POPULATION GROWTH AND RAPID URBANIZATION IN AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract

The realties of rapid urbanization and population growth in Africa are objectively patent with the realities of diversity of challenges, constraints and threats to service delivery in urban centres. Urban centres are attraction centres for rural population and, through multiplier effects, population sizes continue to grow concomitant with the demand for the services (hospitals, schools, industrial and commercial zones, security, etc.). This paper will explore the historical and contemporary challenges of population growth by way of looking at case studies of Nigeria (Lagos), South Africa (Johannesburg), Zimbabwe (Harare), Ethiopia (Addis Ababa), Kenya (Nairobi), Egypt (Cairo) and Rwanda (Kigali). These countries give a diversity of experiences when put together given the differences in institutions and cultures, historical backgrounds, political economy and other structural proclivities. Such an analysis helps in the formulation of the 'appropriate' nomenclature and taxonomy of the subject of urbanisation (and ruralisation, as it were). Socially, most urban centres in Africa have gone through metamorphoses and transitions from white domination to black majority rule. The advent of political independence has opened the gates for the former ruralites resulting in novel challenges which had hitherto been unforeseen (particularly, the increased demand for housing, which, in its own right is indivisible with other socio-economic facets of urban centres). Economically, this transition has heralded calls for black economic empowerment or indigenisation programmes which have beckoned for more urban space being allocated for enterprise. Space allocation for any land-use calls for installation of the supporting infrastructure (roads, water utilities, electricity, buildings and/or shelter, etc). The paper maps out the nesting effect of these challenges in a bid to overcome them so as to produce viable urban economies for the 21st Century Africa, in which amenity, harmony and sustainability are the chief objects. Urban development policy is recommended is the prime solution to attaining the three mentioned objects. This is founded on the notions of balancing between and within settlements (rural and urban) in an economy, urban modelling and stewardship.

Introduction and Background

At the beginning of the 21ˢᵗ Century, over 50 percent of the world's population started to live in cities (IMF, 2006; World Bank, 1980; 2000; Simone and Abouhani eds. 2005). The growth rate of urban population is four times the rate of rural population. Various research organizations have indicated that the future of all nations would depend, to a great extent, on the cities as the population in urban areas will double to more than 5 billion between 1990 and 2025. This means that approximately 65 percent of the world's population will then be living in towns and cities. About 90 percent of urban growth will occur in developing countries alone (IMF, 2006; World Bank, 1980; 2000; Blair, 1985). Most cities will thus be more than double in size. These new populations will consume a vast amount of semi-rural agricultural land currently surrounding these cities - a prospect that highlights the urgent need for forward-looking land use planning (McAuslan, 1985; Simone and Abouhani eds. 2005).

Already under strain to provide services and quality of life to existing urban residents, the government (local and central) faces tremendous challenges in expanding existing infrastructure and avoiding deterioration of living standards due to congestion, pollution, and lack of basic services. Typically, the geographical nature of the cities is uneven. A considerable variation can be observed in the housing quality, public services, amenities and household characteristics. A typical characteristic of urban areas in the developing nations is the informal settlements because of large influx of population from other semi-urban or rural areas. Within the cities also, it can be observed that the settlements are widely distributed, concentrated near the business centers or outskirts of the cities. Either because these settlements are informal or widely dispersed, the

residents, who constitute the urban poor, mostly do not have access to basic public services and amenities.

Providing the basic services to the growing urban population would continue to dominate the strategic thinking of governments across the world). According to estimates, more than 300 million urban poor in developing countries live in slum and squatter settlements, most of them being squalid, unsafe environments that create health and security problems (World Bank, 1980; 2000; Tostensen, Tvedten and Vaa eds (2001).

Methodology

This paper is a based on historical analyses of cities in Africa. Primate cities were chosen as case studies. They reflect the biggest of challenges and opportunities geographical and temporal. This explains the rural-urban dynamics: transformations, continuities and discontinuities in the understanding of African urban development and management. Some of the centres have strong historical roots to Euro-centric establishments. This explicates the spontaneity of inducement to their existence (Table 1). The case studies are from all sections of the continent (north, west south and east). These have had different influences and experiences from the colonial dose.

Historical and Contemporary Challenges of Urban Population Growth in Africa

The historical and contemporary terrain for Africa population and urban development is marked by a multiplicity of factors in interplay – commercial, cultural, politico-administrative, and religious and others (see Table 1). These have operated both

endogenously and exogenously. The endogenous factors that influenced the establishment of most African cities include the natural endowments that the continent enjoys, including the mineral, agricultural, and forest resources. Such factors explain the dominance of extractive industry and the resilience of primary production in the region. This is also alluded to by the Economic Base Theory by Douglass North (1955). As such, the continent enjoys 'exportation' of a host of its attractive locations and places like Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, the Limpopo Trans-frontier Park (for Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe), and other tourist centres, some which have developed to the status of towns. Africa enjoys quite a bulk of urban heritage.

Table 1: Case Studies – a matrix of issues

COUNTRY AND CASE URBAN CENTRE	DATE ESTABLISHED	KEY FEATURES
Nigeria Lagos	**1861**	Established as a political and trading centre and a port. British settlers did not live in the city hence its Africanness. The city is predominantly organic, i.e. unplanned and difficult to plan. It is predominantly Yoruba in terms of ethnic dominance. Robinson (1977:263) asserts that three important parts of the city of Lagos began as "…fishing and farming villages by the indigenous population well before major external influences became important in the eighteenth century". The city's involvement, between 1786 and 1851, in the Slave Trade was an important historical landmark. In this trade, the coastal Yoruba, sold out the Hausa from the hinterland. Due to its locational advantage, Lagos continued trading in slaves up to 1851 despite the abolition of the practice by the British in 1807 (Robinson ed. 1977). Lagos is heavily congested hence the shifting of the capital to Abuja. The city won a place in 1983 in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's dirtiest city.
South Africa Johannesburg	**1866**	Once a mine digger camp, Johannesburg is now the largest city in South Africa. It owes its phenomenal growth to the discovery of gold in 1886. The gold rush caused the town to have grown to a population of 10,000 people in one year. By 1895, the city's population was 100, 000. Separate development (apartheid) was the guiding philosophy which had a strong bearing on the spatial organisation of the city. The most popular black townships are Soweto[1] and Alexandra. The city became also a manufacturing centre.
Zimbabwe Harare	**1890**	Established by the British settlers as a security fort (Fort Salisbury, in honour of the British Premier during this period). Planning of the city began as soon as the city was born. Basing on these plans which were racist in nature, the city is heavily segregated between low, medium and high income earners. Ethnically the city is cosmopolitan with the Mashona people as leaders. In 1953, Harare became the Capital of the Federation of Rhodesia and

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[1] This is the short version of SOuth WEstern TOwnship

		Nyasaland (1953-1963). During this period, the capital gained from huge capital projects' investments including the establishment of the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now University of Zimbabwe), the construction of Harari Hospital (now Harare Central Hospital), among other developments. The advent of majority independence in 1980 ushered in more Africans into the city and the city resources have been overstretched beyond capacity. Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 is a landmark event to explain the extent to which the need for offloading the populations' and informality excess was inevitable.
Ethiopia Addis Ababa	**1886**	Founded by Empress Taytu, spouse of Emperor Menelik II. Addis Ababa means 'New Flower' in Amharic, the Ethiopian lingua franca. The major attraction was the hot springs (Fel Weha) of the site. In 1902/3 there was importation of eucalyptus trees from Australia. This development gave the city new foliage which makes the city a eucalyptus city even today and this has saved it from the fate of so many precedent capitals which had got to their demise as a result of the dearth of firewood due to increased deforestation. 1907, land issuance began giving property holders greater stake in the city; 1917, the completion of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa Railway. Addis Ababa is the continent's metropolis given that African Union offices are headquartered there. This gives the city permanence and centrality.
Senegal Dakar	**1444 [1898]**	The city is famous for its beauty, modernity, charm and style. It has an agreeable climate, excellent location and urban morphology. Dakar was founded in 1444 when the Portuguese sailors made a small settlement on the tiny island, Goree, located about three kilometres from the Dakar Peninsular. In 1588, Goree was also made a resting point by the Dutch; the French followed in 1675. None of the settlers ventured into the mainland until 1857. In 1898, Dakar was chosen as a naval base and in 1904 became the capital of the Federation of French West Africa. Between 1900 and 1902, numerous African homesteads were burnt as a 'sanitary measure' hence the dislodgement and disinheritance of the Africans. African co-habitation was to be cited as the major problem with Africans in the city hence an alibi to be used against them. As with many African primate cities Dakar faces the problems that accompany rapid population growth. This makes planning a crucial problem. "One major challenge should be to make Dakar a de facto African city" (Robinson ed.

		1977:270).
Kenya Nairobi	**1899**	The site is known as Enkare Nairobi by the Masai pastoralist for 'cold water'. The Masai viewed the place as inhabitable given its dense virgin forests plus swamp, which also acted as buffers to their traditional Kikuyu enemies. Moreover, the Nairobi River was to a traveller from Mombasa to Uganda, a strategic resting and camping spot. Due to the natural advantages that the place owed, it was chosen as the headquarters of the railways in 1899. In the same year, it was established as the government's administrative centre. Although in 1906, the area became condemnable due to poor drainage and subsequent health problems, the colonial government insisted onto its endorsement of Nairobi as the capital. By 1948, the city's population exceeded 100,000 people. Like any other primate city in the country, the capital experienced a post-war population boom in the 1950s and after independence. "Although Nairobi is a city in Kenya, few characteristic features made it a viable city for Kenyans" (Robinson ed. 1977:254). The city is divided along three main racial lines: Africans, Asians and Europeans. Nairobi continues to suffer from the inertia of history.
Egypt, Cairo	**AD640**	The metropolis of Greater Cairo reached a population of nine million in 1980. The capital serves as a symbolic focus of the Arab world, though tarnished by the Egyptian-Israeli accords. It began as the military encampment of Fustat, established in the Nile in AD 640. AD969, a dissident branch of the Moslems, the Shiite Fatimids conquered Egypt and named Fustat Al-Quahirah ("the victorious"), which in English has become Cairo. By the 14th century, Cairo was the capital of the Mamulukes and a city of half a million. In 1516, Egypt was conquered by the Ottoman Turks and Cairo became a provincial capital for the Turks. In 1798, Cairo was occupied by Napoleon Bonaparte. Great Britain controlled Egypt after 1882. By 1917, the population of Cairo was about 800,000 and although 10% of this population were foreigners, they controlled the city. After the First World War, the foreign factor became immaterial given the high influx of Egyptians into the city in search of employment. Cairo has faced a number of challenges. A Master Plan for the city in the 1950s limited the city's population to 3,5 million

Sources: Peil (1991); Zinyama et al eds. (1993); Chirisa (2007). Simone and Abouhani eds. (2005); Robinson ed. (1977)

Great Zimbabwe in Masvingo and the Great Pyramids of Egypt are legacies of historical cities. Other cities of similar nature have disappeared completely. The main reason for their extinction was civil wars, which were sparked by depletion of resource bases, which, in turn were triggered by unprecedented growth of population numbers.

The exogenous factors which justify the establishment of the modern cities of Africa include the influence of colonialism, neo-colonialism and 'importation' of religions including Christianity and Islam. Such have had an immense contribution in terms of population growth as well as inculcation of 'middle class values' in the 'natives' of Africa. The modernisation thrust, especially from the 1950s onwards, aimed at increased industrialism whose overall impact has been urbanisation coupled with urbanism in different places, localities and regions of the grand continent.

Urban centres are the motor generators of any economy. Nevertheless, the experience of Africa, specifically the Sub-Saharan region, has been different (IMF, 2006:13). The experience of sub-Saharan Africa from the 1950s through the 1970s has been that "…swollen youth cohorts have entered the labour force, [and] an inadequate policy and economic environment in most countries has prevented [most of these] young people from being able to engage in productive employment. The existence of large dependent populations (in this case, children) has kept the proportion of the working age population low, making it difficult for these economies to rise out of poverty" (ibid. 12).

Failure to provide jobs to those who are willing and able to work has been the incubatory determinant of the informalization of Africa's cities. As such, the predominant activity in the *africity-scape* has been the black economy, better known as the informal sector. The principal problem with this sector is that the proceeds from it are never fully

accounted for. They escape official records. This also means that the economy runs with a multiplicity of leakages of possible revenue. Those engaged in the black economy (sometimes referred to as the gray sector), practice a lot of free rider-ship. This bad practice implies that users of services (e.g. infrastructure) continue to enjoy the fruits of gardens they never cultivated. Such practices in compounded by other practices like vandalism of public utilities. In African urban centres, just like the rural areas, there is rampancy of the tragedy of the commons. Damage of existing infrastructure is a common disease in the continent as reflected in various media in the continent. One imagines a young man, in Nigeria, overtaken and ultimately killed by fire while busy 'milking out' oil from a pipeline. Also a Zimbabwean cable thief electrocuted in the course of his business to earning a livelihood. There are many other examples from the whole continent. This is because a couple of the citizens do not feel that the city, with its wealth, belongs to them. As a number of these poor citizens 'steals' and damages this wealth, the city suffers from acts created by a 'prisoners' dilemma'.

There are number of factors which deny some African city dwellers a positive perspective about their urban centres. Firstly, there is the historical racism which reigned viciously in most of these cities. This made Africans think they are second class citizens to the cities. Deep down their hearts, they always thought that the rural place is their home. As such, most of them loathed being identified with urban areas. It caused them loss of their identity as Africans. This school of thought produces a people who only go to the 'town' of necessity. Secondly, rural areas are places of their strongest attachment. Culturally, it is their 'roots'. Customarily for some sections of population in the continent, it is the rural place that identifies them as "sons and daughters of the soil".

Rural areas are perceivable as 'liveable' because they offer 'cheap' items to survival and living; in towns everything is bought of money. This second school of thought produces a group of people who wait to see modernity come to them rather than they move to it. The rural setting to them is much more than just a comfort zone but also a pure haven for survival. Thirdly, there is group of African who are so outward-looking that they do no see anything good with their urban centres plus economies in entirety. They are sacrificial in character and are ready to go and work, slavishly, in other countries, for years, and sent back remittances home. They will build houses in their African urban centres, some which, they will never stay in. with all the types of people described here, African urban stewardship is what lacks. Such is a problem that was brought about by the advent of colonialism with its capitalistic tentacles.

As such, we have many cities in Africa without the spirit or stewardship of the African in them. Some anathematise them; others temporalise their existence and life in them; yet others are a young generation without a vision about them.

Infrastructure Implications of Urbanization in Africa

Infrastructure is the long-term asset of any country and is a critical factor contributing towards industrial and overall economic development, promoting economic growth by enhancing productivity, improving competitiveness and the living standard of the general population. It is categorized as physical, economic, social and environmental. Its development offers the foundation on which a country can seize and capitalize on the opportunities ushered in by globalization and regional integration. The key challenge is to manage infrastructure provision in such a manner that the resultant growth is socially

inclusive or what is often referred to as an approach that is 'pro-poor' (IMF, 2006). Urban centres, being attraction centres for rural population, through multiplier effects, population sizes continue to grow concomitant with the demand for the services (hospitals, schools, industrial and commercial zones, security, etc.). In Figure 1, the demand for urban infrastructure is largely the outcome or epiphenomenon of the 'rural insufficiency push' and ultimate decline of the sector; and urban sprawl as the urban centres continually etch into the rural territories in a physical expansion way.
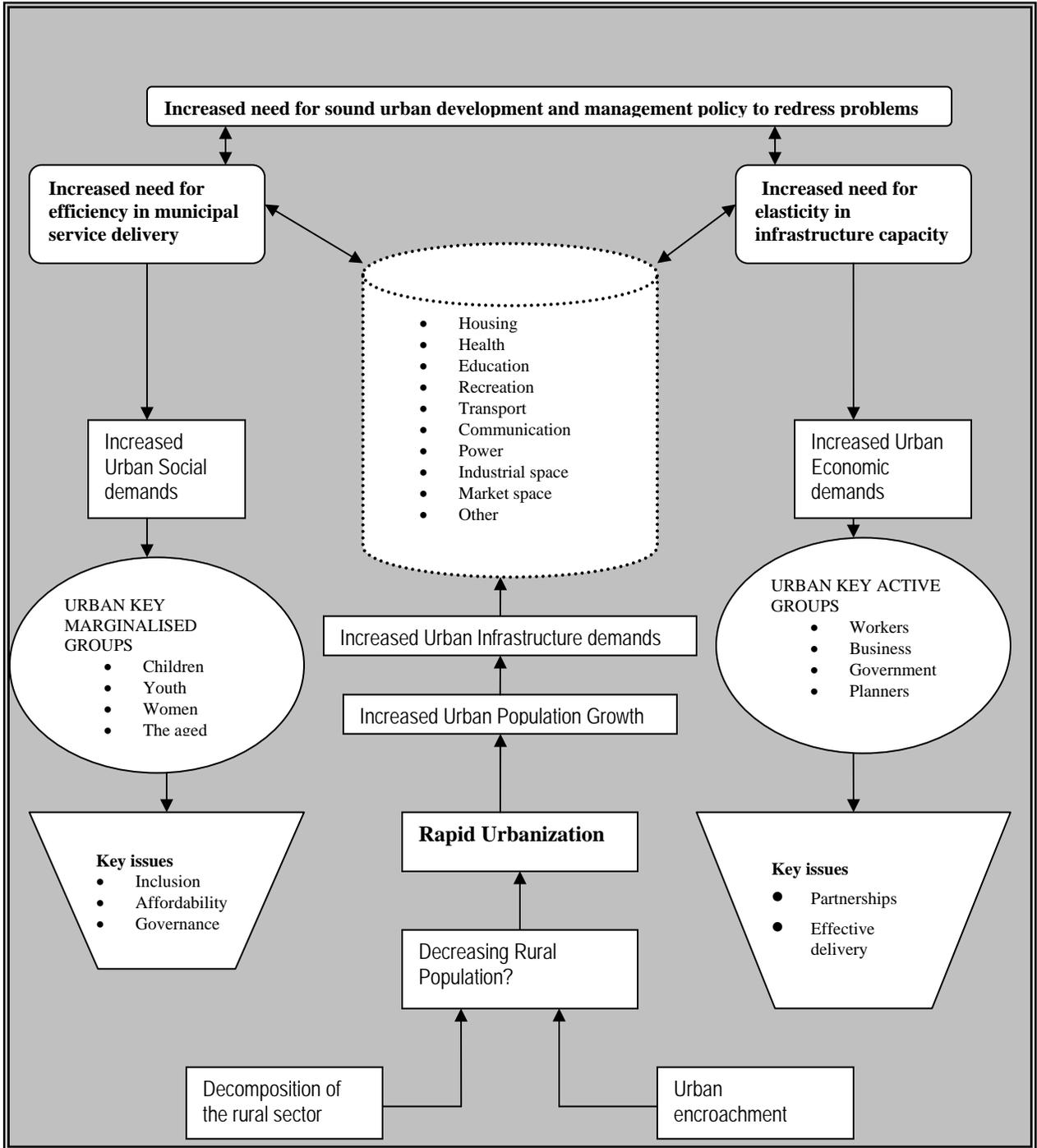
With increasing urban population, there is increased pressure on the existing infrastructure thus reducing the capacity and difficulties in their operational performance. This is explicable in terms of the poor delivery in terms of diseconomies of scale that result. These include traffic congestion, communication jams during peak hours of the day and frequent water and sewer pipe bursts in most of the cities.

It is plausible to observe that the rapid urbanisation trend in Africa has resulted in increasingly decreasing rural population. In certain instances like, in Zimbabwe, the modernisation thrust, adopted at independence, has meant that rural service centres, planned according to town planning standards, brought 'towns' to rural settings. The principal aim was to keep ruralites in their localities and thus prevent the swelling on of urban centres. In most cases, the proposed rural centres have never received full support and ultimate development which would attract gainful investment as envisioned. Hence, such 'dreamt of' opportunities such as for youth in getting jobs and markets have remained as dreams. Such kind of 'planning without development', in the rural regions, has resulted in 'development with planning', in the urban centres. Ruralites have ultimately found their way to the existing and major urban cities in quest and hunt for the

'unfulfilled promises' of rural growth points – towns-brought-rural. The rural urban drift, in most cases has been to one major town, relative to others in the nation, hence, the problem of urban primacy (Table 1, Rakodi and Leduka, 2003).

The problem of urban primacy has always been a 'headache' to the continent of Africa, as portrayed in Table 1. The major explanation to this development lies in the dominant city's capacity to providing infrastructure and its maintenance. Yet the problem of 'development without planning' as already stated remained a prime challenge. There are cases where land for housing was provided but no servicing for infrastructure like roads, water and sewer reticulation and needless to say of power, telecommunications and social facilities like schools, clinics and commodity markets (Rakodi and Leduka, 2003; Patel and Adams, 1981; Tostensen et al eds. 2001). In such cases the lack of the facilities has meant a remarkable impetus towards urban informalization (ruralisation of the urban place) with residents or the generality of the poor embarking on informal trading (Chirisa, 2007).

Figure 1: Problem Analysis and Way Forward

Increased need for sound urban development and management policy to redress problems

Increased need for efficiency in municipal service delivery

Increased need for elasticity in infrastructure capacity

- Housing
- Health
- Education
- Recreation
- Transport
- Communication
- Power
- Industrial space
- Market space
- Other

Increased Urban Social demands

Increased Urban Economic demands

URBAN KEY MARGINALISED GROUPS
- Children
- Youth
- Women
- The aged

Increased Urban Infrastructure demands

URBAN KEY ACTIVE GROUPS
- Workers
- Business
- Government
- Planners

Increased Urban Population Growth

Key issues
- Inclusion
- Affordability
- Governance

Rapid Urbanization

Key issues
- Partnerships
- Effective delivery

Decreasing Rural Population?

Decomposition of the rural sector

Urban encroachment

They have traded without the support infrastructure and this has brought health threats to the fore including cases of cholera and dysentery outbreaks in a number of African urban centres including Lusaka, Harare, Maputo, etc.

The inadequacy of urban infrastructure is partly attributed to the lack of capacity in municipal authorities to create adequate source pools of financial resources to fund for the development of new infrastructure plus maintenance of the existing ones (Zinyama et al eds. 1993). While urban local authorities are entitled to generating their own revenue, for political reasons, central governments are a strong determinant to the way such resources are created. This poses major dilemmas and hiccups to service delivery. Illegal settlements, in most cases, are a political creation. The urban poor become the politician's assets to power; they are 'untouchable' in terms urban managers and planners making recommendations to their eviction on undesignated land. The same applies to situations where the local authority would charge 'commercial rates' for effective service delivery; the politician would intervene for the short term benefit of his or her private interest at the expense of the longer term benefit in the cause of sustainability of the city.

The question should therefore be: Who rules African cities? Is it some people, institution or some force? If a force, what is it? It is, largely, poverty. This poverty is so well packaged that it is the platform upon which alibi and excuses by the urban poor for not paying for the services they get from their municipal government are founded. As well as, it is the pool from which the politicians fish out for tools towards self aggrandisement. It must also be plainly remembered that infrastructure is, and has always been, a political good. While there is, in politics, the making of promises to the hoi-polloi, the same tends to stifle any promise that comes without politics (no matter how sound it may be in benefiting the poor. Much of the lack of infrastructure in urban Africa should be attributed to the intervening power of the political hand. The end result has been a vicious cycle of poverty where cities are poor because citizens are poor and vice

versa. Infrastructure provision and maintenance in African cities will never be adequately addressed unless the poverty malaise is adequately addressed. Thanks to the advocacy for good urban governance by civil society organisations in the continent (Tostensen et al eds. 2001). Urban governance ensures that cities are run with consensus between the rulers and the ruled.

One other important aspect for examination is the issue of supporting infrastructure for urban agriculture. With the increasing advocacy and practice of urban agriculture, two prime kinds of infrastructure will be required; for irrigation in drought prone regions and for draining away excess water in waterlogged areas. Urban agriculture will contribute to the development of the so-called Green Infrastructure, through such aspects as urban agro-forestry practice and market gardening endeavours.

Infrastructure is critical as the support mechanism to any development (housing, industry, institutional delivery, commerce, etc). It is the conduit through which life-related processes flow. Urbanisation should be viewed as a catalyser of socio-economic processes in the urban arena. But it should be emphasised that infrastructure provision and maintenance are never stand-alone issues. They are embedded in economic performance of any region as well as the social willingness to safeguard them. Africa, from the seventies (1970s) has undergone experiences of great economic pain. Such experiences ushered in the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Their emphasis on limited expenditure has meant that, not only expenditure on social investment suffered but also, that of infrastructure development. Most African cities show outward wounds of damaged infrastructure. The problem is not the damaged roads or electricity pylons; it is damaged economies and 'dried up' coffers. The next section will highlight some of the

measures that appear promising to be panacea to the wounds. City marketing is one of them but: How much will one market a place that is damaged already? Yet with a strong supportive private sector in the local domain, there lies much promise in delivery of physical infrastructure and this is by the way of Private-Public Partnerships (PPP). This should mean that the private sector come willingly to the help of the government and 'donate' to the betterment of the place and its people. Its adoption should not be privatisation and commercialisation especially against the question of: Will the people afford the services given their underlying and historic poverty.

Economic Implications of Rapid Urbanization in Africa

There are a number of issues which are economic that have come along with urbanisation in Africa. The over-reliance of African economies on primary production has created a culture of parasitism upon rural economies by both the urban and external economies. Yet it should be clear that the African urban centres are also the primary producers of semi-processed products whose markets are foreign ones, especially the western commodity markets. The same centres are the places where 'graduates' in various technical and non-technical fields are produced. When these graduates finish up their diploma or degree programmes, they are forced by the unemployment situation in their urban centres to look for pastures outside where they were trained, hence the 'brain drain' situation in most African countries.

Due to globalisation, opportunities have become more visible elsewhere through inquiries and the media of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The involvement of multinational corporations (MNCs) in African urban centres has also meant that a lot of wealth is repatriated outside these centres. All these dynamics speak of

the defeated African endeavours to capital, land and labour investments. Urban local authorities provide land for the setting up of industries; governments pave way for foreign direct investment (FDI) by means of incentives; training institutions (colleges and universities) provide education to their citizens using local resources; but these efforts have produced very little, if any, to the enhancement of local urban economic development and growth. The challenging questions that need answering are:

i)   Do city marketing efforts really fructify for urban Africa? How can they be enhanced and adequately redress the place poverty challenges of the cities and town in the continent? Are export processing zones (EPZ) really profitable for urban Africa? Can Africa do without the West?

ii)   What kind of patriotism is required to ensure that the locally produced elites identify their skills with their place? Is Africa, then, a training ground of the Diaspora? How effective have been the remittances by African in Diaspora to the development and enhancement of the local economies? Do we need 'to get out' in order for us to get financial capital to build our cities?

iii)   Is urban Africa exploiting rural Africa for its 'growth'? How best can rural areas contribute to their growth without their survival being compromised? With the 'urban agriculture' thrust in view and practice, is rural agriculture fast losing significance, and to what extent?

iv)   How best can urban Africa collect rents and rates from its citizens and ensure that these residents get value for their money, against the backdrop of high inflation rates?

The following dimensions are critical in the quest for solution to urban Africa's quagmire position:

a) *The Local Economic Development (LED) Thrust*

Several authorities have highlighted that Africa has been experiencing cities' spatial and population growth without commensurate economic growth (Tostensen et al eds. 2001; Power, 2003, Chirisa 2007). This is a very detrimental situation and one that explains the urban poverty situation of the urban centres. Local Economic Development (LED) promises as a sound agenda item for development of urban Africa. Although, several endeavours have been made to this effect, not much has been realised to this date. Formulating appropriate LED strategies is therefore critical for the 21st Century Africa.

The development of the small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) proves to be one way (enmeshed in LED) towards empowerment of the urban poor. This, it is believed, will make them afford taxes given that they will be in full and viable business which allows them to have greater willingness to pay for services provided to them by local authorities and hence move them from parasitic tendencies of free-ridership to responsible citizens. Citizens employed, though by self-help modalities, tend to be responsible citizens. Approaches like Black Empowerment and Indigenisation, as adopted in South Africa and Zimbabwe, require a rational approach while targeting social justice and equity. If done haphazardly, they are more harmful than good for urban development. Making sure that the projects or programmes are not hijacked by the elite class is one major challenge.

b) *Land and Property Taxation versus Citizenry Affordability*

Much of urban Africa has suffered without appropriate property taxation. This has produced 'residents without urban obligation'. That lack of obligation has created urban environments that lack in the relevant infrastructure and services. This is exacerbated by the poverty of the residents. Striking a balance between affordability and raising functional municipal finance is a major challenge to urban Africa. However, the main argument lies on how to make citizens 'own' the places they reside. Stewardship promises to be a sound approach towards generation of urban finances. The management of taxes in an 'urban mosaic' where there is an admixture of standard houses and stands and squatter type of settlements in cities and towns proves to be a mammoth task for local authorities.

The economic implications of population growth in a largely urbanising Africa are best scrutinised in the face of the factors which constitute the social implications to it.

Social Implications of Rapid Urbanization in Africa

The social implications of urban population growth are summarised, among other things, by having a close look at the demographic trends, issues of poverty, age, gender, and heritage:

a) *Demographic Trends*

Although generally fertility is declining all over the world, populations of developing countries are still rising. There is a high influx of rural people into urban centres and the year 2007 is the year when the global population has

reached half-to-half between rural and urban (PRB, 1998, 1999, 2007). In a number of countries in Africa, this trend may not augur well with the prediction. There are still efforts to make rural areas attractive to large numbers of citizens).

The population of Sub-Saharan Africa is growing at 3 percent a year. It has already doubled since the 1960s, and at its current rate of growth will double again in 22 years. By comparison, the population of South Asia, the developing region with the next highest rate, is growing at 2.2 percent a year and global population is growing at 1.7 percent a year. At the same time, economic growth in Sub-Saharan countries in recent years has been disappointing. Between 1965 and 1988 per capita gross national product (GNP) for Sub-Saharan Africa grew by only 0.2 percent a year. During the 1980s GNP per capita *declined* by 2.6 percent a year. Further, human capital in the form of schooling and other training is low, and in many countries school enrollment rates have fallen.

b) *Poverty, Age and Gender: Issues of social inclusion*

As 'pure' ruralites move to urban centres, they move along with them their poverty. Urban areas in Africa have become so characterised by poverty such that most of them have been reduced to 'cesspools of it (Table 1). Life expectancy in most African countries has dropped over the past decade (see Figure 2). The chief reason is the HIV and AIDS scourge that has prevailed in the continent in the last two decades. This leaves Africa with more of a young population compared to the other parts of the world (PRB, 2007). Urban areas are the worst affected, of the outcomes of this scourge.

Figure 2: Life Expectancy Changes in Selected Countries in Africa, 1958-2003
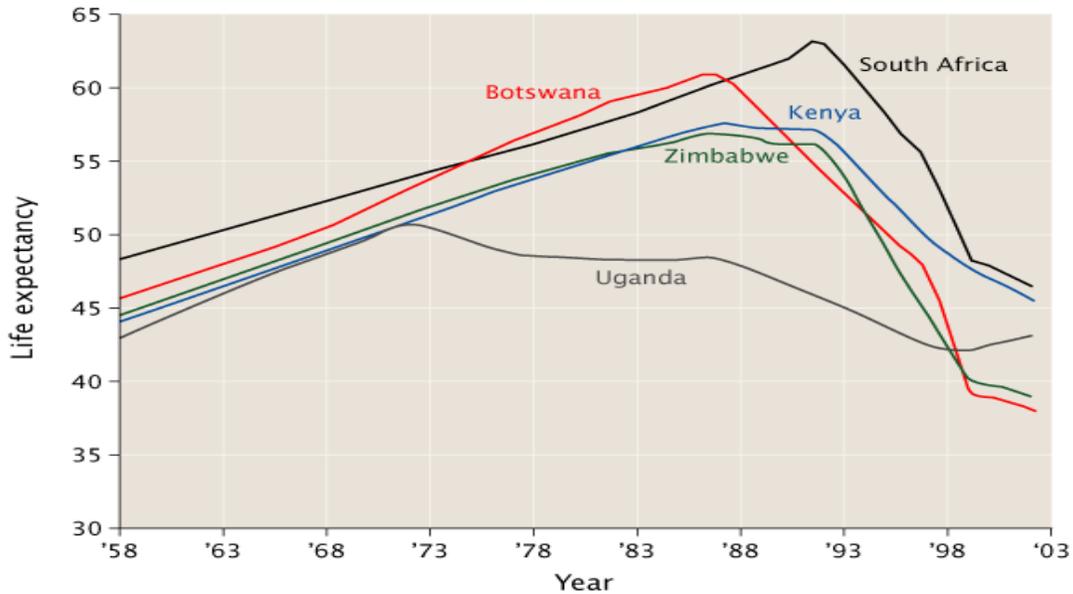
The problem of urban primacy produces a factor of serious regional disparities with rural areas being regions of greatest poverty and places where resources are exploited without justice. The over-exploited are the young non-dependent classes who shun rural areas in preference to urban area. This is because they perceive the menial nature of rural work (farming, in particular) as not paying yet urban work, if any, reduces them into more pauperism or to the practice of 'unholy' acts like prostitution, drug abuse and violence, for illustration. Most get a 'ride' into the vehicle of the informal sector, which is always under threat from the urban local authorities (Chirisa, 2007). The informal sector is also the domain where most urban women find respite from the urban economic pressures they are subjected to in urban space. This shows that while

the majority of urban population seek a place for a foothold in the urban space, the colonial standards that used to govern those places strive to crowd them out.

In the past it was white which excluded blacks from participating effectively in urban space. Today, it is urban economics, which discriminate against the poor who are always in majority, a case of Pareto optimality. How can the poor, the youth, women, the aged, HIV infected and disabled be included in all dimensions of social development so that sustainable development is reached in urban Africa? Sustainable development should work towards realisation of individual human potential.

c) *Ethnicism and Racism, Security and Peace: Cities' Liveability*

As already pointed out, racism has become less of any issue in African cities. However, there are still challenges of ethnicism, for example, Rwanda in 1994. It is the issue of 'fraternising' African towns and cities which is a strong issue for consideration on the agenda of Africa in the 21st Century. How social strains should be reduced so that urban peace and security are enhanced?

d) *Urban Heritage, History and Prophecy: Recreation, Culture and Entertainment*

The issue of historical legacy is paramount in African cities. This issue has a bearing to the making of prophecy of these places through the next century. The urban heritage includes architectural designs which shape the urban-scape. The question is: Whose designs should be preserved, European or African? Most African cities have buildings which are colonial but due to financial constraints they have remained in situ when, by now should have been demolished and replaced. This is an important area to put on the research agenda for towns. In the

background is the question: What is the urban heritage for Africa? Preservation of places is critical to recreation and culture.

But there is also the emergence of entertainment especially the development of the art and music industry in African cities. Entertainment is growing to be big business in African cities. The problem with the industry is that it is less of productive than consumptive. One should remember the argument by the ex-American slave, Booker T Washington, of discouraging the 'former black slaves' from engaging the arts of gospel preaching (training as pastors and evangelists) instead of engaging in technical fields, like agriculture and industry. Should, then, Africa continue to consume without producing? This, in economic terms, is a reflection towards stagflation, and in its own, is a detriment. Social classes are the outcome of economic status, it should be remembered!

e) *Social Capital and Networks*

Urban Africa is also a domain of huge pools of human capital at least in terms of the educated and literate. Most governments (since majority rule and independence) have worked diligently to producing a large elite class. But Africa has had populations educated who have remained socially excluded. Networks and social capital are a large opportunity of individuals' investment in urban Africa. This assures synergism hence the ability for citizens to develop by syndicalism. Communication enhances the development and maintenance of social capital. Investment by municipal governments in collaboration with private enterprises (private-public-partnerships) is critical. There is increased need to develop and manage information, and communication technologies (ICTs).

Social development will come in concomitance with physical infrastructure for its sustenance. City-to-city co-operation, otherwise known as twining, has been identified as one avenue to decentralised co-operation. This approach submits that local development of urban and rural sectors in possible with effective and reciprocal co-operation of local partners with partners abroad.

The idea of development through decentralized cooperation is rapidly gaining attention as a means towards establishing and consolidating decentralized governance, promoting national and local development as well as redesigning and sustaining international cooperation. It is a strategy that is strongly supported by both bilateral and multilateral agencies - the United Nations including UN-HABITAT, European Union, World Bank, national associations of local government authorities (NALGAs) and Civil Society organizations. Decentralized cooperation can safely be considered to be the main focus of the 8th Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which among other targets, aims at promoting commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction through partnerships and collaboration. In that regard, decentralized cooperation is seen as a vehicle for creating lasting north-south; south-south; mutually rewarding cooperation that can foster sustainable development.

f) *Participation and Governance*

Development of social networks comes with increased participation into issues of urban economic and social development. Politically, the development of urban popular participation should encourage the development the principle and practice of governance. Governance is sound for urban development and

management as it covers issues of officials and citizens' accountability, transparency, trust and legitimacy. This promotes peace and security in the urban settings. African cities require more of governance than mere government. Government has failed most cities but governance will produce liveable cities. Governance is built or rather builds on the practice of urban stewardship. Africans, in most cases, have inherited former white cities. They have lived in the cities but failed to realize that such places have become theirs and should be responsible citizens. How can citizens be made more responsible and have their mindset transformed for the betterment of their cities? Urban Governance is the linchpin to urban management which in turn hinges on sound urban policy (Box 1). Policy can be viewed as a process or prescription. Urban policy has a special role in the development agenda of any place or space – geographical, social, economic or institutional.

BOX 1: FUNCTION OF URBAN POLICY
Source: Simone and Abouhani eds. 2005

The role of urban policy includes:
a) formulating objectives and providing the necessary means (planning);
b) resolving the internal conflicts faced by the central state as the main actor formulating policy. Important to note is that the state has many policies which vary depending on the historical, political and geographical situation (remedying and contextualising);
c) harmonising the activities of the state (main actor) and of other actors in the urban sphere (co-ordinating and integrating);
d) ensuring convergence between global planning (allocation of resources) and town planning (allocation of land);
e) ensuring convergence between the state and the region (decentralising); and
f) ensuring convergence between the sate and the private sector implementation schedules (strategising and action planning).

Urban Development (and Management) Policy for Africa: Recommendations

From Box 1 it can be seen that an urban policy ought to be comprehensive and integrative is it should address the complexity of issues of the urban Africa realty. The policy prescriptions are necessary so that anarchism is prevented. More importantly, the process of it allows citizens to have a say in the kinds of development that affects them. Urban policy process is a leeway to place stewardship. A good policy is one which puts across a functional (rather than a dysfunctional) scenario both in picture and in reality. It should be viewed as a system of ideas made of a number of subsystems – social, spatial, economic, structural and institutional. Such an approach requires that all relevant stakeholders, in a place, are called to the fore for discussion and road mapping. Also such an approach should be a contextualised one. This is because different places or nations have different challenges. They have different histories and backgrounds (as shown in the matrix of cases studies outlined in this paper). Prescriptions should never be generalised as different settings are affected by 'infections' of different sorts. The process of urban policy can be the same but never the prescriptions. The forthcoming are important and illustrative (but not conclusive) of the content of urban policy components for Africa in the 21st Century:

a) *Urban Stewardship Policy -Urban citizenship*

Local authorities or municipal governments should, with adequate consultations with their paternal central governments, ensure that urban citizens become more responsible citizens. Such practices like participatory budgeting puts the citizens more into control of the affairs of their places. Development becomes 'owned' by the citizens. Apathy to issues that affects citizens like

elections is reduced, if not completely excluded. Africanization of cities also means that pre-colonial practice of 'nomadism' and 'shifting from places' should be abandoned and people learn to be sedentary hence see cities, in which they reside, as the place for generational perpetuity. Policy should acculturate citizens to 'single citizenship' as opposed to dual citizenship, of being partly urban and partly rural.

b) Research Policy and Adaptation

Sustainable Cities are developed and managed through knowledge bases. Uninformed decisions always prove lethal and disastrous. Urban policy ought to specify the need for constant and consistent urban research and modelling so that places are never 'caught up unawares' of issues they never visualised. Knowledge builds to strategic planning and management hence adaptation, in terms of events, occurrences and processes. Having a situation where development is overtaken by events (as the present situation with most African cities) should never be an option any more in the 21st Century. Modelling allows populations and places to have databases of all or most of 'possible occurrences' in space and time. The buzzword with urban modelling will be: WHAT IF…? These are words indicative of readiness and aptitude to some kind of action away from vulnerability, risk and dearth. Research leads to action. Action is the catchword of urban policy success. Africa needs to invest in research, modelling and scenario writing.

c) Balanced Settlement Systems Policy

Although there is the talk of the world becoming more urban than rural in the next few years (PRB, 2007), dualism in the spatial economy of settlement

systems in Africa remains as an issue. The problem of urban primacy also remains. Infrastructure development alone, for rural or smaller towns, has proved, beyond any reasonable doubt, sterile and ineffective. What has then surfaced is the observation that a holistic perspective and approach is required. This includes factors that are attitudinal, technological, social, historical, anthropological, etc. As such, an urban development policy should factor in such issues of the state of rural towns (service providers and mining towns). How can service centres be made attractive for 'foreign' investors while keeping them small enough and never to outgrow their function? What should be the fate of mining towns especially if the resources is getting finished or has already got finished? Again, state of the urban, should be predictable by urban modelling, projections and forecasting.

c) *Land Taxation Reforms and Policy*

Land tax reforms are necessary if urban areas are to be viable entities which have positive influence to their environs or jurisdictions. Policy should focus on modalities that make the urban poor pay for the services they enjoy. For urban Africa, the reforms should balance between efficacy and citizen affordability of the contributions.

e) *Social Groupings as Collateral Policy and Decentralised Co-operation*

Where the poor are too many to produce reasonable output e.g. supportive infrastructure or shelter, it is important that social capital substitutes financial capital. It should be the responsibility of every local authority to work out its own modalities and these should not frustrate or compromise the municipal finances of

that place. Decentralised co-operation is a sound avenue for creating harmonious and sustainable links with the outside world for knowledge exchange and sharing of practical experiences and innovations among local authorities and their citizens. Africa ought to capitalise on the social grouping as collateral for development. With decentralised co-operation, social capital plays a critical and patent role.

f) *Effective Decentralisation Policy - Good Governance*

Participation of citizens works towards localisation of efforts. But there is need to balance between inward-looking tendencies and outward-looking ones. In short urban policy should put, to the fore, good governance as an ideal to be envied and to be achieved. Devolutionary decentralisation is critical for urban development. Central governments should learn to relinquish power to subsidiary units on ground if effectiveness in the generation and management of resources is to be a reality. Failure to do so produces urban places that are thin and miserable with suppressed citizens who have embedded malice, violence, frustrations, corruptions, etc, which factors are time bombs to any government. The main task for urban Africa is to put the principles of urban good governance into sound practice in the 21st century.

g) *Operations and Management of Facilities and Utilities Policy*

Municipal governance should be encouraged to have clear databases on the way in which their different infrastructure is run, managed or to be replaced. This should be done in full picture of how populations are increasing (or declining). This hinges again on making place dynamics predictable and tractable.

This idea goes with the research and modelling thrust highlighted above. This requires high skilled expertise in the thematic areas of development that will have been identified. Such expertise can be nurtured from local universities, polytechnics, and other colleges but, also, buttressed by decentralised co-operation packages.

Africa in the 21st century is faced with a number of opportunities and promises. What is critical is maximisation of them. It should be noted also that the bulk of wealth that the continent has, has been built by the difficulties, challenges and constraints that the continent has growth through.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that the problem of urban Africa is less of population numbers than compartmentalised needs of these populations. Much of the bad manifestations in urban development are flowers and fruits of the bad policy seeds planted and developed in history. In this vein, both pre-colonial and colonial tendencies were equally awful. Because the urban problems have historical roots, they require futuristic or prophecy-oriented solutions. Africa has learnt enough from experience. It is high time for turning all challenges to opportunities, all opportunities to tangible benefits, and all stumbling blocks into stepping stones. That is why in the recommendations, the writer has emphasised the need for urban policy which are contextualised yet built on a knowledge base. That knowledge base is the outcome of research and an adaptive attitude in the diverse of stakeholders involved. That knowledge base should call for urban modelling whose thrust should be built on the question: WHAT IF…? The 21st Agenda

should ask of how responsible citizens should be identified, grow in number by 'fission' and morally continue to grow by contagion. These two approaches – modelling and stewardship, should see a vibrant urban Africa grow and be well nurtured. It is also necessary to realise that Africa has never been an island. It needs to engage with other countries outside it. Hence the need for decentralised co-operation so that decentralised efforts are distinguished with fruitful diligence.

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