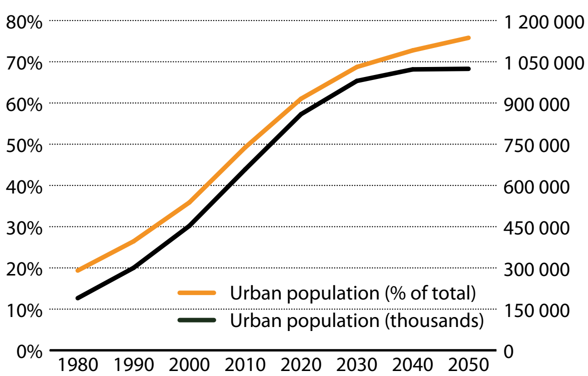


Figure 4: Continued



This was habit, but also law: From 1958, everyone, with modest exceptions, was required from birth to live nowhere but in the geographical area of origin of his/her mother. As China has turned to the global economy, there has been a gradually accelerating government-controlled workforce shift from rural provinces to areas of export production. This is a massive transition: in the last decade, 120 million Chinese have moved from the farm to the city, and by 2050 another 292 million Chinese will join them, while China's rural population will drop by 300 million in the same timeframe.[26]

Figure 5: China's urban population[27]



By moving from the farm to the factory the Chinese worker managed to treble his or her output, with a massive impact on GDP, collectively, and incomes, individually. This is continuing at the rate of around 20 million people annually. Thus, migration has driven Chinese growth, low labour costs, global demand for commodities, raw materials and consumer goods, and low inflation and interest rates, the forces that have shaped the global economy this decade. This two-pronged 'Great Migration' – into the cities and into the global economy – has doubled the world's labour force (that is, the number of workers integrated into the world economy), experienced almost simultaneously by China, India and the former Soviet countries.[28]

Africa's urban revolution has the potential to generate similar consequences. But mere urban migration and expansion by no means inherently portends either economic growth or global integration. Instead, it embodies a trade-off between absolute size (which allows for a larger and more diverse workforce, higher demand and increasing returns to scale) with the difficulties associated with a larger urban area[29] (such as coverage of public transport, bureaucratic inefficiencies, etc.). Density, and its relationship with productivity, is one measurement that partially takes this into account. However, 'in Nigeria workers in urban-oriented industries such as manufacturing actually have lower productivity than farm workers' – the opposite of what should occur with urbanisation, and to what was happened with the Chinese miracle.[30] This demonstrates that the positive relationship between productivity and density is by no means a given, and requires careful policy guidance and effective policy execution. Furthermore, the strong correlation between worker productivity and metropolitan area population that has been demonstrated in cities with high skill levels does not appear so clearly in those with low skill levels.[31] This has serious implications for Africa. Overall, it leads one to conclude that there is a very different connection between urbanisation and economic growth in developing countries, and Africa in particular, than in developed ones.[32]

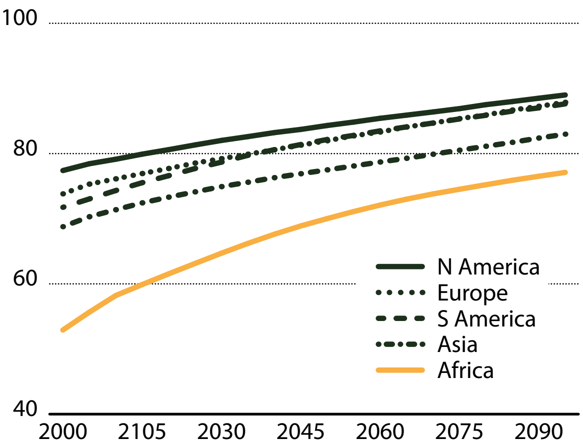
Urbanisation is clearly one of the dominant themes of the 21st century, and most of it is likely to roll out in Africa. The possibilities for the continent and the world more generally if sustainable growth can be nurtured in its cities are therefore huge, but so are the potential costs of failure.

The Drivers of Growth in African Cities

Internal Urban Population Growth

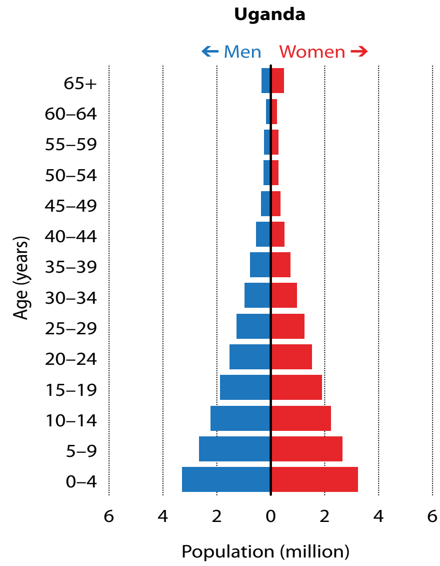
African cities' dramatic transformation is driven, firstly, by population growth within existing cities, that is, the natural surplus of births over deaths. This is caused by a high fertility rate – 4.9 children per woman in 2005–10 – and decreasing mortality rates as a result of improved public health (see Figure 6).[33] Though fertility rates tend to be lower among urban populations than national averages,[34] absolute population growth remains positive even in these areas.

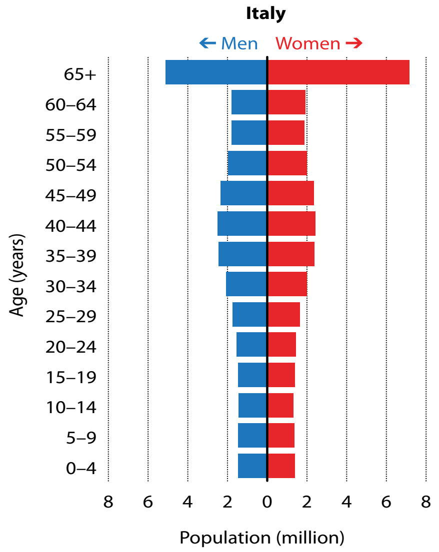
Figure 6: Life expectancy at birth by continent[35]



As a result, the population of African cities will be growing and increasingly younger for at least the next two decades.[36] In the near future this should mean that these countries will reap the dividends of the much-vaunted demographic transition: the working population will be the largest sector of the population and the dependency ratio will be at its lowest. Young workers are not only more productive and less burdened by supporting both the elderly and children, but also tend to save more in anticipation of their future retirement, boosting investment and other economic indicators. The effect is accentuated in urban areas that tend to attract youth and workers seeking jobs.

Figure 7: Africa's pyramid / Europe's bulge (Population by age, years, m, 2010 forecast)[37]



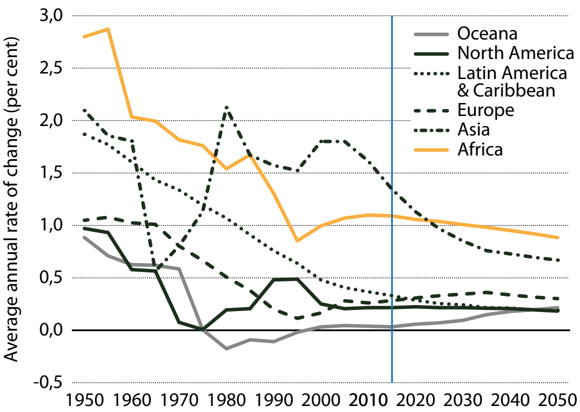


How can population growth and the expansion of the working age population be transformed into benefits for both cities and countries? Despite massive population growth, for 72 per cent of the period from 1960 to 1995, GDP growth per capita in Africa was negative.[38] This implies that population growth outstripped that of GDP, as the economy was unable to accommodate all the new entrants. The risks associated with such a youth bulge have been dramatically exemplified elsewhere, such as in the Arab Spring. The challenge for African cities going forward is to ensure that these occurrences are not replicated.

Rural-to-Urban Migration

In addition to organic population growth, a strong rural-to-urban migration trend is afoot in Africa (the surplus of arrivals over departures) (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Average annual rate of change of the percentage urban by major areas 1950–2050[39]



It is likely that this is partially a consequence of a growing youth population that prefers the urban lifestyle and sees greater educational and economic opportunities there, as well as the desire for greater digital and social connectivity. These pull factors are also, however, supplemented by push factors in many rural regions of the continent: conflict, poverty, natural disasters, disease, resource scarcity, environmental strain from the growing rural population and climate change. Given that urban lifestyles tend to be more environmentally efficient than rural ones of equivalent income, the global drive for sustainability may also be a factor.

Macro Dynamics: Technological Developments and Globalisation

Economies of scale have propelled a global history of urban agglomeration. Human density facilitates higher economic efficiency, improved quality of life from increased social interaction and more feasible (and cheaper) infrastructure and public service provision. More recently, there are a number of new drivers on the scene that are spurring the current urban growth phenomenon: technological change, dramatic improvements in access to electronic connectivity, and the resulting economic and social effects of globalisation are just some examples. Innovations in recent years have significantly reduced the costs of mobility and communication, dispersing economic activity around the world according to comparative advantage, yet concentrating it in urban areas. Cities enable firms to take advantage of economies of scale and scope and of human capital concentration, which the modern disassociation of production and consumption demands. Recently, economic activity has been dispersed vertically as well as horizontally – in deconstructed global value chains – and cities have thus become the scenes for specialised production processes.

Access to connectivity – and thereby to the global economy – has begun to replace access to employment as a key driver in rural-to-urban migration. Globalisation is therefore speeding up the process of urbanisation that has long been occurring at a steady pace. It can also lead to increased industrialisation and dramatic changes in the agricultural sector, where technological change and innovation is driven by greater commercialisation and modernisation. As the search for greater economies of commercial scale and the concomitant reality of increasing mechanisation bites in the agricultural sector, the cities offer succour for those pushed from rural lands. On an individual level, mobile phone access in Africa and the drop in transport costs are facilitating the move away from traditional rural homes.[40] By the end of 2014 there were more than 635 million mobile subscriptions in sub-Saharan Africa, a number expected to rise dramatically to about 930 million by 2020, making Africa the fastest-growing region in the world in terms of mobile telephone and internet access.[41]

There are other global economic trends also contributing. The industrialisation and growth of China, for example, is driving demand for natural resources and an explosion of investment and trade, which is now expanding into other sectors too. As a result, transport costs have decreased – through improved infrastructure – and better employment opportunities have arisen in the cities. Increased investment was also spurred by the global financial crisis and consequent fiscal policy of the US, though it is less certain whether investment will continue on this level. Finally, growth in non-traditional industries such as financial services and tourism disproportionately contributes to the expansion of urban economies over rural ones.

Historical Tendencies

Such factors have combined to generate the African urbanisation rush. The continent's recent period of economic growth, along with a 'peace dividend' and shaky transitions to democracy in many countries, have precipitated the well-documented emergence of an African middle class[42] and an urban shift. This is certainly not an experience unique to Africa.[43] But though the mostly urban-dwelling middle class is better off, there is a corollary effect of rising inequality, both between classes and between urban versus rural areas. It is probable that increasing awareness of better urban lifestyles and opportunities – as a result of the digital revolution – further contributes to the cycle of urbanisation. This in turn results in higher levels of inequality within urban areas, as new migrants are encouraged to make the move and add to the mass of unemployed fighting for limited opportunities. Inequality is generally higher in cities than in rural areas, but absolute poverty levels are often less extreme, maintaining the city's attraction as a destination.[44]

Each of these various drivers exists to a greater or lesser degree in most African countries today, but the situation in each is inevitably distinct. Correctly diagnosing the relevant drivers is thus important to managing the economic and political effects that result. For instance, migrants pulled by job opportunities in the city are more likely to be forced to move into slums, be informally employed and participate in the national and global economy. Those pushed by rural conflict or poverty, conversely, move into slums, are informally employed and perpetuate the cycle of insecurity.

Policy action can make a difference to such rural-urban flows by raising the levels of rural economic growth, for example through improving connectivity, the spread of agricultural extension services, and opening areas up to commercial farming. Other forces are less malleable. Economies of scale have been a constant of urban growth throughout history; globalisation and technological change are similarly unlikely to slow down. Some impacts are less clear, including the rise of the African middle class (which will offer attractions to urban migrants, but also drive demand for rural products) and climate change.

Historical perspective implies that there may be a 'tipping point' of urbanisation at which growth stagnates, usually when the urban population of a country hits about 50 per cent.[45] What is clear is that cities do not tend to grow indefinitely. Even mega-agglomerations, having managed to avoid up to that point the typical challenges of urban areas (congestion, slums, inflated prices, etc.), are highly likely to encounter these problems at one stage or another and, eventually, to slow down, stimulating growth in other, smaller cities in the country. Governments seem unable to adequately manage infinitely growing cities, and eventually run out of the governance capacity to do so.

However, it seems unlikely that African cities will reach any such tipping point soon. Predictions are that Africa will be 62 per cent urban by 2050, and will hit the 50 per cent mark as early as mid-2030. The current wave of urban growth in Africa is faster and occurring faster and on a larger scale than anything the world has yet witnessed, and therefore poses the greatest challenge yet for urban and national policy-makers.

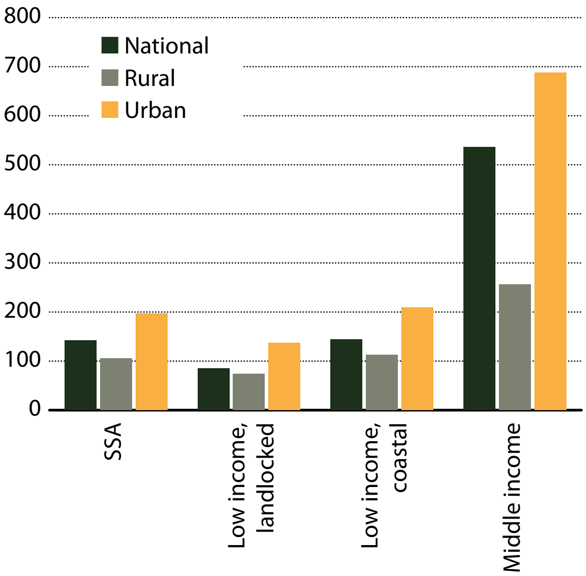
Understanding the Potential Consequences

Economy: Service Delivery, Living Costs and Employment

Dramatic urban growth can dramatically reshape a city's economy. This process will have to be carefully managed to enable economic activity to withstand population shocks. Urbanisation tends to correlate with structural economic shifts from agriculture to industry, manufacturing, technology and services. On average this is a positive development, insulating typically resource-dependent economies from global shocks and erratic commodity prices. Higher densities may also promote greater economic efficiency, encourage infrastructure investment (which becomes more viable in serving larger populations), make service delivery more economical and facilitate the generation and diffusion of knowledge. In India, for example, McKinsey has found that clean water and education could be delivered for 30–50 per cent less in cities than in rural areas.[46] However, for these effects to be achieved, urbanisation must occur at a pace and scale with which local governments are able to cope – if it is too rapid, on too large a scale or unplanned, urban growth can create resource overstretch and governance gaps.

Cities provide larger and more diversified labour markets, more job opportunities, improved skills matching and incentives to up-skill. In addition they are conducive to a larger and/or wealthier middle class which contributes to increased consumption and overall higher quality of life. Urban lifestyles do tend to be associated with higher levels of education, better health, increased access to public services, greater gender equality and increased political and community participation (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Monthly household budget (USD / month)[47]



Alternatively, as has occurred in many places, rapid urbanisation may cause the costs of living to explode. Housing poses a particular challenge. Informal settlements often have a life of their own, expanding beyond control so quickly that governance cannot keep up. About 60 per cent of Africa's urban population currently lives in informal settlements or slums, far more than in other regions of the world.[48] Furthermore, the depth of deprivation in Africa's slums (defined as informal, unserviced urban settlements without access to government services or utilities) appears much graver than in other regions. This is clear evidence of the previous failures of African governments to manage urbanisation. The irreparable damage done to cities during periods of rapid growth, exemplified by Kibera and Makoko, can serve as valuable lessons for those beginning the transition. Morocco is a more positive example, where the government has recently implemented a successful slum elimination initiative in its major cities.[49]

Affordable housing is closely related to the informal economy, as many slum dwellers are informally employed creating a vicious cycle between the two. A large informal economy affects the degree of participation in the financial system, tax collection, and the ability of the state to regulate economic activity, amongst many other effects. However, the African informal economy may be undergoing a transformation as mobile money technologies shake up the existing environment. This is certainly an important area for further research.

Governance: Infrastructure, Accountability and Decision-Making Networks

A principal area in which to look for the effects of urban growth is government and politics. The absolute increase of urban populations creates much greater pressure on infrastructure and public services, a higher burden on limited resources and faster degradation through overuse of resources such as roads. The World Bank found that the provision of infrastructure services in urban areas has not kept pace with urban growth rates in the past decade, and thus urban service coverage has actually declined.[50] The bitter disappointment experienced by newcomers – who move to the city seeking greater opportunity and better living conditions but now find themselves unable to access these opportunities – generates political dissatisfaction, social unrest and demands for government accountability, transparency and more genuine democracy, especially if combined with a growing and more demanding middle class. Greater pressure may stimulate additional investment in infrastructure and improved public service provision, or (if the pace and scale of unplanned urbanisation is too great for governments to adapt to in time) it may precipitate political, social or other crises. Political dissatisfaction results when there is a high degree of proximity between residents, increased interaction between them, and a greater level of connectivity, all of which are ubiquitous in urban areas, and this dissatisfaction is only exacerbated when there is a scarcity of resources. Social unrest may then precipitate either democratic transitions (which, even in the best of cases may be messy or violent), or it may prompt the solidification of military or authoritarian oppression.

It is interesting to note that urbanisation tends to cause people to move away from conservative attitudes, specifically regarding trade, immigration, religion and willingness to pay taxes.[51] There is also scope, therefore, to further examine the effects of urbanisation on more abstract aspects of a country's political system.

Urban growth may also generate pressure for decentralisation of decision-making to lower levels of government better able to respond to local demands, though this is likely to be opposed by, and bring about tension with, the central government. Similarly, decentralisation of decision-making is further driven by globalisation and technological change as individuals are empowered through the internet, mobile communication and social media, especially in urban areas where these connections are more easily accessible. Questions often arise about the relevance of the state-centric governance model, and this threatens traditional divisions of authority among local, national, regional and global bodies. The consequences could be widespread, affecting regional institutions, multi-national corporations, and even possibly the socially-accepted notions of democracy and representation. What is certain is that for governance to be responsive and inclusive, diverse stakeholders need to be engaged, perhaps in more horizontal or networked governance systems rather than top-down forms.

On the other hand, the existing level of decentralisation of a country's political system can actually affect how the urbanisation process unfolds. Some cities are 'policy-takers' as opposed to 'policy-makers'.[52] This influences their ability to govern themselves effectively, their legitimacy and accountability to residents.

Society: Social Ills, Divisions and Power Shifts

Cities can serve as incubators for crime, political dissent, illegal networks, drug abuse, malaise, unemployment and terrorism. These are all closely linked to a government's ability to provide services including policing and social services, and the opportunities residents face.

In a rapidly growing urban centre, particularly one experiencing unplanned urbanisation, a number of security pathologies tend to emerge, associated with the lack of governance capacity to cope with the pace and scale of urban growth. Urban newcomers occupy new settlements on the city's fringes, peri-urban areas that lack essential services, utilities, and government presence. Informal networks develop to meet the population's need for goods and services that the government or the formal economy cannot or will not provide. Armed non-state groups (including gangs, local militias, armed political groups, and organisations based on rural villages-of-origin) fill the security vacuum, providing local security services but also often exploiting and controlling populations through variants of a protection racket.

> Urbanisation tends to cause people to move away from conservative attitudes, specifically regarding trade, immigration, religion and willingness to pay taxes

Local government officials strike deals with these non-state groups, which may control critical entry points and access routes to the city and thus have the ability to interdict key commodities (food, water, labour force, fuel and trade goods) which the city requires in order to function. In some cases these groups have a political ideology – religious, ethnic, separatist or social-justice bases – but in many cases their motivation is simply economic. As a consequence, urban and peri-urban 'no-go' areas tend to emerge, in which there is little or no government presence, public safety depends on the behaviour of non-state groups, and high levels of crime and conflict may emerge. High crime levels in turn have a large impact on the degree of support that citizens display for democracy and democratic ideals.[53]

> The growth of certain cities can restructure power dynamics in countries, as well as within regions and the continent in general

The clientelist relationship between city-level officials and gangs or other non-state armed groups in no-go areas, along with intensified pressure for services, government's inability to meet demands and a lack of economic opportunities, may cause city-dwellers to resort to corruption, bribery and patronage networks. In some cases patronage networks replace state-based governance systems altogether, while in others urbanisation may be more likely to destroy traditional patronage networks.[54] Urban growth is likely to lead to higher levels of nationalism and decreasing prominence of ethnic or sub-national identities because of mass education, economic growth, the breaking of ties with communal regions and higher in-country migration instead of emigration. But, as occurred in Somalia in the 1970s and 1980s, urban growth can also bring tribal, clan and locality-based identities from rural communities into the urban space, and in the most extreme cases (as in Mogadishu in 1991) this can destroy national identity altogether. Stronger nationalism will be fostered if economic gains benefit all groups relatively equally and do not privilege some over others.[55]

Just as it is caused by inequality, city growth can also exacerbate disparities within the urban region as 'premium rewards go to the owners of capital and to global talent'.[56] It is likely that growing cities may also cause greater inequality between urban and rural zones, but there are certainly ways in which the process can be managed so as to benefit the hinterlands. The decline in rural populations may raise rural productivity and thus incomes, but it also makes service and infrastructure provision in increasingly sparsely-populated and isolated areas less cost-effective and more difficult. In China, this shift has exacerbated rural-urban inequality; average incomes are now three times higher in the cities than in the countryside.[57]

Urban growth can affect the rest of the country in other ways too. It could be seen to incentivise investing in cross-country connections between growing urban zones, which facilitates regional trade and possibly labour mobility. But an administrative burden on central authorities and excessive centralisation of public functions may often result, especially if growth is concentrated in a few major urban zones. In some cases, such as Rwanda, this has been eased by encouraging growth in alternative mid-size cities within a country. Nevertheless, the growth of certain cities can certainly restructure power dynamics in countries, as well as within regions and the continent in general. Lagos is a clear example of how this has already occurred in Africa.

Africa is Not Alone: Four Case Studies

Four descriptive case studies will illustrate some of the common challenges and potentialities that arise within cities when undergoing rapid growth. Around the world there are many commonalities that are instructive for the African experience. Singapore from the mid-1960s onwards, Buenaventura, Cape Town and finally Mombasa demonstrate the wide variety of experiences that growing cities face, but also the many commonalities in what is always a long and arduous road to development alongside expansion.

Singapore

At the time of Singapore's divorce from the Malaysian Federation in August 1965 the island faced pressing problems of high unemployment, scarce housing and education, and the threat of civil unrest. The city's then population of 1.8 million[58] was crowded in unsanitary conditions along the creek. The tale of

Singapore then, like Kenya today, was one of two cities and societies: one driven by international finance, steam and the telegraph that enjoyed wealthy lifestyles of leisure; the other a marginalised and violent society, poor, disease- and drug-ridden, and for whom laws and justice did not equally apply.

Singapore took advantage, however, of this moment of crisis, mustering intense discipline from government as well as attention to detail and sound, prescient leadership. Through hands-on management it filled the gaps prevalent in other developing regions between vision, planning and execution. It has also relied on some novel policy ideas, for example the public Housing Development Board (HDB), which provides 80 per cent of the overall housing requirements for Singaporeans, or over 900 000 apartments, up from just 9 per cent in 1960.[59] Apartments are funded through a combination of home-owner grants and loans, the latter both commercial and from the Central Provident Fund, a mandatory savings scheme in which employers and employees contribute (a maximum of) 16 per cent and 20 per cent of salary respectively. This scheme was not only necessary to clean up Singapore's 'squatter colonies and slums', says the HDB's Sng Cheng Keh, but home ownership gave the population a 'stake in their society, building a strong work ethic, a store of value to be monetised, and a sense of belonging'.[60]

The key lesson from Singapore is of the need for assiduous and innovative planning to move from vision to reality, a process rooted in the realities of meeting the population's principal needs – jobs and housing were the priorities in the 1960s, and better infrastructure and urban renewal those of the 1970s – by generating economic growth and mobilising financial resources. This was also done through, among other methods, forced savings and targeting local and foreign direct investment. Indeed, a striking aspect of Singapore's development is the continuous, driving reinvention and fast-paced expansion of its model.

Buenaventura

The Pacific city of Buenaventura, Colombia's second-largest port with more than 500 000 people, is better known for its poverty and criminality than for its potential role as a gateway to the region, a would-be source of prosperity.[61] Buenaventura's Gerardo Tobar López airport is serviced only by the subsidised military airline Satena given a lack of commercial demand. The 15-minute drive from there to the port itself could not, according to the military, be undertaken 10 years ago without being shot at by feuding gangs and FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) hiding in the hills surrounding the Simon Bolivar *autopista*, the road locals say was once a development 'hub.'

The key lesson from Singapore is of the need for assiduous and innovative planning to move from vision to reality

Today there is a sense of calm punctuated by extraordinary incidences of extreme gang-driven violence. As Rear-Admiral Pablo Romero, commander of the Colombian Pacific naval force, put it in June 2014: 'The gang is the neighbourhood itself.' The distinction between gang violence and law and order is merely an 'invisible border'. The population has long been caught in the crossfire of a murderous gang war between paramilitary criminal gangs Los Urabeños and their rivals La Empresa.[62] In the 2001 Naya massacre south of the city, paramilitary groups killed hundreds of villagers, some beheaded by chainsaw. More recently, community leaders have been victims of *decuartizando*, or murder by quartering.

The geography of the town and area does not help either, with the Panamanian border to Ecuador no less than 1 300kms away, and just one other main urban centre, Tumaco, on the coastal strip. Buenaventura has an astonishing 7 000mm annual rainfall – among the world's highest – and the region is a patchwork of rivers, estuaries and deltas, sparsely populated and just fractionally cultivated. It is vulnerable to extreme tidal currents and weather conditions and is cut off from the hinterland save the presence of two main roads up and over the coastal mountain range: a 122km strip between Buenaventura and Cali, and the longer 283km link from Tumaco to Pasto. Just five airports with runways of more than 1 200m service the entire coastal area, still only capable of accepting small aircraft.

The wider region around Buenaventura is less a source of prosperity than destabilisation. To the south, Ecuador is a conduit for smuggling, especially of subsidised fuel. As the Chief of Naval Operations Vice-Admiral Rudolfo Amaya reflects, 'the problem with Ecuador is that … because there is a border area, there is an issue of fuel. People that live in Nariño have the right to use fuel from Ecuador, which is of a lesser quality and much cheaper, most of which is used for the production of cocaine. The border is also the site of the flow of food and weapons, since it is an open border with many illegal crossings that are difficult to control.'

Little wonder the Pacific coast has historically been economically and politically marginalised. Ninety per cent of the seven million people in the coastal departments of Chocó, Cauca, Nariño, and Valle del Cauca are of Afro-Colombian descent, and 7 per cent of the remainder, some 56 000, are from among 48 indigenous communities. They are different to the majority of Colombians, and have previously been left out and behind. As is the case in many developing cities, the clash between local and national dynamics has not played to their favour.

> The Pacific coast has historically been economically and politically marginalised

Indeed, like the Pacific region more generally, Buenaventura is a city that time – and the government – forgot, and which has suffered 'decades of neglect by the central government' says Amaya, combined with the insurgency. The Navy's national Joint Task Force Poseidon operates across 26 000 km^2 of the coastal area which has an estimated 40 per cent extreme poverty level, a social environment that enables the drug trade by providing very few other alternatives.

Amaya concludes that 'the past was better. This is a city that drug trafficking has severely damaged. It used to have a strong fishing industry but [the boats] were used as tankers for moving the cocaine. When these companies were shut down, these communities went down. There also used to be tobacco, coconut and aqua-culture and oil palm for the long-term, but all of this has gone. We are trying to recover this, and work with investors who will make a bet on this recovery. But this will take at least 10–15 years. But this implies great responsibility for the armed forces for the duration.'

> The challenges of development are compounded by the 'push' of people from the countryside due to ongoing insurgent activity

Today the 8 200 sailors and marines in Joint Task Force Poseidon are attempting to bring stability to this substantial area by focusing on two overlapping strategic objectives: dealing with narcotics and the insurgency threat, and the protection of maritime interests.

To achieve this, says Amaya, will require much more than simply patrolling territorial waters and rivers and attacking the FARC. 'For success,' he stresses, 'we need to smell the same as the local people smell, and we need to find a fine balance between military and comprehensive actions.' The economic and political environment in Buenaventura has allowed the situation to deteriorate to a point where instead of just a crime threat the government is now faced with an endemic gang and violence culture that has seeped into the very bones of the city. Although some inhabitants still demonstrate their preference to get out of the city forever, as people continue to stream out of the area, mostly to the safety of the capital Bogotá, many say the military presence has certainly improved matters. Still systemic change will take time, perhaps a generation.

The challenges of development are compounded by the 'push' of people from the countryside due to ongoing insurgent activity. During the 1990s and 2000s more than 45 000 jobs were lost in the palm oil and coconut plantations and processing plants, which had supported 200 000 family dependents. This explains the prevalence of coca production. 'It is deeply rooted in the local society,' says Rear-Admiral Guevara, 'because of poverty and a lack of opportunity and unmet needs. Also,' he added, 'coca grows wild. You virtually don't have to cultivate it. It can produce as many as four harvests a year, and fetches a good price for farmers in areas where there are no roads, just riverine transport. It's an easy option.' He concludes, 'Where you don't have development, you have coca.'

The lessons from Buenaventura are clear: security is the fundamental stepping stone to all other development. Nevertheless, it is not sufficient on its own, and economic opportunities feed back into the cycle of instability. Local governance plays a vital role in overcoming this chicken-and-the-egg problem, but coordination with national authorities, particularly when it comes to acquiring the military and police resources necessary to secure the environment, cannot be neglected. Finding the line between these various responsibilities can be difficult, as can the transition from military to civil authority once an initial degree of stability has been achieved. But both must be resolved before more complex issues of private sector expansion, human capital development and infrastructure investment can be dealt with.

Mombasa

As the primary port of entry into East Africa – and much of the rest of the continent – a historical trading hub and the centre of the coastal tourism industry in Kenya, Mombasa is the gateway for the entire region. While it has the potential to serve as a motor of growth for Kenya and East Africa, Mombasa currently only processes in one year (780 000 TEUs) what the world's most active ports (Shanghai or Singapore) handle in a week.[63] There are various, structural reasons for this weakness, demand aside.

One such factor relates to capacity. Despite its strategic placement the port of Mombasa struggles to process even the small volumes that pass through. This should be improved by the opening in 2013 of the new berth capable of handling an additional 200 000 TEUs, though problems remain with the processing of goods through various Container Freight Services. The CFSs were originally introduced as a short-term measure to handle congestion by offering transporters temporary storage services, but now add another layer of logistical complexity and cost, though a useful source of patronage. But closing them down, given the patronage opportunities, is less a technocratic than a political exercise.

Moreover, the arteries connecting Mombasa through the 500kms to Nairobi and into the East African hinterland are poor, and subject to all sorts of similar political and other vagaries. The time constraints imposed by the above factors have only continued to grow in importance within the logistics industry as vertical disintegration in global value chains makes rapid and reliable transportation the backbone of almost all international commerce.

> Security is the fundamental stepping stone to all other development

Beyond the port, Mombasa continues to struggle to develop its economy. It's a costly place to do business. Despite being the second-largest city in Kenya, and one of its most prominent economic hubs, the city ranks only sixth of 13 major Kenyan cities on the World Bank's *Ease of Doing Business* Index.[64] In addition to the high costs of doing business, access to finance is limited, job and market information is scarce, while cultural attitudes and feelings of marginalisation and victimisation pervade society.[65] About 80 per cent of Mombasa's 1.2 million people live in informal settlements, which cover more than 90 per cent of the land area, and almost 40 per cent live below the poverty line.[66] The majority of this population participates only, or at least predominantly, in the informal sector in low value-added industries.

There are also layers of insecurity, related both to Mombasa's role as a transit point for drugs and the legendary corruption in the port and among customs. It also links to its predominantly Muslim character. By July 2014 twenty-one Islamic clerics were reported to have been gunned down in the city over the previous two years. All but one of them was linked by the government to terrorism and support for the Somali Islamist Al-Shabab movement, though the Kenyan government strenuously denied allegations that the security forces were involved in any extra-judicial killings.

Still Mombasa is reportedly a fertile recruiting ground for Al-Shabab, working through radical mosques and clerics.[67] This aspect of insecurity complicates an already high level of criminality set against chronic unemployment. Indeed, radicalism and criminality have appeal in the absence of other opportunities: unemployment here runs at an estimated 44 per cent of the youth population.[68] Some of Mombasa's youth, in particular, feel they are 'no longer part of Kenya'.[69]

Mombasa is so far a missed development opportunity, where the downsides of crime and terrorism both demonstrate and exacerbate the costs of a failure of governance. Better intelligence networks and coordinated actions by the Kenyan security forces might help to keep a lid on the worst symptoms, but dealing with the root causes will demand actions on a whole number of fronts, from improving port efficiencies, which requires hitherto unseen levels of political will to break and reshape corrupt systems, and investment in both hard and soft educational and vocational infrastructure. It's a big ask and a long haul.

Cape Town

Cities inhabit the space where implementation occurs, where the policy rubber has to hit the road, where policy-makers come face-to-face with society's problems. Although the role of municipal actors is overlooked, their direct influence is often greater than presidents. Indeed, the rise of national governments in policy making and implementation is a relatively recent global phenomenon, spurred by globalisation and the need to raise armies (especially given the last century's world wars), and the national importance of managing inequality.

City governments are inherently pragmatic and less partisan, since their job is to 'clean the streets' no matter the political allegiances. Mayors are by necessity not legislative but executive. Or as Teddy Kollek, who served as mayor of Jerusalem for 28 years, once put it in trying to negotiate between Israeli and Palestinian communities, 'Spare me your sermons, and I'll fix your sewers.'[70]

Still, for all of the coalface responsibilities, they lack the policy tools, in South Africa as elsewhere.

The centrepiece of South Africa's tourism industry, Cape Town, is a study in contrasts. Drawn by the backdrop of opulent coastal mansions, pristine beaches and 'old' wealth, visitors arriving at Cape Town International Airport are often shocked to pass through miles of squalid squatter camps where basic sanitation and electricity remain elusive luxuries. A reminder of the injustices of apartheid, the city's wealth inequality is mirrored by spatial divisions, with the poor and gang-ridden suburbs of the Cape Flats and the townships spreading interminably away from the heart of the city around Table Mountain. Still, it remains an attractive destination for migrants from all over the country and continent. The result has been massive pressure on housing, basic service delivery and public transport systems, and more than anything, jobs.

According to Tim Harris, the former Director of Trade and Investment for the City of Cape Town government, the authorities have three priorities to tackle the new 'urban migration' challenge: connecting citizens through investments in public transport and ICT infrastructure, maintaining a high level of delivery for basic services as the city expands (including providing free allocations for water and electricity for those unable to pay), and ensuring sufficient and appropriate human settlement solutions.[71]

Although the role of municipal actors is overlooked, their direct influence is often greater than presidents

Yet Cape Town has very limited scope to act independently of central government in dealing with its specific challenges – or, more positively, to play to its particular strengths. The reasons for this come down to money and autonomy.

The city, with a population of 3.7 million, currently has an annual budget of R36 billion, which includes R6 billion for capital expenditure – compared to the national budget of R1.25 trillion and population of 52 million. Eighty per cent of the city's income comes from the premium charged on utilities (especially electricity), property rates and other charges. The remainder comes from three sources: a tranche from the national government according to a countrywide formula; conditional grants from the Treasury (which remove discretion for municipalities to spend as they may need to); and a portion of the fuel levy raised on sales within the municipal boundary. The vast majority of this (like other municipal budgets) is spent on maintaining and expanding infrastructure and delivering basic services, including water, electricity and refuse removal, on the back of that infrastructure.

The shortage of funding is worsened by 'unfunded mandates', including library services and clinics, where the city is 'left out of pocket by hundreds of millions of Rands for services provided which are not matched by income or allocations from higher structures.'[72]

> The most important reform to allow municipalities to 'shape their own destiny' would be the devolution of taxing powers

This fiscal and political environment severely limits the latitude of Cape Town, among other South African cities, to act independently, for example, in designing strong investment incentives. It can offer 'non-financial' incentives: accelerated planning approvals, bio-diversity offsets, an investment facilitation touch-point in the Mayor's office, and the overall 'lifestyle' advantages. On the financial side, the city has been able to offer discounted electricity tariffs and waive various application fees and development contributions that would normally be incurred for bulk infrastructure required to support an investment. It can also offer discounted rates and land leases, though this is controversial within the administration, not least given the budgetary funding imperative.

From the city's vantage, the most important reform to allow municipalities to 'shape their own destiny' would be the devolution of taxing powers. Any intent in this regard on the part of the drafters of the constitution quickly ran afoul of the low capacity of many sub-national governments and a move towards centralism by the national government. This has removed the potential for tax competition between sub-national governments, a key tool in spurring development world-wide.

While a comparative success when viewed alongside other African cities, Cape Town's desire to break clear of its tracking of the rate of national growth, albeit constantly 'at 1.5 to 2 per cent' above this rate,[73] demands rethinking its own growth constraints and strategies. This includes its skills-base. For example, there is a desire to turn the city (and province) into an 'Oil and Gas Hub' by gaining a greater share of maintenance contracts for the '126 African rigs which were looking for servicing in 2013', of which 'Cape Town got 12'. Meeting this ambition would, however, require not fewer than 18 000 qualified artisans in the government's estimation, nearly four times the number now available. This demands a different mind-set on the part of the city's Port, which is, in the words of one naval architect, 'interested in container shipping, not in ship repair – if the lack of working cranes is anything to go by.'[74] It also demands rethinking densification, where Cape Town is comparatively sparsely populated. This aspect requires 'managing the NIMBYs [Not in My Backyard] who have held up billions in investment'. It also requires putting in place practices to execute against its plans, including notably the promulgation of a West Coast Special Economic Zone from Cape Town to Atlantis. Perhaps more than anything, Cape Town's actions have to be infused by the realisation that 'others are sprinting ahead [of South Africa] and we are not even in the race.'[75]

The tension between the pressure of necessity and the limits on action as a result of a lack of policy tools highlights two qualities in turn: the need for focus, and the importance of efficiency and innovation. This includes rethinking the patterns of current usage and planning for usage over the next generation. Absent these qualities, the spatial dynamics are likely to reinforce inequalities and the business of local government becomes 'a maintenance game'.[76]

Key Determinants of Urban Success or Failure

Taking into account possible consequences and comparing them against lessons learnt from case studies, it is possible to identify those vital factors which make a city a success:

Economy: It's about Jobs

Urbanisation cannot be addressed through economic redistribution alone, but rather, fundamentally, through economic growth. Thus, planning has to be accompanied by an appropriate overall strategy for growth premised on increased investment and broad-based economic expansion.

There is therefore a need to institutionalise the principles of growth during the initial planning period. In Singapore's case (as in many others) these were: fiscal prudence, a stable and competitive exchange rate, low interest rates, price stability, outside orientation, a focus on growth engines (such as manufacturing, services and the necessary soft and hard infrastructure), and improving factor competitiveness.

> In this day and age it is vital that cities present themselves as internationally competitive hosts of industrial clusters

In this way enablers of successful urban growth will be activated and sustained. An attractive business environment, including good macroeconomic policy, clear and fair taxation policy; flexible and robust labour market; openness to trade, FDI, tourism and skills; and clear and navigable government regulations and requirements are essential ingredients. The presence and growth of a middle class, while being inclusive of lower classes, also serves to boost both economic and political performance. Having an independent foreign economic policy for the city is valuable, as it serves to enable positive engagement with the global economy. In the case of Singapore it is clear that the government's ability to do this was helpful, but for cities in different geographic and political situations within their host-states a more explicit effort may be required. This is certainly part of the attractiveness of the contentious 'Charter City' movement, which enables local city authorities to make use of flexible governance structures and benefit from greater independence in planning and policy-making.[77]

Regardless of how it is achieved, in this day and age it is vital that cities present themselves as internationally competitive hosts of industrial clusters in order to attract global and regional investors, and that they are able to govern themselves as needed for such. In the African context policies to integrate informal economies into the financial and regulatory systems – and thus to collect tax from them – are also essential. As part of this, it is vital that job creation be included as an explicit strategy within the urban planning process for growing cities.

The Need for Governance

Political pressure is almost certainly going to be created from the influx of people demanding services from a limited pie of resources, given both the shortage of domestic energy and sound relations with its key potential trading partner. Rwanda's great market is the eastern Congo, and its advantage lies in its relative infrastructure efficiencies. But realising this opportunity depends on improving the political relationship between Kinshasa and Kigali, not an easy task given the history of genocide and conflict. Secondly (and partly as a consequence), an effort to restructure society and decision-making is probable and prudent. However this occurs, it requires coordination and collaboration between different sectors of society: 'in this increasingly complex, interdependent era, the challenges of rapid urbanisation far exceed the capacity and interests of any one industry, sector or country.'[78] Thirdly, economic growth is by no means automatically inclusive, and may even lean towards exacerbating inequality. In terms of institutions and the political system, some factors are both undoubtedly indispensable and sadly absent in African cities. Hard connectivity is the first. Vital to allowing a city to be competitive in the global economy and to the quality of life of its residents, physical infrastructure such as transport networks, invested in intelligently and not for glitzy but needless projects, is a necessary component of connectivity. As mentioned before, the degree of urban density may affect efficiency, but also influences the facility with which urban residents can be connected. While density can incentivise investing in infrastructure, it by no means occurs as an automatic process. Furthermore, infrastructure has been shown to be insufficient on its own for sustainable development. The success of hard connectivity also depends on the degree to which integration into regional infrastructure networks is accomplished. This is, in turn, influenced by immigration and trade policies.

On the national level, while city governments require adequate public finances to meet their running costs, the state also has to protect rural populations from negative fallout

Hard connectivity also needs to be achieved within the city limits. Cape Town is a prime example of where this effort has failed, where a majority of residents have been left stranded in informal and inadequate housing settlements on the outskirts with little ability to integrate into the life of the city. Affordable housing and financing systems in the way of the HDB of Singapore are clearly the first step in ameliorating this situation. But given that the spatial character of Cape Town, as with most other African cities, is very different to that of the city-state of Singapore, these systems must also be incorporated into the transport infrastructure and will likely need to be developed into more comprehensive and independent suburbs with full service-delivery. This would be a massive and ambitious project for developing cities, but should be recognised as necessary to their overall stability.

Besides infrastructure, there are other public policies that have huge potential to influence city development in various ways. Some countries have utilised formal population control or population movement control policies to manage urban growth, others have national policies that benefit rural areas to the expense of metropolitan ones. For all, having the political will, leadership and vision to implement a positive urban growth strategy is critical. In Brazil, for example, Curitiba, has successfully pursued a clear strategy of becoming a leader in green growth.[79] Other cities, such as London and New York, have taken the route of installing 'empowered mayors with long tenures and clear accountability' to craft modern, efficient and effective governance regimes.[80] In all cases, long-term planning – preferably up to a 50 year horizon – is needed to craft impactful and sustainable policies.

Previous examples of successful and dynamic cities have demonstrated that the capacity to provide public services requires efforts to develop human capital as well as a willingness to implement some degree of decentralisation of decision-making while maintaining overall coordination. A city must be able to control its own development policies, but it is important to take into account that new technologies often have the effect of empowering new types of actors and disrupting existing economies. On the national level, while city governments require adequate public finances to meet their running costs, the state also has to protect rural populations from negative fallout. In general, authorities need to be flexible, adaptable and innovative.

The character of a nation's political system is a controversial factor in urban growth. Some argue that democracy enables wider inclusion in the economy and a distribution of economic gains, while others point out the room for irregular or inefficient resource allocation, corruption and rent-seeking, and that authorities with greater control and manoeuvrability can provide the vision and efficiency necessary for sustainable and inclusive growth. This argument has been thoroughly dealt with in the context of national growth. As with countries, what is clear is that institutional strength, a robust legal framework, impartial enforcement of property rights and contracts and efficient public services are vital to urban economic growth, and that institution-building should be done as early as possible in the development process.

Such institutional strength is the keystone of international perceptions of a city's business environment. In Cape Town, relatively superior service delivery and widespread privatisation of the gaps in such services – such as security companies, electricity generators and schools – have encouraged investment to continue flowing despite the aforementioned difficulties. Similarly, the city's reputation for a high quality of life and political stability has mitigated to some degree the brain drain occurring in the rest of the country.

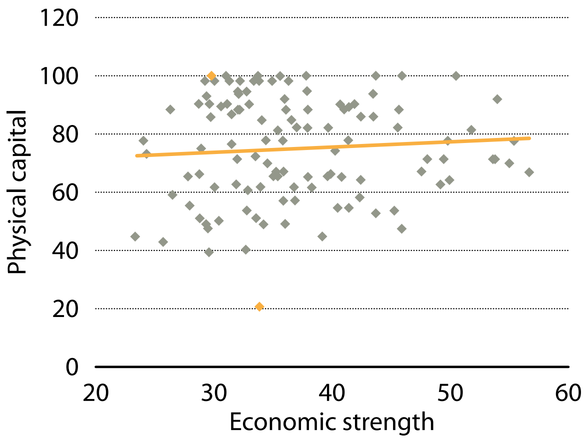
While the bureaucratic environment and global competitiveness affect the economic potential of a city, it is clear that its reputation also includes the quality of life it provides, the human capital it offers and develops, personal freedoms allowed to its citizens and the clean environment they enjoy, all of which combine to attract talent, but also investment and entrepreneurs.[81] These 'softer aspects of development' are also key to generating growth that is sustainable and forging a city whose competitiveness is durable. Human capital, as mentioned below, is particularly important.

Infrastructure, Housing and Public Services

The network of challenges outlined above can be overcome by focusing on implementing informed policy and good governance in a number of key sectors: infrastructure, housing, spatial planning and the provision of public services, particularly health and education.

Infrastructure is a strategic determinant of the pace at which cities transform themselves, and whether they are even able to do so. Core physical infrastructure, particularly for transport, power and connectivity, are certainly prerequisites for a globally competitive city. The World Bank found that if all African countries were to catch up with Mauritius – the regional leader in infrastructure – per capita economic growth could increase by 2.2 per cent.[82] However, the EIU established that current physical capital does not directly correlate with a city's projected future economic strength; it is therefore necessary but not sufficient, an obvious-seeming fact but one often forgotten (see Figure 10).[83] Furthermore, given the resource and space limits in many African cities, simply adding more physical infrastructure will not be enough to overcome the deficit; some innovation and untraditional investment is needed.[84] Soft infrastructure, such as digital technologies, has the potential to make great strides in overcoming the challenges for hard infrastructure that the difficult economic geography of Africa presents.[85]

Figure 10: Physical capital vs economic strength[86]



Housing is the next key sector, and one of the growing African city's most difficult challenges. Informal housing is troublesome not only because of the squalid conditions it provides for its residents but also because it is closely linked to the informal economy, which consequently impacts on the government's ability to collect tax revenue and provide public goods. It creates a vicious cycle of deprivation and incapacity.

There are nevertheless a number of entry-points through which policy can impact this cycle.[87]

The first is providing alternative budgetary support to compensate for the low tax base, such as aid and loans. Secondly, methods for managing the erraticism of informal incomes, encouraging savings, and facilitating the transition into the formal economy have been attempted in many regions, and there is scope for scaling up successful initiatives. Thirdly, ensuring that infrastructure investment occurs for the wider benefit of all a city's residents can be achieved by minimising corruption and skewed resource allocation. Finally, opening up land markets to create equitable and just land distribution and accessibility can break the cycle.

Spatial planning is a concept closely related to both housing and infrastructure development. African cities have been plagued by social and physical divides for much of their histories. This has contributed to unprecedented levels of slum urbanism, 'enclave elite urbanism,' and the privatisation of many public services, as in Cape Town.[88] Ensuring comprehensive delivery of high quality public services, especially health and education, will be one of the most important tasks for growing African cities.

Society: Security and People

Security, primarily in the sense of human security, is a critical underpinning for urban growth, in three ways. First, it provides much-needed predictability for businesses, civil society organizations and members of the community, establishing norms that ensure (for instance) that contracts will be honoured and plans completed. This positive 'shadow of the future' effect encourages investment, commerce, political participation and construction activity which can have profound benefits for urban growth. Second, the creation of a zone of safety enables urban-dwellers to redirect resources that would otherwise have to be devoted to self-protection toward productive growth-oriented activity such as commerce, education and urban development. Finally, most importantly, security provides the basis for competing groups to come together in a safe environment, discuss contested issues and develop consensus or compromise approaches to addressing them. This enables urban societies to improve inclusion of marginalised groups, build resiliency against natural and man-made catastrophes, and unlock the adaptive resources needed to cope with rapid urban growth and development.

In an urban system, security is often produced by local community and individual engagement and activity, rather than by the direct presence of government representatives. Especially in African cities where no-go and no-see areas emerge over time through patterns of unplanned and unrestrained urban growth, informal security systems (including neighbourhood watch organizations, women's associations, business groups and religious organizations) can be at least as important as state-based systems.

Security in cities is also heavily affected by micro-geographies of urban space and social access. Critical issues include access to clean drinking water (which is often severely lacking in informal settlements and peri-urban or outlying districts and can become subject to manipulation by 'water mafias' and corrupt officials), as well as freedom of movement, access to electronic connectivity and electrical supply, and access to affordable food supplies. Of these the most urgent issue is water, since lack of water (even for a single day) imposes an immediate life-threatening risk to urban populations. Urban-dwellers can survive essentially indefinitely (albeit with significant hardship) without access to electricity, and can survive for a week or more in the face of a breakdown in food supply. But a water outage presents an immediate crisis, as a result of which water stress often correlates strongly with incidents of urban unrest. Likewise, issues of urban habitat including drainage, street lighting, street width and housing setback have an outsize impact on levels of violent crime and public confidence. Urban areas under stress may see a rise of violence (both political and criminal) in key bottlenecks, areas of contested space or where access to critical resources is lacking. These can be useful warning signs that help analysts understand where and when violence may spill over into larger areas or affect whole urban populations.

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In addition to the management of security, there are many social characteristics of a city that can serve as enablers of positive urban growth. Most important of these is how the demographic transition is managed and how long it occurs for. Hardly less vital is the soft connectivity afforded to residents. Social capital, relationships, a sense of community, ability to communicate and receive an education and quality of life all contribute to soft connectivity, as does digital infrastructure. While it is clear that state-centred urban development has failed Africa thus far, new digital technologies and social movements have the potential to transform how urbanism plays out on the continent in the future. This is not to discount the massive impact that reformed national governance should have on facilitating the inclusive development of cities. But it is to say that we should not forget the considerable potential of new technologies, decentralised systems of community action, institutional innovations and new forms of collective action powered by novel technologies and networks to catalyse modern forms of urbanism.

It cannot be ignored that traditional social factors can – and should – still be manipulated to positively affect urban development. The presence of a social safety net, family planning and human capital investment – particularly in education and health – remain vital to this process. As far as education is concerned, what matters is the nature of the skills that are invested in; that is, whether they prepare workers for an urban or a rural lifestyle. Without investments that mobilise the large working force into productive activities, demographic dividends will instead be only a burden. As Michael Bloomberg notes, 'talent attracts capital more effectively and consistently than capital attracts talent.'[89] Not only capital is drawn in, but entrepreneurs and a wider range of additional skills as well. This additionally improves the functioning of city authorities by providing qualified civil servants. With regards to health, urban environments concentrate risks and can thereby exacerbate inequalities in the region, and it is therefore vital that adequate services be provided to all residents, especially younger segments of the population.

Geography and Balanced Growth

Geography can also play a big role in determining the economic and social success of cities. Certain factors, such as the presence of natural resources, location relative to ports and other countries or continents, and the types of industries favoured by certain global locations, are undeniably influential. Others, such as vulnerability to tropical diseases and such factors are more ambiguous. It is likely, however, that geography will come to play an increasingly important role in the fate of urban metropolises as their ability to resist and mitigate the effects of climate change becomes more and more important. Internal geography can also play a role by influencing the degree to which balanced national growth is achieved. Negative consequences in rural areas need to be mitigated, but it can also be wise to encourage the growth of mid-size cities as a way to generate balanced distribution of dividends from growth, ease the administrative burden on major cities, mitigate environmental impacts and moderate excessive centralisation of authority. At the level of the city itself, a 'just spatial form' must be created with inclusive land markets, compact urban forms and an integrated and public-oriented spatial plan.[90] This requires managing urban density, preventing enclave elite urbanism, and overcoming spatial and social divides, prominent features of African cities today.

History has shown that dynamic and inclusive cities can be kick-started by economic or political crises if they are viewed and acted upon as windows of opportunity during which to implement bold policies. Surat, India, for example, capitalised on a disastrous outbreak of the plague to mobilise major reforms and progress.[91]

Technology and Innovation

It is important to note that new technologies can, and likely will, revolutionise how cities develop and function in many ways. This is particularly significant in the African context because of the high degree of uncertainty around actual statistics about the continent. Although at present we cannot even be entirely sure that the predicted outlook is accurate, the rapidly growing connectivity in cities – between cell phones, computers and tablets, but also other things like streetlights and railroad tracks – will provide a new kind of big data that can inform urban policy-making.[92] Our ability to monitor, analyse and understand what is going on in African cities could be dramatically improved in the next few years. In this way, there may be some justification for a positive outlook. African cities are growing and developing right at the time when the potential to become modern, digitised 'smart cities' is greatest, with the consequent ability to cut costs and improve efficiency and government responsiveness if correctly implemented.

Kenya has been at the forefront of new mobile-money technologies that have the potential to significantly impact the informalism of many of its cities' urban economies and the society's degree of financial inclusion. Other African countries now appear to be following its lead in this regard. Technology and innovation can also provide a way for African cities to leap-frog some of the traditional development requirements such as some forms of infrastructure or low value-added industries by becoming tech-hubs and service centres. Recent attempts in Africa like Konza Technology City[93] have not yet proven they can overcome the myriad obstacles outlined above, but Indian cities like Bangalore and Chennai show it can indeed be done. It remains to be seen what will come of Kigali's current attempt to emulate the 'Singapore model' as an ICT, finance and logistics hub.

Rural Growth Strategies

According to research done under the auspices of the Urban Expansion Initiative of New York University that aims to help cities experiencing rapid growth to prepare, restrictive planning policies attempting to block urban growth have had no effect on the relative expansion of both urban populations and land cover in 120 cities between 1990 and 2000.[94] Instead, they recommend planning frameworks on which cities can grow to accommodate the influx.

While slowing the urbanisation process is not likely to be successful, or even desirable, it is nevertheless important that policies are put in place to enable rural communities to prosper too.

Growing cities need to be accompanied by a productive agricultural industry, creating 'a virtuous supply-demand cycle that [makes] both the cities and rural areas prosperous'.[95] This can be done by instituting rural growth strategies that facilitate the agro-revolution, improve tenure over land, mitigate land degradation, provide adequate infrastructure, integrate agricultural extension policies and new technologies to improve yields and ensure that land reform supports the expansion of arable land where necessary.

As recently as 2000 Africa was a net exporter of food, but today imports significantly more than it produces. While the urbanisation revolution is a necessary component of the continent's growth strategy, maintaining food security is equally as vital. This is not only an issue of food production, however, but also of the nature of the trade in food in the urban environment, and the regulations that can assist or hinder in this regard – from the establishment of operations of vendors to the (over) regulation of licensing requirements. Food security is not only about production, though this is important, but distribution, which can have a significant bearing on pricing and availability. If low productivity and barriers to trade are not overcome, the half of Africa's population living in urban areas by 2030 will not be fed by African farmers, but rather by agricultural imports, a troubling scenario for many reasons, especially as consumption rises with higher incomes.

Conclusion

Historically, urbanisation was accompanied by industrialisation and economic growth. And though it continues to offer economies of scale of infrastructure and social services, Africa's urbanisation is occurring as a result of globalisation, but not in the main alongside industrialisation and full economic transformation. The relationship between the two does not therefore appear as strong as in other cases, such as China. The 'rural exodus' in Africa may have begun prematurely as a result of alternative factors such as technological innovation, climate change and declining mortality rates. In addition to its sheer speed and scale, this is what makes the African urbanisation revolution different – and more challenging – than anything that has previously occurred. Destroying traditional theories that urbanisation is driven by economic development, Africa's transformation is illuminating the fact that urban growth is a long-term, global trend that is stimulated by technological and institutional change facilitating what is an 'inherent human propensity to agglomerate'.[96]

Enabling sustainable and equitable growth in African cities hinges on ensuring that economic development at the very least maintains, or preferably surpasses, population growth and urbanisation rates, something that failed to occur for much of the period since independence.[97] More than that, it requires careful and intelligent long-term planning, innovative use of technology and skills, new forms of governance and an informed focus on key sectors such as infrastructure, housing and the provision of public services.

Failing government action, the prospect of African cities as centres of prosperity will fade against the grinding reality of slums, disease, crime, chronic and burgeoning unemployment, populism and even violent radicalism, where those left out and behind are easy prey for political prophets.

The rapid growth of the African city will, if properly managed, ensure the realisation of the 'Africa Rising' narrative; if not, not only will it be a lost opportunity, but a source of chronic and, quite possibly, violent instability.

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