

Annotated bibliography on urban politics and political economy in African cities

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Abstract

Produced as part of the inception phase of the African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC), this bibliography provides a starting point into the investigation of the politics and political economy of African cities. Based on an extensive desktop search and review of relevant literature on the politics and political economy of African cities, it is split into seven sections, covering: the global political economy of African cities; the politics of urban infrastructure; governing African cities; elections, party politics and elite bargaining; the political sociology of African cities; civil society and popular agency; and crime, violence and conflict. Each section and sub-section has a summary laying out what is covered by the existing literature and where the research gaps lie, followed by the bibliographic entries themselves. The list of publications in each section begins with general overview studies, followed by comparative research studies and then single-city or -country case studies. Web-links have been provided for all publications for ease of reference.

Keywords: Urban politics, political economy, African cities, urban infrastructure, party politics, urban violence, material politics, urban governance

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1. Introduction

This annotated bibliography has been produced as part of the inception phase of the African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC).¹ ACRC aims to provide rigorous political economy analysis of how African cities work, in order to support a wide range of policy actors to promote more just and sustainable development futures. This bibliography provides a starting point into the investigation of the politics and political economy of African cities – scholarship which gained prominence in Africa during the late 20th century and continues to grow rapidly with contributions from several disciplines, including human geography, urban studies, political science, social anthropology, political sociology, and criminology. It is a companion piece to the urban politics review also commissioned by ACRC,² which draws on the resources listed here to provide a substantive discussion of the key trends and gaps within scholarship on the politics and political economy of African cities to date.

The bibliography is split into seven sections, covering the main substantive areas that have received attention in the literature to date, namely: the global political economy of African cities; the politics of urban infrastructure; governing African cities; elections, party politics and elite bargaining; the political sociology of African cities; civil society and popular agency; and crime, violence and conflict. Each section and sub-section has a summary laying out what is covered by the existing literature and where the research gaps lie, followed by the bibliographic entries themselves. The list of publications in each section begins with general overview studies, followed by comparative research studies and then single-city or -country case studies. Web-links have been provided for all publications for ease of reference.

This bibliography is based on an extensive desktop search and review of relevant literature on the politics and political economy of African cities. The data was gathered from several sources, including websites of journals, book publishers and development agencies. Key terms, such as politics, political economy, African cities, party politics, urban governance, political settlement, popular agency, urban infrastructure, material politics, urban violence and urban crime, among many others, were adopted in carrying out a search via Google Scholar. More than 300 documents, comprising journal articles, books and policy documents, were retrieved. A careful review of each of them revealed that some were out of the scope of this bibliography and were subsequently deleted. The large majority were found useful and included in this bibliography. In organising the documents into relevant themes and writing out (sub)section

¹ See www.african-cities.org

² Collord, M, Goodfellow, T and Asante, LA (2021). "Uneven development, politics and governance in urban Africa: An analytical literature review". ACRC Working Paper 2. Manchester: African Cities Research Consortium.

summaries, we followed the styles of previous annotated bibliographies, particularly the ones by Jeffrey Paller³ and Laura Routley.⁴

2. The global political economy of African cities

The literature on global political economy of African cities is categorised under four sub-headings:

- Global processes of capitalist development in African cities
- International aid organisations and diaspora in African cities
- Foreign traders and investors in African cities
- Covid-19 pandemic in African cities.

2.1. Global processes of capitalist development

The connection between African cities and the global processes of capitalist development has been the subject of several notable political economy studies. One focus has been on the experience of the structural adjustment programmes (SAP) that were implemented across African countries during the 1980s and 1990s. Studies by Riddell (1997) and Harris and Fabricius (1996) have argued that SAPs altered the role of African cities, from being in a position of leadership in national economies to becoming the focal point of national depression, as they were marked by a rapid decline in manufacturing, the rise of the informal economy, mounting inequality, decreased access to food, capital flight and brain drain, among many other trends. In some African cities, Yeboah (2000) and Briggs and Yeboah (2001) indicated that global and local factors led to residential sprawl, particularly through peri-urban development. The second source of this connection is the inadequate critical urban infrastructure and the growth in real estate development in African cities, which forms a growing focus of current scholarly and policy discourse (Goodfellow, 2020; Schindler and Kanai, 2021).

Through the diffusion of global capital to African cities, Moser (2020), Cote-Roy and Moser (2019) and others have shown that new houses, master-planned cities and large-scale urban infrastructure have sprung up across the continent, in an attempt to address the urban challenges in African cities. Schindler and Kanai (2021), Goodfellow (2020) and Gillespie (2020) have observed that African cities are witnessing dramatic transformation in urban infrastructure and real estate development, characterised by the imperative of getting the territory right, coupled with the incremental and contested

³ Paller, J (2020). "Informal practices of accountability in urban Africa". Oxford Bibliographies in Political Science. Available at: www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756223/obo-9780199756223-0172.xml (accessed 1 November 2021).

⁴ Routley, L (undated). "Annotated bibliography on developmental states, political settlements and citizenship formation: Towards increased state capacity and legitimacy?" Manchester: Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre (ESID), The University of Manchester. Available at: www.effective-states.org/wp-content/uploads/working_papers/final-pdfs/esid-annotated-biblio.pdf (accessed 1 November 2021).

commodification of land, which has implications for the politics of urban accumulation, dispossession and violence.

Guma (2021) notes that the prioritisation of new urban infrastructure and real estate development in formal planning and city-making processes often leads to the demolition of informal settlements and displacement of its inhabitants, disregarding the important and viable alternative that informal settlements provide amidst the exclusionary nature of capitalist urban interventions. In the same vein, Adama (2020) argues that neoliberal and modernist ideologies and the associated focus on constructing world-class cities are disadvantaging low-income urban residents and generating urban protests.

Getting the territory right: Infrastructure-led development and the re-emergence of spatial planning strategies

Seth Schindler and J Miguel Kanai (2021)

Regional Studies 55(1): 40–51

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00343404.2019.1661984 (paywall)

This paper argues that infrastructure-led development constitutes an emergent international development regime whose imperative is to “get the territory right”. Spatial planning strategies from the post-war era are increasingly employed in contemporary attempts to integrate territory with global networks of production and trade. Large-scale infrastructure projects link resource frontiers and subnational urban systems – often times across national borders – in ways that constitute spatially articulated value chains geared toward the extraction of resources, logistical integration and industrial production. The paper charts the emergence of this regime, analyses its spatial manifestations and evaluates its developmental outcomes.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Infrastructure

Development

Regional planning

Neoliberalism

Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City

Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse and Margit Mayer (2012)

Routledge, London

Available at: www.routledge.com/Cities-for-People-Not-for-Profit-Critical-Urban-Theory-and-the-Right-to/Brenner-Marcuse-Mayer/p/book/9780415601788

The worldwide financial crisis has sent shockwaves of accelerated economic restructuring, regulatory reorganisation and sociopolitical conflict through cities around

the world. It has also given new impetus to the struggles of urban social movements emphasising the injustice, destructiveness and unsustainability of capitalist forms of urbanisation. This book contributes analyses intended to be useful for efforts to roll back contemporary profit-based forms of urbanisation, and to promote alternative, radically democratic and sustainable forms of urbanism. The contributors provide cutting-edge analyses of contemporary urban restructuring, including the issues of neoliberalisation, gentrification, colonisation, “creative” cities, architecture and political power, sub-prime mortgage foreclosures and the ongoing struggles of “right to the city” movements. At the same time, the book explores the diverse interpretive frameworks – critical and otherwise – that are currently being used in academic discourse, in political struggles, and in everyday life to decipher contemporary urban transformations and contestations. The slogan, “cities for people, not for profit”, sets into stark relief what the contributors view as a central political question involved in efforts, at once theoretical and practical, to address the global urban crises of our time. Drawing upon European and North American scholarship in sociology, politics, geography, urban planning and urban design, the book provides useful insights and perspectives for citizens, activists and intellectuals interested in exploring alternatives to contemporary forms of capitalist urbanisation.

[Publisher’s summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Cities for people

Not for profit

Critical urban theory

Right to the city

New cities: Engineering social exclusions

Sarah Moser (2020)

One Earth Commentary 2, 21 February

Available at: [www.cell.com/one-earth/pdf/S2590-3322\(20\)30045-2.pdf](http://www.cell.com/one-earth/pdf/S2590-3322(20)30045-2.pdf) (open access)

Over 150 entirely new cities are currently underway in more than 40 countries and are rationalised as a means of addressing increasingly acute urban challenges. Despite the potential of designing brand-new cities to be sustainable, inclusive and diverse, evidence suggests that they are producing social exclusions on an unprecedented scale.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Literature review

Keywords

New cities

Social exclusion

Cities and politics in the developing world

Alison Post (2018)

Annual Review of Political Science 21: 115–133

Available at: www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-polisci-042716-102405

The last 20 years have witnessed an impressive outpouring of comparative politics research examining urban politics in the developing world. This research advances our understanding of phenomena such as clientelism, law and order, and local public goods provision. Scholarship could be strengthened, however, through more careful attention to how the urban setting of this research affects the politics examined. This article proposes two distinct ways in which urban politics can be conceptualised: politics taking place in urban agglomerations, characterised by large, diverse populations settled at high densities; or politics taking place within the boundaries of city jurisdictions, possessing legal powers and responsibilities distinct from those at other tiers of government or in rural areas. Adopting either of these conceptualisations illuminates new avenues for empirical work, theoretical innovation, and improved measurement. This article also shows that recent scholarship has neglected important, and fundamentally political, topics such as urban political economy, land markets, and environmental harms. Engaging with these areas would allow political scientists to revisit classic questions regarding the institutional influences on economic growth, the politics of redistribution, and the determinants of collective action.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Review of literature

Keywords

City

Urban

Clientelism

Security

Law and order

Local public goods

Development

Slum

Finance, infrastructure and urban capital: The political economy of African “gap-filling”

Tom Goodfellow (2020)

Review of African Political Economy 47(164): 256–274

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03056244.2020.1722088 (paywall)

Financial flows into Africa are being reoriented through the pervasive discourse of the “infrastructure gap”. The article argues that the generation of new infrastructures

identified as “alternative assets” by global finance is also creating landscapes of opportunity for urban capital accumulation by more locally embedded actors. Thus, as international financial flows are becoming “infrastructuralised”, domestic capital is increasingly “real-estatised”. The conceptualisation of African urban economies in terms of deficits has obscured the extent to which they are also characterised by surfeits, including of certain kinds of property development and speculation, with important implications for the politics of urban accumulation, dispossession and violence.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Fieldwork

Literature review

Keywords

Infrastructure

Urban development

Real estate

Capitalism

Finance

Political settlements

Structural adjustment programmes and the city in tropical Africa

Barry Riddell (1997)

Urban Studies 34(8): 1297–1307

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1080/0042098975646 (paywall)

Following a preface which indicates the alteration in the forces shaping the African city, it is indicated how the conditionalities imposed by structural adjustment programmes initially relate to the national economy. However, they also result in a second round of impacts, which, in effect, reshape the city. These operate primarily with the removal of the operation of “urban bias”; they are reflected in reduced urban growth rates and a mounting informal sector as the overall economy changes and the nature of industry is revised. Meanwhile, underdevelopment occurs as the quality of life declines, inequality mounts and the food supply experiences difficulty. At the same time, money and people depart. It is concluded that such programmes are but reflections of the operation of the global economy

[Author’s abstract]

Methods

Review of literature

Keywords

Structural adjustment programmes

Cities

Tropical Africa

Cities and Structural Adjustment

Nigel Harris and Ida Fabricius (eds.) (1996)

Routledge, London

Available at: www.routledge.com/Cities-And-Structural-Adjustment/Harris-Fabricius/p/book/9781857286199

This work addresses the challenges faced in the management of major cities throughout the world as they adjust to economic reform and, in particular, to becoming more open to the processes operating in worldwide markets. Such processes have already had some dramatic effects on large cities in developed and developing countries – the rapid decline in manufacturing in older industrial cities and the emergence of the servicing city are but two of the more striking outcomes. Based on substantial case studies of cities in the developed and the developing world – Sheffield, Barcelona, Lille, Mexico City, Monterrey, Santiago de Chile, Bogota, Kingston Jamaica and Johannesburg – themes are drawn out, extending from structural economic change to policy reactions, new city initiatives, management, planning and finance. [Publisher's summary]

Methods

Various

Keywords

Cities

Structural adjustment

Economic reform

Note: Chapter 10 (pp. 173–197) of this book focuses on Johannesburg, with the title “The changing structure of Johannesburg’s economy”. The chapter is authored by Richard Tomlinson. Find below the summary of the chapter.

Based on the research that the author and others recently completed on Johannesburg and the inner city, six topics are of particular interest in the context of this book: manufacturing; business and financial services, including the head-office function; government; (a quick scan of) commerce, catering and accommodation; the beginnings of physical decay; and “emerging” enterprise. In particular, it is evident that manufacturing’s role is declining rapidly, commerce is static, and that the other sectors are increasing their share of the economy. Perhaps inevitably, the financial sector’s contribution to gross geographical product (GGP) is about double its contribution to employment, and that of government is the reverse.

“Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?” The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa

Laurence Cote-Roy and Sarah Moser (2019)

Urban Studies 56(12): 2391–2407

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0042098018793032 (paywall)

This paper explores the emerging new master-planned city-building trend on the African continent. Situating our research within urban policy mobilities literature, we investigate the “Africa rising” narrative and representation of Africa as a “last development frontier” and “last piece of cake”, an imaginary that provides fertile ground for the construction of new cities. Building upon research on the practices of “seduction” that facilitate urban policy circulation, we argue for the relevance of critically examining elite stakeholder rhetoric to understand the relative ease with which the new city development model is being promoted in Africa. We investigate the enablers, advocates and boosters of new cities, represented mainly by states, corporations, non-profits and consultants, to render visible the complex networks of relations and private interests that support and enable the creation and circulation of the new cities model in Africa. We also analyse the pervasive “right to development” argument among African elites, which precludes criticism of new city ventures and circulates problematic assumptions about modernity and development. We conclude by discussing how stakeholder rhetoric limits the range of urban visions that are put into circulation and mobilised for Africa’s urban future.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Africa

Discourse on development

Entrepreneurial urbanism

New cities

Right to development

Urban policy mobility

Africa’s Cities: Opening Doors to the World

Somik Vinay Lall, J Vernon Henderson and Anthony J Venables (2017)

The World Bank, Washington, DC

Available at: www.worldbank.org/en/programs/africa-regional-studies/publication/african-cities-opening-doors-to-the-world (open access)

Cities in sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing rapid population growth. Yet their economic growth has not kept pace. Why? One factor might be low capital investment, due in part to Africa’s relative poverty: Other regions have reached similar stages of urbanisation at higher per capita GDP. This study, however, identifies a deeper reason: African cities are closed to the world. Compared with other developing cities, cities in Africa produce few goods and services for trade on regional and international markets. To grow economically as they are growing in size, Africa’s cities must open their doors to the world. They need to specialise in manufacturing, along with other regionally and globally tradeable goods and services. And to attract global investment in tradeables production, cities must develop scale economies, which are associated with successful urban economic development in other regions. Such scale economies can arise in

Africa, and they will – if city and country leaders make concerted efforts to bring agglomeration effects to urban areas. Today, potential urban investors and entrepreneurs look at Africa and see crowded, disconnected and costly cities. Such cities inspire low expectations for the scale of urban production and for returns on invested capital. How can these cities become economically dense – not merely crowded? How can they acquire efficient connections? And how can they draw firms and skilled workers with a more affordable, liveable urban environment? From a policy standpoint, the answer must be to address the structural problems affecting African cities. Foremost among these problems are institutional and regulatory constraints that misallocate land and labour, fragment physical development, and limit productivity. As long as African cities lack functioning land markets and regulations and early, coordinated infrastructure investments, they will remain local cities: closed to regional and global markets, trapped into producing only locally traded goods and services, and limited in their economic growth.

[Authors' summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Africa's cities

Open doors

Global community

Leveraging urbanization for Africa's structural transformation

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (2017)

Available at: archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/leveraging-urbanization-for-africa-st_eng.pdf (open access)

Africa's structural transformation is the overarching policy priority for the continent's inclusive and sustainable development. As clearly expressed in the African Union's Agenda 2063, there is now consensus among African leaders and stakeholders that structural transformation is a necessary condition to translate the region's recent impressive growth rates into inclusive and sustainable development. Structural transformation of the African economies through industrialisation is now considered imperative. ECA works with member states on improving urban productivity and economic development through a focus on local economic development strategies linked to targets and priorities in long-term national development plans. A primary objective is to enhance job creation in higher productivity sectors to respond to the growing demand for employment in African countries, and address the challenge of informality. This includes the formulation of deliberate urban strategies and plans to enhance the functionality of cities, in order to support industrial and agricultural development.

[Author's summary]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Urbanisation

Africa

Structural transformation

The State of African Cities 2018: The Geography of African Investment

UN-Habitat (2018)

Available at: www.afdb.org/en/documents/document/the-state-of-african-cities-2018-106759 (open access)

In recent years, especially after the 2008–09 financial crisis, there has been a steady increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) towards the Global South. This has been a welcome trend for Africa, not only because of its developmental challenges but also because of the generally limited availability and cost of domestic financing, which has persistently hampered African business. Nonetheless, despite a growing FDI influx, Africa's share of total world FDI volume remains small, at roughly 5%. This compares poorly to the continent's 15% share of global population and over 30% of world poverty. The current GDP per capita gap, relative to other world regions, is likely to widen if "business as usual" is to continue. There is a clear and pressing need for increasing foreign investment in Africa. Financial and policy interventions are needed that support Africa's emerging transformations and strengthen its already unfolding shift from FDI in the primary sector (resources), towards secondary and tertiary sectors (manufacturing, services and hi-tech). Such interventions would facilitate structural economic transformation and generate higher value-added economic activities. FDI is a key resource to expedite Africa's growth potential, since it promises to bring not only financial resources but also new technologies, knowledge and expertise. Investment promotes employment, productivity and competitiveness through entrepreneurship in investment destinations. Substantial private capital injections can, for instance, help close Africa's huge gap in physical infrastructure, improve the quality of the built environment, and make the continent a more attractive destination for global FDI.

[Author's executive summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

African cities

African investment

Foreign direct investment

Cities, Capital and Development: African Cities in the World Economy

David Simon (1992)

Belhaven Press, London

Review available at: academic.oup.com/afraf/article/93/372/467/8715*Recommended for purchase, as publisher summary is not available*

David Simon's book is a welcome, scholarly addition to the burgeoning literature on urbanisation in developing countries. Given the recent policy shift to a stronger emphasis on urban poverty from both the World Bank and UNDP, it is important to conceptualise the condition of the poor in the context of the broader national, regional and world economies in which they live. It is important because the major institutions interpret the urban problematic in this way, and it is vital to know why and how development aid/loan strategies are going to change in the 1990s. It may not be the right or best way to approach urban poverty, but it is going to be the dominant way. So David Simon has undertaken a daunting task, viz, to take the complex, varied processes of African urbanisation and fit them into an evolving world economy. On the whole, he does this very well in what is a well researched and thought-provoking text. [Extract summary from a book review by David Drakakis-Smith]

Method

Various

Keywords

Cities

Capital

Development

African cities

World economy

Place and function of African cities in the global urban network: Exploring the matters arising

Victor Udemezue Onyebueke (2011)

Urban Forum 22: 1–21Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12132-010-9097-2 (paywall)

As the world shrinks into a “global village”, cities have come into focus as dominant nodes in the global transactions and flows of capital, commodities, people and services. The resulting economic-cum-information order is not only transforming the architecture of discrete cities everywhere but is also motivating new patterns of intercity relations and networks. Global urban network is now synonymous with the trans-state processes that make up the global economy. Hence, cities are increasingly perceived as a new “resource” and “springboard” for connecting to and operating at the global level. The article explores these issues, with reference to the place and function of African cities in the global urban network. A city-based assessment of this nature offers a fresh and fluid scope to the African development question and quest, as against the more conventional “state-centric” benchmarking.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Place

Function

African cities

Global urban network

Colonial cities, postcolonial Africa and the world economy: A reinterpretation

David Simon (1989)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 13(1): 69–81

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1468-2427.1989.tb00109.x

(paywall)

It is now widely accepted that colonial cities represent a heterogeneous but distinct urban type, which conforms to neither the preindustrial nor industrial model. The distinguishing morphological, functional and social features, which reflect their pivotal roles in the establishment, systematisation and maintenance of colonial rule have been documented. As the centres of political, military and economic domination and exploitation, colonial cities also became the foci of growing nationalism and anticolonial struggles, whether or not independence was ultimately precipitated by rural-based guerrilla action. Recent colonialism was crucial to the formation and entrenchment of a global economy characterised by inequality. Parts of the ex-colonial world – the so-called newly industrialising countries (NICs) – are today experiencing industrialisation, in parallel with deindustrialisation of the first world. Yet, despite the new international division of labour, little change in the overall balance of wealth or power has occurred. Much of the Third World, especially in Africa, remains peripheral, unindustrialised and plagued by increasing poverty. This paper seeks to explore whether it is therefore still meaningful to talk about colonial and postcolonial cities. Have they remained a recognisable type, or are they losing their inherited distinctiveness and assuming more local character? Or, conversely, are some, at least, becoming in certain respects more homogeneous as loci of investment, accumulation, circulation, reproduction, and exploitation in the modern high-tech global economy governed by international capital and characterised by instant communications and uniform built environments? An attempt will be made to address these questions, using comparative material from sub-Saharan Africa.

[Extract from the introduction of the article]

Methods

Case studies

Comparative analysis

Keywords

Colonial cities

Postcolonial Africa
World economy
Reinterpretation

Globalization and social exclusion in cities: Framing the debate with lessons from Africa and Asia

Jo Beall (2002)

Environment and Urbanization 14(1): 41–51

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/095624780201400104 (free access)

This paper considers the contradictory roles demanded of city governments as they seek to keep their cities competitive in an increasingly globalised world economy while also having increasing responsibilities for addressing social problems, and making local economic development less exclusionary. After reviewing debates on globalisation, social exclusion and their interconnections, the paper discusses the impact of globalisation on the sweepers in Faisalabad (Pakistan) and on livelihoods in Johannesburg. In Johannesburg, the new socially excluded are those who are superfluous to the requirements of the global economy and Johannesburg's position within it. Exclusionary processes associated with globalisation (including changes in the international division of labour) graft themselves onto local dynamics of social exclusion. The scope for government action at national and city level is also reduced by the downsizing of governments, and liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

Globalisation
Social exclusion
Cities
Johannesburg
Faisalabad

Thinking about African urban management in an era of globalisation

AbdouMaliq Simone (1999)

African Sociological Review 3(2): 69–98

Available at: www.jstor.org/stable/24487404 (paywall)

The past decade has witnessed a sweeping restructuring of urban life, at least on paper. New municipalities and local authorities have been established, and there has been a greater emphasis on elaborating, up-scaling, and institutionalising local solutions that have been honed through the efforts of citizens more broadly engaged in improving their living environments. While the general thrust of decentralisation remains of limited efficacy in most African countries, due to the persistence of weak national economies and the conflicts inherent in the intensifying democratisation of

national political life, many cities are experiencing a substantiation of working relationships and partnership among diverse sectoral actors and ways of life. Efforts to affect comprehensive changes in the management of urban life, the reform of national political practice and the role of cities in stimulating economic growth have produced an often contentious yet sometimes highly innovative patchwork of incessant revisions in approaches to urban governance.

Perhaps one of the most hopeful occurrences has been the proliferation of new spaces of negotiation among various urban actors. These spaces have been generated on the basis of a widening recognition that addressing urban crises necessitates a more systematic appropriation of the skills usually deployed only for survival into practices of planning, administration and development. Not only are such spaces compelling a more appropriate engagement of local dynamics on the part of urban administrators, but they are also providing opportunities for neighbourhoods often only focused on their own self-interest to engage city-wide processes and concerns. While many positive changes have occurred, many challenges remain, and it is the objective of this paper to outline some of those challenges, particularly related to the social and cultural implications of globalisation for African cities. Additionally, rather than pinpointing specific policy frameworks and programmes to be adopted by urban managers, the paper suggests particular mindsets and ways of thinking about the city that are important precursors to the generation of specific governance.

[Extract from the article]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Urban management

Africa

Globalisation

Globalisation and uneven urbanisation in Africa: The limits to effective urban governance in the provision of basic services

Fantu Cheru (2005)

UCLA Centre for Near Eastern Studies

Available at: www.international.ucla.edu/cnes/article/107324 (open access)

Most of the literature on cities and globalisation has so far been focused on the cities of developed countries that have had their economic bases greatly enhanced by globalisation, namely, New York, London and Tokyo. There have been very little systematic studies of cities in less developed countries where the benefits of globalisation are less obvious or are absent despite two decades of donor-mandated economic reform programmes by developing countries in an effort to integrate them better to the world economy. Even less known is about the effect of globalisation on the relationships between capital cities that serve as the nerve centre of global accumulation and the hundreds of small towns and provincial capitals that have been

untouched by economic globalisation in a meaningful way. This paper will examine how globalisation has affected the provision of public goods – water, sanitation and infrastructure – services that were the domain of governments until recently.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Globalisation

Uneven urbanisation

Urban governance

Basic services

On the worlding of African cities

Abdoumalik Simone (2001)

African Studies Review 44(2): 15–41

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/african-studies-review/article/abs/on-the-worlding-of-african-cities/377CAB5AA45E4A255A6479800FCACCD2 (paywall)

How do African urban residents, who are conventionally assumed to operate within parochial, highly localised confines, operate at larger scales? How do they reach a “larger world”? The article looks at some of the overall effects on African cities and their residents of a global process of scalar recomposition and the reconfiguration of social cohesion that ensues. By examining renovations in a traditional Islamic institution, *zawiyyah*, an example is provided of ways in which urban Africans attempt to act effectively within larger domains.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Worlding

African cities

Urban Africans

Africa's new cities: The contested future of urbanization

Femke van Noorloos and Marjan Kloosterboer

Urban Studies 55(6):1223–1241

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New private property investments in Africa's cities are on the rise, and they often take the form of entirely new cities built up from scratch as comprehensively planned self-contained enclaves. As these new city-making trajectories are expanding and empirical research is emerging, there is a need to provide more conceptual clarity. We systematically examine the diversity of new cities in Africa; elicit their financial

trajectories; and set an agenda for critically examining their actual and expected implications, by learning transnational lessons from debates on gated communities, peri-urban land governance and displacement, and older waves of new city building. Although most new cities are private-led projects, they are inserted into diverse and dynamic political economies, with states ranging from developmentalist to neoliberal to absent. The consumptive and supply-driven character of many projects so far (resembling gated communities for middle and higher classes), their insertion into “rurban” spaces with complex land governance arrangements, and their tendency to implement post-democratic, private-sector-driven governance will make them at best unsuitable for solving Africa’s urban problems, and at worst they will increase expulsions and enclosures of the poor, public funding injustice and socio-spatial segregation and fragmentation.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Africa

Land

New cities

Satellite cities

Urban restructuring

Structural adjustment and the contemporary sub-Saharan African city

John Briggs and Ian Yeboah (2001)

Area 33(1): 18–26

Available at: [rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/1475-4762.00004](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/1475-4762.00004)

(paywall)

Although it has been suggested that structural adjustment policies have slowed Third World urban growth and have stimulated a spatial deconcentration of economic activity, this paper argues that African cities continue to grow and mainly through peri-urban development. This investment comes mainly from domestic sources and migrants’ remittances, and tends to be in consumption rather than production. Reasons include cultural factors, lack of confidence in the national economy and in the state’s long-term economic objectives, an increasing demand for housing, improvements in intraurban transport, and a desire to spread investment risk among a range of alternatives including housing.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

African city

Structural adjustment

Peri-urban

Accra

Dar es Salaam

Secondary towns in globalization: Lessons from East Africa

Hélène Mainet and Sylvain Racaud (2015)

Journal of Urban Research 12: 1–22

Available at: journals.openedition.org/articulo/2880 (open access)

Through examples of small and medium-sized towns in East Africa mountain areas, in Uganda and Tanzania, the paper focuses on the changing role of secondary towns through their commercial functions, acting as nodes in wide trade networks (fieldwork conducted in urban and rural markets of the studied areas). The local productive systems have turned to market gardening to face the drastic decline of cash crops like coffee, and new products and productions are now inundating local markets, like fruits and vegetables but also imported Chinese or second-hand clothes, shoes or kitchenware. Trade connections are more open and complex than before, with strong processes of spatial and economic differentiation and specialisation. The position of secondary towns is at the same time challenged by new roads, new (often external) actors and new strategies, with visible bypassing effects (direct connections between rural and large cities), but also remains inconspicuously important for servicing rural areas. The paper presents the changing role of these secondary towns in globalisation, the stakeholder interplays (old and new, local and exogenous) in these new configurations, and finally the redistribution of market localisations, in response to new opportunities and challenges in globalised trading systems.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Secondary towns

Globalisation

East Africa

Neoliberal urban legacies in Luanda and Maputo

Sílvia Jorge and Sílvia Leiria Viegas (2021)

African Geographical Review 40(3): 324–338

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19376812.2021.1937664 (paywall)

The paper focuses on the transformation of the Angolan and Mozambican capital cities with regards to the neoliberal context, taking into account local sociospatial legacies. Following the theoretical conception of the production of space and the right to the city, as discussed by Lefebvre, our purpose is to reflect on the urban strategies, policies and

practices of the last decades and to present their main impacts, stressing counteractions. We conclude that neoliberal dynamics tend to perpetuate forms of spatial fragmentation and social exclusion, while local resistances are a path for more inclusive approaches inspired by the right to the city.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Neoliberal context
Sociospatial legacies
Production of space
Right to the city
Luanda and Maputo

The real estate frontier

Tom Gillespie (2020)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (44)4: 599–616

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.12900 (open access)

Africa's major cities are experiencing dramatic transformation as a result of growing real estate investment. This article explores whether existing theories can explain the dynamics of urban redevelopment in an African context, and how African cases can inform new theorisations of real estate driven urban transformation. Examining the utility of theories of gentrification and speculative urbanism for understanding urban redevelopment in Accra, Ghana, it argues that urban redevelopment in this city has been shaped by its particular (post)colonial history of state land acquisition and urban planning. Rather than simply identifying empirical variation on established theories, however, the article draws on recent research on commodity frontiers to propose an original theorisation of urban redevelopment in Accra in terms of the production of a "real estate frontier". This real estate frontier is characterised by the incremental and contested commodification of state land to enable the growth of the real estate sector in the city. The article concludes by calling for a comparative research agenda to better understand real estate frontiers globally.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban transformation
Real estate frontier
Real estate investment

Recasting provisional urban worlds in the Global South: Shacks, shanties and micro-stalls

Prince Karakire Guma (2021)

Planning Theory and Practice 22(2): 211–226

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14649357.2021.1894348 (paywall)

This article contributes to ongoing calls that provoke a recasting of provisional urban worlds in the Global South. I draw from informal and transient structures – shacks, shanties, micro-stalls – in Kibera, a high-density settlement in Nairobi, to offer an explication of provisional worlds that transcends teleological conceptions of what constitutes “the urban”. I argue that while often disregarded, sidelined, and marginalised in formal planning and city-making processes, informal and transient structures offer viable alternatives amidst the usually exclusionary nature of neoliberal and market-oriented interventions. As such, they instigate a mode of practice that speaks to different ways of being-in-the-world.

[Author’s abstract]

Methods

Case study

Keywords

Southern urban practice

Provisional urban worlds

Built environment

Planning

Nairobi city

Slum upgrading in the era of world-class city construction: The case of Lagos, Nigeria

Onyanta Adama (2020)

International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development 12(2): 219–235

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19463138.2020.1719499 (open access)

The paper examines the tensions that accompany slum upgrading in the era of world-class city construction. The focus is a slum upgrading project in Lagos, Nigeria. The paper observes the intertwining of modernist and neoliberal ideologies in world-class city construction and in slum upgrading projects. The entanglement centres on a number of shared interests; the prioritisation of infrastructure and notions about urban space, participation and citizenship. As documented, the project and, by extension, world-class city construction fails to acknowledge the livelihoods of the poor and is undermined by protests. Historical legacies and systemic failings of governance present additional obstacles. The paper seeks to broaden the scope of world-class city research by acknowledging the local context, but at the same time recognising the global links. Along these lines, the paper suggests that slum upgrading provides an opportunity to examine how the local is inserted into the global.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Modernity

Neoliberalism

World-class city construction

Slum upgrading

Lagos

Nigeria

Urban paradox and the rise of the neoliberal city: Case study of Lagos, Nigeria

Oluwafemi Olajide and Taibat Lawanson (2021)

Urban Studies, June

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00420980211014461 (paywall)

In a bid to actualise the vision of transforming Lagos into Africa's model megacity and global economic and financial hub, the state government has embarked on and/or supported various urban development projects. Drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of neoliberalism, we argue that governance practices in Lagos are transforming the city in a manner that is paradoxical to the intents of the city's development plan. This paper, therefore, explores how government practices have shaped the city, and the sociospatial consequences of the recent Lagos state government-supported developments. Of interest are projects from the Lagos State Development plan (2012–2025) which have resulted in significant spatial displacements – hence the selected case studies of Lekki Free Trade Zone and Badia-East Housing Estate. The study reveals that the Lagos state development policy results in creative destruction largely due to the uncritical embrace of market logic over social logic, thereby entrenching urban discontent and sociospatial fragmentation across the city.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Development

Dispossession

Governance

Informality

Neoliberalism

Poverty/exclusion

Redevelopment/regeneration

Oiling the Urban Economy: Land, Labour, Capital and the State in Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana

Franklin Obeng-Odoom (2014)

Routledge, London

Preview available at: www.routledge.com/Oiling-the-Urban-Economy-Land-Labour-Capital-and-the-State-in-Sekondi-Takoradi/Obeng-Odoom/p/book/9781138626072

This book presents a critical analysis of the “resource curse” doctrine and a review of the international evidence on oil and urban development to examine the role of oil on property development and rights in West Africa’s new oil metropolis – Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana. It seeks answers to the following questions: In what ways did the city come into existence? What changes to property rights are oil prospecting, explorations and production introducing in the 21st century? How do the effects vary across different social classes and spectrums? To what extent are local and national institutions able to shape, restrain and constrain transnational oil-related accumulation and its effects on property in land, property in housing (residential, leisure and commercial), and property in labour? How do these processes connect with the entire urban system in Ghana? This book shows how institutions of varying degrees of power interact to govern land, housing and labour in the city, and analyses how efficient, sustainable and equitable the outcomes of these interactions are. It is a comprehensive account of the tensions and contradictions in the main sectors of the urban economy, society and environment in the booming Oil City and will be of interest to urban economists, development economists, real estate economists, Africanists and urbanists.

[Publisher’s summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Urban economy

Land

Capital

Labour

Sekondi-Takoradi

Varieties of residential capitalism in Africa: Urban housing provision in Luanda and Nairobi

M Anne Pitcher (2017)

African Affairs 116(464): 365–390

Available at: academic.oup.com/afraf/article-abstract/116/464/365/3072813 (paywall)

Many cities in Africa have experienced building booms over the last 15 years. This article combines theoretical insights from the varieties of capitalism and varieties of residential capitalism literatures to examine the development of urban housing provision and real estate in Africa. It identifies two patterns of residential capitalism, the statist market economy and the hierarchical market economy types, and draws on a

comparison of Luanda, Angola and Nairobi, Kenya to illustrate their respective differences. The two patterns reflect how governments, the private sector and residents interact around the provision and purchase of housing in diverse political and economic contexts. The article suggests that the features of urban housing construction and real estate markets in the capitals of Angola and Kenya may serve as prototypes for broader patterns of capitalist development in these countries and elsewhere on the continent.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Residential capitalism

Urban housing provision

Luanda

Nairobi

Global urban policymaking in Africa: A view from Angola through the redevelopment of the Bay of Luanda

Sylvia Croese (2018)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 42(2): 198–209

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.12591 (paywall)

A burgeoning literature looks into the processes and actors involved in the adoption and emulation of best practices and models of urban policy and development across the globe, often with the aim of attracting investment and making cities more competitive. With its focus on leisure, tourism and global capital, the redevelopment of the Bay of Luanda, in the capital of Angola, echoes the rhetoric, policies and projects underpinning such practices. Yet, a deeper interrogation reveals that the redevelopment forms part of a predominantly inward-looking project driven by the highest echelons of the national government and its ruling party. While these actors mimic and appropriate the language and tools of entrepreneurial cities, their aim is not necessarily to make the city more internationally competitive but to achieve domestic political legitimacy and stability. The argument presented in this article builds on McCann's (2013)⁵ call for scholars to also consider the "introspective" politics of urban policy boosterism from the perspective of a context in which power is highly centralised. The article thus contributes to a growing literature that advances more adequate and provincialised theorisations of urban policy and city governance in the Global South, with a particular focus on the African context.

[Author's abstract]

Method

⁵ McCann, E (2013). 'Policy boosterism, policy mobilities, and the extrospective city'. *Urban Geography* 34(1): 5–29.

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Global urban policymaking
African cities
Bay of Luanda

The framing of inner-city slum redevelopment by an aspiring developmental state: The case of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ezana Haddis Weldeghebrael (2020)

Cities: 1–11

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0264275118301884
(paywall)

Following the contested 2005 election, the Ethiopian state enhanced its repression of dissent and tried to gain legitimacy through delivering on development targets by branding itself as a “developmental state” until the election of a reformist prime minister in 2018. In line with its developmental aspiration, the Ethiopian state engaged in large-scale inner-city slum redevelopment between 2009 and 2017, by displacing thousands of households to the periphery. Based on six months of qualitative research, this article interrogates the way the Ethiopian state framed the inner-city redevelopment using Bob Jessop's “strategic-relational approach”. The article argues that the Ethiopian state framed slum redevelopment to project itself as developmental and to enhance state control of the inner city. At the same time, the state used inner-city redevelopment to minimise the cost of the intervention through dispossessing inner-city residents and leasing the land at a higher premium. However, since 2012, there has been a tendency to use the redevelopment for the accumulation of high-end developers, by framing the redevelopment as a means to build the “Diplomatic Capital Africa”. Overall, the Ethiopian aspiring developmental state used slum redevelopment not only to facilitate accumulation but also to consolidate its tight grip on power.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Inner-city redevelopment
Developmental state
Frame
Hegemonic project
Accumulation strategy

Structural adjustment and emerging urban form in Accra, Ghana

Ian Yeboah (2000)

Africa Today 47(2): 61–89

Available at: www.jstor.org/stable/4187332 (paywall)

Researchers have postulated the emergence of new urban forms in the Third World (TW), which are characterised by either a deconcentration of urban functions to peri-urban or smaller cities (polycentric), or a fusion of urban and rural functions (desakota). This paper provides empirical evidence, in the form of the phenomenal growth of Accra, on emerging urban forms. It argues that Accra's growth is a quality residential sprawl with unicentric tendencies, rather than either a deconcentration of urban functions or a fusion of urban and rural functions. For Accra, globalisation, economic growth and structural adjustment have helped the state provide enabling circumstances for global and local factors to contribute to the city's expansion. Based on the case of Accra, the paper raises a series of questions that relate to generalisation, planning and the management of sub-Saharan African cities (SSACs).

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Structural adjustment

Urban form

Accra

The African City: A History

Bill Freund (2012)

See Chapter 6, "Globalisation and the African city: Touba, Abidjan, Durban"

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/books/african-city/18714539D303FA24AC3D68A80DD685E9

Descriptions of African cities in desperate conditions are generally coupled with assumptions about globalisation, a term that became fashionable in the course of rapid international economic growth in the 1990s. Globalisation can work as a term if we posit that it represents a stage in international economic interactions. It has gone together with an intensive increase in networking through telecommunications and the large-scale use of computers, with the dominance of big multinational corporations that deploy investments, production and other activities relatively freely to desirable corners of the globe. Linked to globalisation, and given the end of the Cold War, there has come an allied emphasis on international governance intended to ease the flow of goods and currencies amongst other forms of regulation. For the globalisation champions, Africa has fallen off the map of the civilised world. With its poor infrastructure, its chaotic politics, not infrequent episodes of natural disaster causing havoc, and its continued dependence on primary product sales as its only desirable

exports, it has been marginalised in the networked world. Where urban sociologists and geographers consider the fate of “world cities” that compete with and integrate largely with each other as national boundaries become less important, what is left for the cities of Africa? How Africans survive, form human communities, and access necessities in these cities is part of the picture which we have already considered in the last chapter. In this chapter, which is in a sense a continuation of this theme, we shall look as well at aspects of globalisation which do not exactly fit the scary stories of the Afropessimists.

[Extract from the introduction of Chapter 6 of the book]

Method

Various

Keywords

Globalisation

African city

Durban

Abidjan

Touba

Centralized clientelism, real estate development and economic crisis: The case of postwar Luanda

Miguel Dias (2021)

African Geographical Review 40(3)

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19376812.2021.1933555 (paywall)

The article explores the role of Luanda's property and real estate development within the postwar Angolan system of centralised clientelism, drawing on the political settlements theory applied to urban analysis. It argues that profit-driven urban policies were fundamental to ensure Angola's political stability but detrimental to its development, leaving behind financial distress and a splintered urban landscape, which is a significant impediment to pursuing a much-needed economic structural change. The tensions in the urban realm between factions of the recent power reconfiguration constitute a fertile terrain to explore the relationship between political regimes and urban transformation.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Luanda

Centralised clientelism

Political settlements

Real estate development

Economic crisis

2.2. International aid organisations and diaspora population

In different ways, international aid organisations and diaspora populations are involved in shaping urban governance and development processes in African cities. Amongst the several development agencies providing financial support for urban development in African cities, Ramsamy (2006) indicated the World Bank has been the major lender of urban assistance to African cities since the 1970s. However, Stren (2014) argues that the World Bank's assistance to African governments in terms of urban infrastructure has been modest in comparison to the development needs of African cities and Asante and Helbrecht (2020) and Goodfellow and Huang (2020) have shown that China has become the major source of urban infrastructure finance in African cities.

The presence and support of international aid organisations has not always benefited urban governance and development in African cities. Carolini (2021) argues that the presence and density of international aid agencies in some African cities is deepening urban inequalities and weakening the fiscal capacities of state authorities to meet the urban infrastructural demands of the local people. Esser (2012) observes that the post-conflict conduct of politics in Freetown has involved collusion between the national government and international aid agencies that has undermined the ability of the local government to meet the demands of the local people.

Diaspora populations have become increasingly involved in the process of supporting urban development in their countries and hometowns. The report by Pescinski (2018) considers the place of diaspora populations in African cities and how city governments can take steps to promote inclusion of these associations in urban development. McGregor (2014) found that remittances from diaspora populations can provide essential familial support, but also, when channelled into urban real estate, can contribute to inflated property prices and residential construction booms. These studies notwithstanding, there has been little scholarly attention to the involvement of transnational actors – particularly diaspora populations – in the urban governance and development processes in African cities.

Aid's urban footprint and its implications for local inequality and governance

Gabriella Y Carolini (2021)

Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space 53(2): 389–409.

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0308518X20947099 (paywall)

This paper analyses how local urban development, and governance therein, are being shaped by the explosion of actors within the donor and investment community in African countries like Mozambique. More specifically, drawing on qualitative fieldwork in Maputo, existing data on aid and private sector flows to Mozambique, and a spatial analysis of new real estate developments between 2009 and 2017, I forward two novel arguments about the negative externalities fostered by the growing density of the community of international development professionals and their foreign private-sector counterparts in the Mozambican capital of Maputo. First, I show that the increasing density of international actors in the capital city and their living needs, as well as how

those needs are treated by the public sector, are deepening a housing, infrastructure and amenities divide between the rentier and international classes in the city and the majority of low-income residents. Second, I contend that the very readiness of non-tax revenue sources from international agents is enabling a continued reliance on external funding, rather than own-source revenues, for major capital investments. This balance in favour of external financing further diminishes the already weak tax bargaining potential of the local population in making demands for urban development projects that directly serve them. In conclusion, I argue that the international development organisations portending an interest in the enhancement of urban equities and fiscal responsibility across cities like Maputo especially need to rethink their operational presence to better address the perverse externalities of their physical and socio-economic imprints on the urban landscapes in which they operate.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban development

Foreign aid

Mozambique

Housing

Taxation

Urban service delivery in Africa and the role of international assistance

Richard Stren (2014)

Development Policy Review 32(S1): s19–s37

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/dpr.12067 (open access)

Sub-Saharan African cities have been growing at historically unprecedented rates. Since the early 1970s, they have received considerable international assistance, involving a succession of major thematic objectives. The main agency involved in urban assistance has been the World Bank. But as its goals have changed, it has been obliged to operate increasingly through a decentralised, more democratically structured local-government system. Overall, the success of this international-assistance regime has been positive but modest, given the overwhelming needs of African cities. Still, African cities are increasingly finding solutions both cooperatively and on their own.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Literature review

Keywords

African cities

Decentralisation

Local government

Urban assistance
 Urban management
 World Bank

International assistance for cities in low- and middle-income countries: Do we still need it?

Richard Stren (2008)

Environment and Urbanization 20(2): 377–392

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956247808096118 (free access)

Based on evidence of a secular decline in urban development assistance on the part of many overseas agencies such as the World Bank and USAID, this article suggests reasons for the decline and considers what can be done to reverse it. Urban assistance (from North to South) is still needed in many countries because it strengthens economic development at all levels of recipient nations and because it engenders networks of decentralised cooperation that promote local development. To be more effective, urban assistance programmes must support local research; they must support South–South networks; they must continue to focus on pro-poor policies; and the agencies that undertake these must act responsibly as the local stakeholders they have in fact become.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Literature review

Keywords

Anti-urban bias
 Decentralised cooperation
 Donor agencies
 Ideas in good currency
 Networked development
 Urban assistance

“When we launched the government's agenda ...”: Aid agencies and local politics in urban Africa

Daniel E Esser (2012)

Journal of Modern African Studies 50(3): 397–420

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-modern-african-studies/article/when-we-launched-the-governments-agenda-aid-agencies-and-local-politics-in-urban-africa/31D061322A4784A44B698940FCBFC6DC (paywall)

Political realities in the capital cities of impoverished countries emerging from violent conflict illustrate how local actors can be hindered in conducting political affairs independently from the interests and influence of national governments as well as international agencies. This experience problematises the argument that the main cause of political impasse in African cities governed by opposition parties is incomplete

decentralisation, whereby a devolution of responsibilities is not matched by a downward reallocation of resources. Although resulting competition constrains local governments' opportunities to deliver basic services, we need to look beyond the national scale to uncover the drivers of institutional change and gauge the promise of donor-driven local political empowerment. Urban politics in Africa continues to be shaped by global aid discourses, which are translated into local policy frameworks through interest convergence between international and national actors. The case of Freetown, Sierra Leone provides an illustration of such macro-level alignment and resulting local frictions. At the same time, it also demonstrates how local politics have challenged the technocratic, apolitical reinvention of urban governance in the Global South perpetuated by the international aid industry.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Aid agencies

Local politics

Freetown

African cities

The World Bank and Urban Development: From Projects to Policy

Edward Ramsamy (2006)

Routledge, London

Available at: www.routledge.com/World-Bank-and-Urban-Development-From-Projects-to-Policy/Ramsamy/p/book/9781138987357

As one of the world's most powerful supranational institutions, the World Bank has played an important role in development ideology and practice since 1946. Although the World Bank has been involved in urban lending for more than three decades, *The World Bank and Urban Development* is the first book-length history and analysis of the Bank's urban programmes and their complex relationship to urban policy formulation in the developing world. Through extensive primary research, including interviews with World Bank and government officials, and through an exploration of factors internal and external to the Bank that have impacted its urban development agenda, this groundbreaking work addresses four major gaps in the literature:

- the political and economic forces that propelled the reluctant World Bank to finally embrace urban programmes in the 1970s;
- how the World Bank fashioned its general ideology of development into specific urban lending projects and how those programmes, in turn, eventually translated into urban policy in developing countries;
- trends and transitions within the Bank's urban agenda from its inception to the present;

- the World Bank's historic and contemporary role in the complex interaction between global, national, and local forces that shape the urban agendas of developing countries.

The book also examines how protests from NGOs and civic movements, in the context of globalisation and neoliberalism, have influenced World Bank policies from the 1990s to the present. The institution's attempts to restructure and legitimate itself, in light of shifting geopolitical and intellectual contexts, are considered throughout the book.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Case study (there is a case study on Zimbabwe in the book)

Fieldwork

Keywords

The World Bank

Urban development

Projects

Policy

Contingent infrastructure and the dilution of “Chineseness”: Reframing roads and rail in Kampala and Addis Ababa

Tom Goodfellow and Zhengli Huang (2020)

Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space 53(4): 655–674

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0308518X20967962 (open access)

Amid growing interest in China's role in financing and building infrastructure in Africa, there is still little research on how Chinese-financed infrastructures are negotiated and realised at the city and metropolitan scale. We compare the Light Rail Transit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with the expressway linking Kampala to Entebbe airport in Uganda, examining the processes of bargaining behind these transport infrastructures and their emergent effects on urban land use and city-dwellers' mobility. We find that both projects were designed and implemented through opaque negotiations between African national elites and Chinese agencies, with little or no engagement from city authorities, leading to haphazard outcomes that are poorly integrated with broader planning. Yet we also suggest that, despite being enabled and mediated by Chinese agencies, such projects do not embody a Chinese global vision. They instead reflect the entrepreneurial activities of Chinese contractors and the varying ways in which these connect with African national governments' shifting priorities. Moreover, as they are subsumed into the urban context, these transposed infrastructures have been rapidly repurposed and their “Chineseness” diluted, with one morphing into an infrastructure for the poor and the other into a site of private value extraction. We thus argue that, far from representing a domineering or neo-colonial influence, Chinese-financed infrastructures that land in institutionally complex African city-regions can be rapidly swallowed up into the political-economic landscape, producing contingent benefits and

disbenefits that are far removed from the visions of any planners – Chinese or African, past or present.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Infrastructure

Urban transportation

China–Africa relations

Uganda

Ethiopia

The place of diaspora associations in cities

Janina Pescinski (2018)

United Nations University Institute on Globalisation, Culture and Mobility (UNU-GCM), Policy Report

Available at: i.unu.edu/media/gcm.unu.edu/publication/4407/Final_Janina-Pescinski_Policy-Report_Diasporas-in-Cities.docx.pdf (free access)

City-level policies affect diaspora members' right to association, freedom of expression, access to public space and visibility, all of which impact how they build communities and are included or not in the city. Considering the way in which diasporas enact these rights at the local level goes beyond individual rights to what has been called the "right to the city": a collective right to have power over the process of urbanisation. Diaspora members are shaping cities as much as cities are shaping their identities and communities. Through their associations, diaspora members contribute to the wellbeing of their community and the cultural life and diversity of the city, despite facing challenges with regard to funding and organisational structure. Drawing on case studies of West African diaspora associations in Paris, Dakar and Tangier, this policy report considers the place of diaspora associations in cities and how city governments can take steps to promote inclusion of these associations and their members.

[Author's summary]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

Diaspora associations

Cities

US AID's private sector housing programme in urban Zimbabwe: Examining the terrain from the terraces

Amin Y Kamete (2001)

Environment and Urbanization 13(1): 125–135

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/095624780101300110 (free access)

This paper discusses the role of the United States government's Agency for International Development (US AID) in housing provision in Zimbabwe. While emphasising that much of the Agency's support has helped expand and improve housing for low-income urban groups, it also describes how a US AID-funded project in Harare contradicted the Agency's own principles of good governance, since it was developed without the approval of the local authorities and used a steel-frame technology that had not been approved. This technology subsequently proved to have many disadvantages and the participants in the project find themselves with mortgage repayments that they have difficulty meeting, and poor-quality houses within a neighbourhood that the city authorities will not recognise as a legal development.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

USAID

Housing programme

Low-income urban groups

Harare

The urban dimension of Chinese infrastructure finance in Africa: A case of the Kotokuraba Market Project, Cape Coast, Ghana

Lewis Abedi Asante and Ilse Helbrecht (2020)

Journal of Urban Affairs 42(8): 1278–1298

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07352166.2019.1629819 (open access)

For many years, Chinese infrastructure finance has been secured by African governments to provide infrastructure of national significance, while cities continue to lack fiscal tools for the provision of large-scale urban infrastructure. This article not only demonstrates that Chinese infrastructure finance is being extended to municipal authorities in Africa to undertake critical urban infrastructure but also scrutinises the urban dynamics and local impact of using Chinese infrastructure finance for urban regeneration. Through empirical scrutiny of the regeneration of Kotokuraba Market in Cape Coast, Ghana, findings reveal that municipal authorities, like national governments, are subjected to political and embedded conditionalities. However, the conventional resource-backed repayment conditionality characteristic of Chinese-funded national projects differs from the project finance model – relying on the project's cash flow for repayment – adopted in Cape Coast. We found in Cape Coast a locally driven emphasis on affordable rents that stands in stark contrast to the practice of project finance, resulting in potential default of the Chinese loan. The wider consequences of this disjuncture for urban development, financing and governance in Cape Coast, Ghana, and Africa are discussed.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Chinese infrastructure finance

Local impact

Evaluation summary: District development facility

MDF Training and Consultancy BV (2015)

Commissioned by Agence Française de Développement (AFD)

Available at: www.afd.fr/en/ressources/evaluation-summary-district-development-facility-ddf-ghana (free access)

In Ghana, the District development facility project (DDF) was subject to an evaluation in September 2015. Access to funds by the Metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs) for implementation of local socioeconomic development projects was limited. The government of Ghana partnered with the governments of Germany, France, Canada and Denmark in 2008 to ensure improved access to funds for MMDAs. The project was relevant, as it provided reliable sources of decentralised funding to MMDAs and succeeded in changing mindsets in local governance structures towards performance and results-based management. In the period reviewed, MMDAs identified and implemented 3,537 socioeconomic development projects. However, DDF sustainability is not yet sufficiently secured and MMDA trust in DDF is slowly declining. To maintain its relevance, DDF stakeholders should address issues relating to disbursement delays to MMDAs, invest in capacity development and improve monitoring and reporting.

[Author's executive summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

District development facility

Evaluation

Performance assessment

Sentimentality or speculation? Diaspora investment, crisis economies and urban transformation

JoAnn McGregor (2014)

Geoforum 56: 172–181

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718514001651 (open access)

This article explores political and moral economies of diasporic investment in urban property. It challenges uncritical policy discourses on migrant investment that romanticise transnational family and entrepreneurial networks by assuming diasporic social embeddedness, mutual trust, risk-reduction and socioeconomic benefits, often founded in neoliberal assumptions. The article elaborates alternate starting propositions emphasising the conflicting interests and predatory business practices that characterise informalised state governance and episodes of crisis. It stresses the importance of understanding changing regulatory regimes over finance and urban property. Migrants' desires need to be scrutinised in relation to those of a range of other actors who cannot be assumed to have convergent interests – including relatives, investment advisors, money transfer companies, estate agents, property developers. The article takes the case of hyperinflationary Zimbabwe, where remittances from the displaced middle classes not only provided essential familial support, but were also materialised in urban real estate, contributing to inflated property prices and a residential construction boom in the capital city. Diasporic investors were vulnerable to fraud, due to the combination of effects of fantasies of successful return to dream homes and irregular regimes for remittances and property. But there were notable speculative opportunities for those with government connections. New diaspora suburbs and homes that have transformed the landscape of the Harare periphery stand as material testimony to the intersection of emigré sentimentality and the speculative informalised economy of the crisis years.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Diaspora investment

Risk

Property

Middle classes

Crisis

Informality

2.3. Foreign investors and traders

Foreign investors and traders from different countries have been a feature of daily life in African cities for centuries, with the presence and trading activities of Chinese migrants being the most notable trend in recent times. Lampert et al. (2014) put the discussion into context by examining whether the presence of Chinese migrants connotes the return of new imperialists or makes a positive contribution to urban development in African cities. Warmerdam and van Dijk (2016) show that small-scale traders in many African cities may display discontent towards Chinese traders whilst consumers benefit from more affordable goods. Gukurume (2019) found that Chinese

traders deploy various tactics and strategies to adapt and get by in the relatively hostile environment in African cities. Others indicate that cooperative relations can emerge among African and Chinese traders (Lampert and Mohan 2014), with Dankwa and Valenta (2019) describing the relations between African traders and their Chinese counterparts as complementary, collaborative and competitive – something that might be extended to interactions among African traders from different countries.

Chinese Migrants and Africa's Development: New Imperialists or Agents of Change?

Ben Lampert, May Tan-Mullins, Daphne Chang and Giles Mohan (2014)

Zed Books, London

Available at: www.zedbooks.net/shop/book/chinese-migrants-and-africas-development/

China's recent stepping up of relations with Africa is one of the most significant developments on the African continent for decades. For some it promises an end to Africa's dependent aid relationships, as the Chinese bring expertise, technology and a stronger business focus. But for others it is no more than a new form of imperialism. This book is the first to systematically study the motivations, relationships and impact of this migration. It focuses not just on the Chinese migrants but also on the perceptions of, and linkages to, their African "hosts". By studying this everyday interaction, we get a much richer picture of whether this is South–South cooperation, as political leaders would have us believe, or a more complex relationship that can both compromise and encourage African development.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Fieldwork

Keywords

Chinese migrants

African development

Imperialism

Agent of change

Chinese traders in Kampala: Status, challenges, and impact on Ugandan society

Ward Warmerdam and Meine Pieter van Dijk (2016)

African Studies Quarterly 16(3–4): 129–148

Available at: asq.africa.ufl.edu/warmerdam_dec2016/ (free access)

Chinese petty traders are the most popular and yet most controversial foreign population that most Africans meet and engage with on a regular basis. Although the quality of their goods is suspect, their contribution of affordable goods to some African societies is recognised. There has been much discontent directed towards them, especially by small traders, because they are seen as undercutting local traders, not contributing to the local economy, and only interested in short-term gain. This paper examines the role of Chinese traders in Kampala, Uganda and their contributions to

that country's economy according to a number of economic indicators, as informed by the survey that the authors conducted in Kampala in 2012. It also analyses the Ugandan government's attitude towards these traders, the policies it implements, and the prospects for further investment in Uganda.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Chinese traders

Status

Challenges

Impact

Kampala

Chinese migrants and the politics of everyday life in Zimbabwe

Simbarashe Gukurume (2019)

Asian Ethnicity 20(1): 85–102

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14631369.2018.1490174 (paywall)

While there has been a rapid migration of Chinese nationals to Zimbabwe following the “Look East” policy, there has been little research on and about how the Chinese migrants relate and interact with locals and how they negotiate their social identities thereof. This paper examines Chinese small-scale traders in Harare, in particular their mundane forms of the everyday, with specific focus on their social and business practices, social relations and interactions with the locals. Drawing on qualitative ethnographic research with small-scale Chinese traders, workers and clients in Harare, this paper argues that as Chinese traders devise and deploy various tactics and strategies to adapt and get by in the city of Harare, new and unique forms of Chineseness emerge akin to what some scholars referred to as “tactical cosmopolitanism”. The paper further reveals how Chinese mobility reconfigures the ways in which Chinese identities and Chineseness are enacted and articulated in Harare.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Chineseness

Identities

Chinese traders

Social capital

Migration

Sino-African encounters in Ghana and Nigeria: From conflict to conviviality and mutual benefit

Ben Lampert and Giles Mohan (2014)

Journal of Current Chinese Affairs 43(1): 9–39

Available at: journals.sub.uni-hamburg.de/giga/jcca/article/view/722.html (free access)

China's renewed engagement with Africa is often framed as a form of imperialism, with the growing number of Chinese migrants on the continent seen as an exploitative presence. Such claims have generally been based on little evidence, and where more detailed empirical studies have emerged, they tend to emphasise the tensions and conflicts that have arisen. Our research on Chinese migrants in Ghana and Nigeria suggests that while there are concerns about Chinese competition in the informal retail sector and the treatment of local labour in Chinese enterprises, narratives of apparent tension and conflict are often much more nuanced than is generally recognised. Furthermore, more convivial and cooperative relations have also emerged and these have facilitated important opportunities for Africans to benefit from the Chinese presence. However, while the presence of Chinese migrants in African socioeconomic life can be more integrated and mutually beneficial than is often assumed, the ability of African actors to benefit from this presence is highly uneven, placing the politics of class at the centre of any understanding of Sino-African encounters.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

China in Africa

Chinese migrants in Africa

Migration and development

Conviviality

Globalisation

Chinese entrepreneurial migrants in Ghana: Socioeconomic impacts and Ghanaian trader attitudes

Kwaku Opoku Dankwah and Marko Valenta (2019)

Journal of Modern African Studies 57(1): 1–29

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-modern-african-studies/article/abs/chinese-entrepreneurial-migrants-in-ghana-socioeconomic-impacts-and-ghanaian-trader-attitudes/40D0DCDB1ABB656A94647BC2EA81D923 (paywall)

This article explores attitudes of Ghanaian traders towards an increasing Chinese influx into Ghanaian trading spaces and the impacts of Chinese merchants on Ghanaian traders and trading spaces. Despite a late entrance of Chinese merchants into Ghanaian trading spaces relative to Lebanese, Indians and Nigerians, the abrupt change in size of the Chinese trading community, along with its huge capital and cheap

goods, have had big impacts on local trading spaces. We maintain that relations between Ghanaian traders and Chinese counterparts may be roughly described as complementary, collaborative and competitive. While the Chinese impacts are seen as positive by some Ghanaian traders and landlords, they are negative for others. Yet, we argue that these relations are also nuanced and rooted in each Ghanaian trader's position amidst the Chinese presence. This article contributes to the literature on dynamics of South-to-South movements. It adds to growing studies on contemporary Chinese emigrations and accompanying impacts in host communities.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Fieldwork

Case study

Keywords

Chinese merchants

Ghanaian traders

Trading spaces

Competition

2.4. Covid-19 pandemic

Almost every city across the globe has suffered the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic since its emergence in December 2019 and there are indications that the pandemic is already deepening urban poverty in African cities (Chirisa et al., 2020). Several studies have already emerged to understand the socioeconomic impact and the responses of African governments to the pandemic. Onyishi et al. (2020) argue that the Covid-19 pandemic is not only a health problem but also a social and political economy challenge, given the large informal nature of urbanism in Africa. Several studies have demonstrated that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in African cities has been evident in market and street trading (Asante and Mills, 2020; Kiaka et al., 2021), urban transport (Mogaji, 2020) and informal settlements (Smit, 2020), among many others.

In response to these impacts, UN-Habitat (2021) explores the spatial dimensions of the pandemic and identifies the necessary shifts in urban forms that can mitigate the spread of future contagions, reducing their adverse economic, social and environmental impacts, while making cities more prosperous, green and fair. Cobbinah et al. (2020) suggest that for urban planning in Africa to be responsive to the ongoing Covid-19 and other future infectious diseases, three areas – integration of informal sector into formal planning processes; regional planning; and consideration of public health in urban planning practice – should be given priority. Smit (2020) notes that it is essential to strengthen urban governance processes and upgrade informal settlements, in order to reduce the risk of infectious disease and to reduce social inequities. In analysing the responses of governments in two African cities, Durizzo et al. (2021) conclude that the shutdown of public life is only effective, and might be prevented, with

a well-informed population, who perceive their government's actions as appropriate and who have access to the infrastructure required to follow WHO safety regulations.

Cotula (2021) contends that Covid-19 presents an opportunity to ask new research questions, which will track the ways in which the crisis is reconfiguring economic and political ordering and how diverse actors are renegotiating relations in the exceptional circumstances that the pandemic has created. More research is still required to develop robust data on the varying spatial impacts and responses across African cities, in order to inform policy formulation at the city, national and global level.

Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future

UN-Habitat (2021)

UN-Habitat, Nairobi, Kenya

Available at: unhabitat.org/un-habitat-report-on-cities-and-pandemics-towards-a-more-just-green-and-healthy-future (free access)

Since its emergence late in 2019, the coronavirus pandemic has triggered what is considered the worst public health crisis in a century, with outbreaks spreading to virtually every corner of the globe: first, between interconnected metropolises, then through the urban–rural continuum. And as entry points for Covid-19, cities are a critical line of defence in responding to the pandemic. The overall objective of the report is to explore the spatial dimensions of the pandemic and identify the necessary shifts in urban forms that can mitigate the spread of future contagions, reducing their adverse economic, social and environmental impacts, while making cities more prosperous, green and fair. In offering such an analysis, this report seeks to inform urban decision-making and policy formulation.

[Extract from the report]

Methods

Various

Keywords

Cities

Pandemic

Just, green and healthy future

Towards a political economy of the Covid-19 crisis: Reflections on an agenda for research and action

Lorenzo Cotula (2021)

World Development 138: 1–4

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X20303624 (open access)

The spread of Covid-19 has raised difficult questions that interrogate the pandemic as a public health emergency, an economic crisis and a disruptor of consolidated governance forms. While addressing the public health emergency must be the main priority, we also need to track the ways in which the crisis is reconfiguring economic

and political ordering and diverse actors are renegotiating relations in the exceptional circumstances the pandemic has created. These dimensions can have far-reaching implications in wide-ranging policy areas, both as the crisis unfolds and in the longer term. Based on a review of developments concerning land governance, this Viewpoint discusses continuities with longstanding patterns as well as ruptures and distinctive features that outline the initial contours of an agenda for research and action.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Review of literature

Keywords

Political economy

Covid-19 crisis

Reflection

Agenda for research and action

Covid-19: Can it transform urban planning in Africa?

Patrick Brandful Cobbinah, Michael Erdiaw-Kwasie and Ellis Adjei Adams (2020)

Cities and Health, Special Issue, Covid-19

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23748834.2020.1812329 (free access)

The Covid-19 pandemic raises questions about the effectiveness of urban planning practice in Africa and offers an opportunity to reflect on more constructive protocols for planning that can promote the public health agenda in the continent. This commentary analyses three critical areas of urban planning concern that limit the capacity of cities in Africa to respond to global health crises: integration of informal sector into formal planning processes; regional planning; and consideration of public health in urban planning practice – and proffers practical and conceptual recommendations that can position African cities to adequately respond to future health crises.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Review of literature

Keywords

Covid-19

Urban planning

Urban health

Urbanisation

Sustainable development

The challenge of Covid-19 in African cities: An urgent call for informal settlement upgrading

Warren Smit (2020)

Cities and Health, Special Issue, Covid-19

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23748834.2020.1816757 (open access)

This commentary discusses the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic for cities in Africa, particularly the informal settlements that make up a large part of African cities. There is a strong possibility that Covid-19 will result in the relocation of residents from informal settlements to the urban periphery, but this could result in further social exclusion and should be avoided. The key lesson of the pandemic is that it is essential to upgrade informal settlements, in order to reduce the risk of infectious disease and in order to reduce social inequities. Strengthening urban governance processes is a key precondition for this.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Review of literature

Keywords

African cities

Covid-19

Informal settlements

Covid-19 pandemic and informal urban governance in Africa: A political economy perspective

Chinedu Josephine Onyishi, Adaeze UP Ejike-Alieji, Chukwuedozie Kelechukwu Ajaero, Casmir Chukwuka Mbaegbu, Christian Chukwuebuka Ezeibe, Victor Udemezue Onyebueke, Peter Oluchukwu Mbah and Thaddeus Chidi Nzeadibe (2020)
Journal of Asian and African Studies 56(6): 1226–1250

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0021909620960163 (free access)

The outbreak and spread of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is probably the most serious global challenge since the second world war. While research has paid considerable attention to the technical, epidemiological and public health aspects of the pandemic in Africa, it neglects the social, economic and political dimensions. Relying on analysis of data on trends of Covid-19 infections from the World Health Organization and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, and a rapid review of available international and national policy/programme documents on Covid-19 control responses in Africa, this study assessed the extant protocols and responses to Covid-19 in relation to urban governance principles. Utilising the political economy framework, the social conditions of informal labour and business activities during the Covid-19 pandemic are explored with accession to social habitus of informality. The paper argues that in as much as the Covid-19 pandemic is a pervasive health problem it should be treated more as a social and political economy challenge, given the large,

informal nature of urbanism in Africa. The study concludes that urban governance that incorporates collective organisation, community groups, non-state and informal actors offers scope in the battle against Covid-19 in Africa. Rethinking African urbanism in line with the principles of the Global Campaign on Urban Governance is also canvassed.
[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Review of literature

Keywords

Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic

Urban governance

Informal economy

Informal settlements

Political economy

Africa

The urban penalty of Covid-19 lockdowns across the globe: Manifestations and lessons for anglophone sub-Saharan Africa

Innocent Chirisa, Tafadzwa Mutambisi, Marcyline Chivenge, Elias Mabaso, Abraham R Matamanda and Roselin Ncube (2020)

Geojournal: 1–14

Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10708-020-10281-6 (open access)

The paper contributes towards deciphering and decoding the misery of the urban poor in light of the Covid-19 scourge. It unpacks urban poverty in light of the coronavirus. The emergence of Covid-19 and the lack of any vaccines require physical distancing as preventative measures to contain and reduce the spread of the virus. Governments across the world, including in anglophone sub-Saharan Africa have implemented lockdown measures. The Covid-19 pandemic is happening within settlements where the majority of the population lives from hand to mouth. In anglophone sub-Saharan Africa, because of urbanisation and increased urban poverty, the Covid-19 scourge has had a huge impact on the urban poor. Covid-19 is likely to devastate economies and the community. For rapidly growing, densely populated and poorly planned settlements, the situation is tragic for these inhabitants. Nation states lockdown and social and physical distancing in response to the pandemic have escalated their misery. The paper adopts a critical review of literature, anchored in case study analysis, document analysis and scanning from reports. Results point to redefining the way humanity has related, functioned and conceptualised realities. There is need to go beyond prevention from infection, as a majority of urban dwellers are in the informal sector or unemployed. For the urban poor, strategies for social distancing may not be possible or effective. People are being asked to make choices between being hungry or risking getting infected. The paper recommends planning response at national, regional and local level, bearing in mind informal settlements, high densities and forms of overcrowding which have been placed as hotspots for the virus. There is a need to

rebuild societies, during and beyond Covid-19, calling for immediate disaster risk planning adaptation and transformation to promote resilience.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Case studies

Secondary data

Keywords

Covid-19

Lockdown

Urbanity

Pandemic

Poverty

Informality

Urban policy

Management

Nairobi

Cape Town

Lagos

Harare

Managing the Covid-19 pandemic in poor urban neighborhoods: The case of Accra and Johannesburg

Kathrin Durizzo, Edward Asiedu, Antoinette Van der Merwe, Attie Van Niekerk and Isabel Günther (2021)

World Development 137: 1–14

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X20303028 (open access)

Without a vaccine, practising social distancing and protective hygiene are the most effective measures to curb the spread of Covid-19. In order to understand how the urban poor mitigate their risk of infection, we conducted a survey with more than 1,400 poor households in two of the African cities with the most Covid-19 infections, Accra and Greater Johannesburg, early in the pandemic, during lockdowns of public life. We find that many of the urban poor already engage in the appropriate hygienic behaviour and follow social distancing rules. However, despite citywide lockdowns, about 25–40% of people still report attending large gatherings, 10–20% report receiving guests at home, and 30–35% report leaving the house more than once per week. Lack of cooperation with governmental regulations seems to be more related to a lack of infrastructure or poverty, rather than unwillingness to engage in behavioural change.

Interestingly, even with the stricter lockdown in South Africa, people are at least equally likely to deviate from social distancing rules. Our results indicate that more South African respondents perceive their government's actions as too extreme and underestimate Covid-19 cases in their country. About half of the sample in both

countries report knowing (mainly through TV) about current Covid-19 case numbers. Most participants know that coughing is a symptom, but only half mention fever and difficulty breathing, and very few people mention tiredness. Ghanaians seem to be somewhat better informed. While lack of information is an issue, misinformation appears to be limited. We conclude that a costly shutdown of public life is only effective – and might even be prevented – with a well-informed population, who perceives their government's actions as appropriate and who has access to the infrastructure required to follow WHO safety regulations.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Covid-19

Lockdown

Mitigation measures

Urban poor

South Africa

Ghana

“The street is ours”. A comparative analysis of street trading, Covid-19 and new street geographies in Harare, Zimbabwe and Kisumu, Kenya

Richard Kiaka, Shiela Chikulo, Sacha Slootheer and Paul Hebinck (2021)

Food Security 13: 1263–1281

Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12571-021-01162-y (open access)

This collaborative and comparative paper deals with the impact of Covid-19 on the use and governance of public space, and street trade in particular, in two major African cities. The importance of street trading for urban food security and urban-based livelihoods is beyond dispute. Trading on the streets does, however, not occur in neutral or abstract spaces, but rather in lived-in and contested spaces, governed by what is referred to as “street geographies”, evoking outbreaks of violence and repression. Vendors are subjected to the politics of municipalities and the state to modernise the sociospatial ordering of the city and the urban food economy through restructuring, regulating and restricting street vending. Street vendors are harassed, streets are swept clean and hygiene standards imposed. We argue here that the everyday struggle for the street has intensified since and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Mobility and the use of urban space either being restricted by the city-state or being defended and opened up by street traders, is common to the situation in Harare and Kisumu. Covid-19, we pose, redefines, and creates “new” street geographies. These geographies pivot on agency and creativity employed by street trade actors, while navigating the lockdown measures imposed by state actors. Traders navigate the space or room for manoeuvre they create for themselves, but this space unfolds only temporarily, opens for a few only and closes for most of the street traders,

who become more uncertain and vulnerable than ever before, irrespective of whether they are licensed, paying rents for vending stalls to the city, or “illegally” vending on the street.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Various

Keywords

Street trade

Covid-19

Informality

Informalisation

Street geography

Urban restructuring

Exploring the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19 pandemic in marketplaces in urban Ghana

Lewis Abedi Asante and Richael Odarko Mills (2020)

Africa Spectrum 55(2): 170–181

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0002039720943612 (open access)

This article explores Ghana's preventive measures for stemming the spread of the Covid-19 disease among its population and the socioeconomic impact of these measures in urban marketplaces. It argues that Ghana's Covid-19 approach in marketplaces was characterised by (1) improving hygiene conditions through disinfection of all markets, (2) closing down markets to enforce social distancing among traders, and (3) imposing a lockdown to decongest densely populated marketplaces. Yet the micro-geographies of Ghana's marketplaces complicated the implementation of these preventive measures. The socioeconomic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in marketplaces were evident in the increased food prices, the economic hardships associated with the lockdown directive, and the forceful relocation and decongestion exercises to enforce social distancing among traders. The hostile nature with which municipal authorities implemented the Covid-19 -19 preventive measures in marketplaces is akin to how they sought to decongest inner cities prior to the emergence of Covid-19.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Review of literature

Keywords

Ghana

Covid-19 pandemic

Market trading

Social distancing

Partial lockdown

Impact of Covid-19 on transportation in Lagos, Nigeria

Emmanuel Mogaji (2020)

Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives 6: 1–7Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590198220300658 (open access)

The growing number of studies on the impact of Covid-19 is often discussed in the context of developed countries, highlighting a gap in the understanding of how the pandemic is impacting developing countries. This theoretical commentary focuses on the present and long-term impact of Covid-19 on transportation in Lagos State, Nigeria. The paper recognises the effect on transportation in emerging economies, where lockdowns and restrictions on movement may be ineffective, a state with high population density, poor transportation infrastructure and a large informal economy. Adopting the “avoid-shift-improve” framework, this paper presents practical implications for public and private sector policymakers, as they navigate this precarious time and chart a new path for individuals and Nigeria.

[Author’s abstract]

Methods

Various

Keywords

Covid-19

Transportation

Social distancing

Lagos

Nigeria

The Covid-19 pandemic is deepening the health crisis in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo

René Écochard, Patient Wimba, Justin Bengelhyag, Philippe Bianga Katchungae, Séraphine Lugwarhah, Moise Oyimangirwee, Jacques-Aimé Bazeboi, Léon Tshiloloj, Benjamin Longo-Mbenzak, Muriel Rabillouda, Jean Iwaza, Jean-François Étard and Philippe Vanhems (2021)

International Journal of Infectious Diseases 105: 716–720Available at: [www.ijidonline.com/article/S1201-9712\(21\)00261-7/fulltext](http://www.ijidonline.com/article/S1201-9712(21)00261-7/fulltext) (open access)

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo raised concerns regarding additional morbidity and mortality. Updating these indicators before a second wave is essential in order to prepare for additional help. From mid-May to mid-December 2020, weekly surveys were undertaken in sampled streets from ten health areas to quantify the use of barrier measures, and interview pedestrians about sickness and deaths in their households. Crude death rates (CDRs) were estimated. Minimal use or no use of face masks was observed in at least half of the streets. From May to December 2020, the number of suspected cases of Covid-19 increased sixfold ($P < 0.05$). Of deaths within 30 days

preceding the interviews, 20% were considered to be related to Covid-19. The monthly CDRs at the beginning and end of the study were approximately 5 and 25 per 1,000 population, respectively ($P < 0.05$); that is, annual CDRs of 60 and 260 per 1,000 population, respectively. Thus, during the first wave, the estimated mortality rate increased by 50% compared with previous years, and increased at least fourfold by the end of 2020. Despite possible overestimations, the excess mortality in South Kivu is extremely concerning. This crisis calls for a rapid response and increased humanitarian assistance.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Community-based surveillance

Democratic Republic of Congo

Covid-19

Mortality

South Kivu

Survey

3. The politics of urban infrastructure in African cities

The politics of urban infrastructure in African cities has attracted a great deal of interest in recent years, in relation to issues of land, housing, urban redevelopment, sanitation, market trading, transport and issues related to Chinese investment. Andreassen et al. (2020) note that informal land acquisition is beneficial to the housing needs of the urban poor and middle class and therefore the formalisation of the land market may not serve the interest of the low- and middle-income households. Croese and Pitcher (2019) and Chipungu and Magidimisha (2020) argue that most African governments are involved in the direct provision of housing as a strategy to secure the political loyalty of the urban poor and the middle class, but this is likely to fail if political calculations do not take into account how the internal state contradictions, individual agency and market forces act together. Lindell et al. (2016) observed that, while urban residents welcome the prioritisation of the redevelopment of large-scale urban infrastructure by African governments, such urban projects are often in contradiction with the realities of local residents. In his analysis of the political economy of the Bus Rapid Transport system in Dar es Salaam, Rizzo (2015) discredits the “win-win” narrative presented by the government, by arguing that some Tanzanian actors stood to lose their employment from the implementation of the system. There is also growing discussion of material politics around toilet, garbage and energy infrastructure (see Silver, 2014; Chalfin, 2014; Fredericks, 2018). Nevertheless, research is lacking on the gendered dimension of access to these productive resources and what it means for urban politics in African cities.

3.1. Urban land

Urban land conflict in the Global South: Towards an analytical framework

Melanie Lombard and Carole Rakodi (2016)

Urban Studies 53(3): 2683–2699

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0042098016659616 (open access)

In cities of the Global South, access to land is a pressing concern. Typically, neither states nor markets provide suitable land for all users, especially low-income households. In the context of urban growth and inequality, acute competition for land and the regulatory failures of states often result in conflict, which is sometimes violent, affecting urban authorities and residents. Conflicts are often mentioned in analyses of urban land, but rarely examined in depth. This paper develops a framework for land conflict analysis, drawing on relevant literature and the papers in this special issue. In order to explore the drivers, dynamics and outcomes of urban land conflicts, diverse disciplinary perspectives are discussed, including environmental security, political ecology, legal anthropology, land governance, conflict analysis and management, and urban conflict and violence. The papers focus on conflicts in the peri-urban areas of Xalapa, Mexico and Juba, South Sudan, and during informal settlement upgrading in eThekweni (Durban), South Africa and Nairobi. A second paper on South Africa examines how current tenure law reflects the characteristics and outcomes of previous conflicts. We suggest that an analytical framework needs, first, to consider definitional categories, including the material and emotional dimensions of access to land, conflict and violence, and tenure. Second, it needs to identify and examine the interests and behaviour of the many actors involved in urban land conflicts. And, third, it needs to analyse the interactions and relationships between those involved at different levels, from the individual/household, through the local to the citywide, national and international.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Conflict

Low-income communities

Tenure

Urban land

Violence

African cities, by comparison: Urban land, politics and agency in East and West Africa

Lucy Koechlin, Aïdas Sanogo, Miriam Badoux and Till Förster (2017)

Basel Papers on Political Transformations No. 13/14, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Basel

Available at:

ethnologie.philhist.unibas.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/ethnologie/Publikationen/Basel_Papers_No_13-14.pdf (free access)

This latest issue of the *Basel Papers on Political Transformations* is the result of a joint research project on corruption, conflict and cities in East and West Africa. Our key interest is the formation of urban governance arrangements in African secondary cities that have experienced violent conflict in very different contexts. The cities, Korhogo and Bouaké in Côte d'Ivoire and Eldoret and Kisumu in Kenya, are now rapidly growing urban centres, changing their shape and possibly their character with new investment projects under way and new neighbourhoods mushrooming. This growth of smaller cities that are often overshadowed by the economic and political dominance of the capital cities is part of broader processes of urban transformations in Africa. However, these cities play an important role in the political configuration of the countries. They experienced particular forms of violence because of their specific political history and position with the broader political setting of the countries. The expulsions, expropriations and lootings that took place during those periods have left scars on the relations between social actors, and have thrown up serious societal questions around justice, reconciliation and legitimacy. They are also significant, given the fact that urban land is becoming both more sought-after and commercially valuable, raising the stakes with regard to access to and ownership of urban land. For these reasons, we chose urban land as an entry point for our research, seeking to shed light on practices and discourses of urban land ownership.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Comparative analysis

Case studies

Keywords

Urban land

African cities

Politics

Agency

West Africa

East Africa

Informal land investments and wealth accumulation in the context of regularization: Case studies from Dar es Salaam and Mwanza

Manja Hoppe Andreassen, Gordon Mcgranahan, Alphonse Kyessi and Wilbard Kombe (2020)

Environment and Urbanization 32(1): 89–108

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0956247819896265 (open access)

Between half and three-quarters of new housing development in African cities has been taking place on land acquired through informal channels. This paper offers

insights from a study of self-builders' investments in informal land and housing in Dar es Salaam and Mwanza, two of the largest and fastest growing cities in Tanzania. The findings demonstrate that self-builders' investments in informal land and self-built housing are inextricably linked with household wealth accumulation processes and long-term security. In light of the research findings, the paper offers reflections on the potential impacts of ongoing land formalisation processes. The paper argues that the informal housing system has far more advantages than appreciated by proponents of formalisation, that the vision of bringing "dead capital" to life is misleading, and that the anticipated emergence of active formal markets for land and housing may not serve the needs or interests of low- and middle-income households.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

Formalisation

Incremental construction

Informal housing

Investments

Land investments

Regularisation

Self-builders

Tanzania

Wealth accumulation

The urban land nexus – Challenges and opportunities of regularising info settlements: The case studies of Dar es Salaam and Mwanza in Tanzania

Fredrick B Magina, Alphonse G Kyessi and Wilbard J Kombe (2020)

Journal of African Real Estate Research 5(1): 32–54

Available at: journals.uct.ac.za/index.php/JARER/article/view/837 (free access)

Informal settlements in Tanzania accommodate more than 70% of the urban population. Owing to this, the Tanzanian government has undertaken several initiatives to address the growing size and number of informal settlements. One such initiative is regularisation, which addresses security of tenure for residents of these settlements. Most of the people living in informal settlements lack legal land ownership and, as a result, properties in such settlements have relatively less value and lack security of tenure. Providing security of tenure is believed to encourage investment into informal households and facilitate the provision of urban services. This study aims to evaluate the process of regularisation in three Tanzanian settlements: Magengenu in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania's largest city); Ibungilo; and Isamilo in Mwanza city (the nation's second largest city). Using qualitative data, the paper explores the challenges and opportunities that emerged from regularisation. Findings indicate that the regularisation process has facilitated the issuance of title deeds, increased land value and security of tenure. However, a number of challenges were highlighted during regularisation. These

include an over-emphasis on the protection of private rights while undermining public interests, a lack of harmonised cost for regularisation, and prolonged delays in completing the regularisation process. These require policy actions, particularly reviewing the national informal settlements regularisation guidelines, as a way to address the weaknesses emerging from regularisation projects in the studied settlements. We conclude that land regularisation remains an important tool to enhance liveable cities and protect long-term public and private interests in land development. In order to achieve this, supportive policy actions are required to support the protection of public interests in land regularisation and harmonise the costs of regularisation.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

Informal

Settlements

Regularisation

Tenure

Security

Public

Interest

Tanzania

The politics of land and housing development in Harare

Lovemore Chipungu and Hangwelani Hope Magidimisha (2020)

In: *Housing in the Aftermath of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe*

Routledge, London

Available at: www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/politics-land-housing-development-harare-lovemore-chipungu-hangwelani-hope-magidimisha/10.4324/9780429344220-11

(paywall)

Decisions concerning urban land and housing development for low-income people are not merely driven by market forces and policy visions, but are a response to an array of complex factors. The level of desperation among the urban poor, coupled with political forces prevailing, are some of the factors that complicate land and housing markets. This chapter argues that housing markets that emerged at the height of the FTLRP for the urban poor were largely driven by the political vision of the ruling political party, with the state playing second fiddle. Although the state, in this context, is perceived as the highest institution with authority, obligations and legitimacy, its efficacy depends on other equally competing forces, such as party politics, which in this chapter, is at the centre of the discourse. This is inevitable in an environment where there are no clear-cut boundaries between the political party in power and the state.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Politics

Land

Housing development

Harare

Understanding competing and conflicting interests for peri-urban land in Ethiopia's era of urbanization

Achamyeleh Gashu Adam (2020)

Environment and Urbanization 32(1): 55–68

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0956247819890215 (free access)

Understanding the competing and conflicting interests in peri-urban land is crucial for informed decisions and well-managed urbanisation. These interests in peri-urban land in Ethiopia are explored from a political economy perspective, using desk review and case study research. The findings show that the state, the private business sector and the local community are the three main sets of players with competing interests in peri-urban land, which has resulted in the rapid conversion of farmland into built-up urban property. The more land is expropriated by government agents, and the more land is developed by developers, the more revenues are collected by the government and the more profit is realised by developers and dealers, but with less opportunity and security for local communities in the peri-urban areas. Therefore, urban spatial expansion and development programmes in urban fringe areas require purposeful intervention of the government in a way that can accommodate the interests of all parties without conflict. [Author's abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Actors

Competing interests

Ethiopia

Landholder

Peri-urban

Urbanisation

The urban land question in Africa: The case of urban land conflicts in the City of Lusaka, 100 years after its founding

Horman Chitonge and Orleans Mfune (2015)

Habitat International 48: 209–218

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0197397515000600 (paywall)

Pressure on urban land is growing in many cities across Africa and the developing world. This is creating various challenges around urban land administration, planning and development. Growing pressure on urban land is manifesting in various ways, including the mounting urban land conflicts. In this paper we look at the urban land question in Lusaka, focusing on urban land conflicts. What we have found in this study is that the reportedly growing invasion of vacant or idle land in Lusaka is a more complex issue, which involves not only the desperate urban poor looking for land to squat on, but also well-resourced groups, who sometimes hire poor people to invade the land on which they later develop residential and commercial properties. We argue in the paper that the prevalence of these conflicts points to the gap in the administration, planning and delivery of land and the accompanying services.
[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban land conflict
Lusaka
Informal settlement
Urban planning
Land invasion

Two states, one city? Conflict and accommodation in land delivery in Kampala, Uganda

Emmanuel Nkurunziza (2006)

International Development Planning Review 28(2): 159–180

Available at: www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/journals/article/49917 (paywall)

Kampala has evolved from the capital of the Buganda kingdom, which pre-dated colonialism, and the establishment of a “twin” settlement adjacent to the original urban centre during the colonial period. This dual legacy has strongly influenced contemporary land development patterns and practices. The paper analyses the social relationships and legal provisions underpinning land tenure and transactions in the Buganda kingdom, those imported from the colonial power, and the complex relationships between them that resulted from colonial policies. It shows how these continue to determine the context and processes of land delivery in the city today. In particular, the paper examines the relationships between the official government structures and processes; the Buganda Land Board; and the actors involved in land delivery in informal settlements. It concludes that these relationships are characterised by both conflict and accommodation, with the result that the land delivery channels through which most prospective owners gain access to plots, while not unproblematic, generally work well to deliver large volumes of reasonably priced land.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Historical analysis

Keywords

Conflict

Accommodation

Land delivery

Kampala

Urban land governance in Dar es Salaam: Actors, processes and ownership documentation

Stina Møldrup, Wolff Amelia Kuch and Joshua Chipman (2018)

IGC Working paper, International Growth Centre

Available at: www.theigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Kuch-et-al-2018-Working-paper.pdf (free access)

Dar es Salaam has the most vibrant land market in Tanzania. As the city expands demographically and geographically, the pertinence of understanding urban land governance processes across the urban zone increases. Despite the increased attention to urbanisation on the African continent, research on issues of land governance in Dar es Salaam remains limited. This report aims to address this perceived knowledge gap. It draws on data from qualitative fieldwork conducted in two of the city's municipalities, Kinondoni and Kigamboni. By directing attention to how land transactions play out on the local level, we get a clearer picture of the processes that are involved in urban land transactions, both statutory and customary, for the vast majority of city residents. The main argument of this report is that the institutional setup that characterises land management in Dar es Salaam is polycentric and opaque, with formal arenas often inaccessible to the average Dar denizen. The opaqueness of the system is caused by a range of factors: the multiplicity of actors asserting authority over urban land, a fundamental lack of communication between land offices across institutions, and an overall inefficiency of the process of formal titling and land planning. At the same time, however, an increasing concern for landowners in the city is obtaining the highest possible level of security of tenure – indeed, our research shows a notable increase in fear of displacement and eviction in Dar es Salaam. This fear can be seen in the context of a wave of recent evictions and displacements due to mega investments in infrastructure. The fear of eviction has prompted a strong incentive to pursue secure tenure in whichever way is deemed attainable – and affordable.

[Extract from the working paper]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

Urban land governance

Actor

Processes

Ownership documentation

Urban transformation and land governance in peri-urban Khartoum: The case of Soba

Griet Steel, Salahedin Abukashawa and Mohamed Osman Hussein (2019)

Journal of Economic and Human Geography 111(1): 45–59

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesq.12372 (open access)

The New Urban Agenda and SDG 11 promote inclusive urban development, but limited empirical knowledge exists on how such global rhetoric plays out on the ground. This paper contributes to the inclusive city debate by focusing on the case of Soba, a peri-urban area at the fringes of the capital of Sudan. Based on an explorative study of secondary material, semi-structured interviews and structured observations, it aims to systematically analyse the dynamics of peri-urban development. Findings show how the rising pressure on land results in commoditisation, (informal) land-use changes and a multitude of other land transformations. The paper concludes that the mismatch of urban land policies has resulted in increasing fragmentation of urban space and socio-spatial discrepancies between those who can afford to buy land or transform it into urban uses and those who cannot. It sheds fresh light on the challenges of the inclusive urban transition agenda.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Urban transformations

Land governance

Spatial segregation

Inclusive cities

Khartoum

Sudan

Idioms of accumulation: Corporate accumulation by dispossession in urban Zimbabwe

Beacon Mbiba (2017)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 41(2): 213–234

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1468-2427.12468 (paywall)

David Harvey's notion of "accumulation by dispossession" has inspired a wide range of studies in different places. But it has hardly registered in the area of urban land grabbing in Africa and what the role of local capital has been in these processes. In this article, I use archival data, field observations and insights from key informant interviews in Harare to examine how the 1990s neoliberalism and the post-1999 Zimbabwe crisis created new opportunities for accumulation of wealth through the irregular and fraudulent transfer of public urban land into private hands, including those of reputable

corporate institutions. I provide a summary of the literature on contemporary land grabbing, raising questions about and providing new insights for a comparative understanding of the transformative role and nature of the state, postcolonial African cities, anti-capitalist struggles, and the status and meaning of planning in different settings.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Accumulation by dispossession

Land grabbing

Local capital

Urban Zimbabwe

Geologising urban political ecology (UPE): The urbanisation of sand in Accra, Ghana

Kate Dawson (2021)

Antipode 53(4): 995–1017

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/anti.12718 (open access)

This paper makes a call for an urban political ecology (UPE) which engages more extensively with Earth's geological formations. As a material at the centre of global urbanisation process, sand is offered as a geological entry point. The paper presents an analysis of the urbanisation of sand, or the ways in which sand is brought into the urban realm, grounding this reading in Accra – a growing city on Ghana's Atlantic coast. Drawing from 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork, the paper charts the socio-natural politics through which sand is first unearthed from the edges of the city – an extractive process otherwise known as “sand winning” in Ghana. By examining the forms of power which govern uneven revenue flows to communities, the displacement of farming groups, the widespread loss of farmland and a contested regime of governance, the analysis exposes the socio-natural politics through which the city's geological baseline is first unearthed.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban political ecology (UPE)

Geological

Sand

Cities

West Africa

Accra

3.2. Housing

The politics of shelter: Understanding outcomes in three African cities

Diana Mitlin (2020)

ESID Working Paper No. 145, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, The University of Manchester

Available at: www.effective-states.org/working-paper-145/ (free access)

This paper analyses the politics of shelter provision in three African cities, focusing on the needs of and provision for the low- and middle-income residents. Housing is a priority for low- and middle-income households. Governments influence multiple facets of land and shelter and affect the shelter options realisable for urban residents. The significance of housing to citizen wellbeing means that housing policy and programming is attractive to politicians seeking popular support. The framework of political settlements is used to structure the analysis. In all three cities, national political elites seek to influence housing outcomes. In the two capital cities, elites use clientelism (backed up by violence) to advantage themselves and secure rents for influential local groups (or factions). Territorial controls are used by elites to influence electoral outcomes, while approaches to housing help to gain legitimacy through strengthening paradigmatic ideas that encapsulate a vision for development. To date, the framework has primarily been applied to the national level. Hence, this application is both novel and a test of the framework's relevance at this spatial scale and with this sectoral focus.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

Shelter

African cities

Sub-national political settlements

Ordering power? The politics of state-led housing delivery under authoritarianism – the case of Luanda, Angola

Sylvia Croese and M Anne Pitcher (2019)

Urban Studies 56(2): 401–418

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0042098017732522 (paywall)

The urban studies literature has extensively analysed the modernist, developmental or neoliberal drivers of urban restructuring in the Global South, but has largely overlooked the ways in which governments, particularly those with authoritarian characteristics, try to reinforce their legitimacy and assert their political authority through the creation of satellite cities and housing developments. From Ethiopia to Singapore, authoritarian regimes have recently provided housing to the middle class and the poor, not only to alleviate housing shortages, or bolster a burgeoning real estate market, but also to

“order power” and buy the loyalty of residents. To evaluate the extent to which authoritarian regimes realise their political objectives through housing provision, we survey nearly 300 poor and middle-class respondents from three new housing projects in Luanda, Angola. Alongside increasing social and spatial differentiation brought about by state policies, we document unintended beneficiaries of state housing and uneven levels of citizen satisfaction. We explain that internal state contradictions, individual agency and market forces have acted together to re-shape the government’s efforts to order power.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Angola

Authoritarian regimes

Housing delivery

Middle class

Urban politics

Urban transformation and the politics of shelter: Understanding Nairobi’s housing markets

Baraka Mwau, Alice Sverdlik and Jack Makau (2020)

IIED Working paper

Available at: pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/10876IIED.pdf (free access)

This working paper presents findings and recommendations from research on access to shelter and services in Nairobi, Kenya. It is part of a three-city study in East Africa also covering Mogadishu, Somalia and Hawassa, Ethiopia. Guided by political economy analysis, the two-year research project investigated why and how city dwellers make certain shelter choices, and generated recommendations to improve access to adequate shelter and basic services for the most vulnerable urban residents.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban transformation

Politics

Shelter

Housing markets

Nairobi

Incremental infrastructures: Material improvisation and social collaboration across postcolonial Accra

Jonathan Silver (2014)

Urban Geography 35(6): 788–804

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02723638.2014.933605 (open access)

Approaching the informal construction and extension of infrastructures through the terrain of what I term “the incremental” opens up new platforms of analysis for postcolonial urban systems. This refers to ad-hoc actions on the part of slum dwellers to connect to energy networks or carve out informal living spaces. I argue that incrementalism is produced and subsequently secured and scaled through material configurations that seek to test and prefigure new forms of infrastructure and accompanying resource flows. I use a case study of energy and housing systems in a low-income neighbourhood in Accra to define and examine these incremental infrastructures. I examine shifts in the Accra energy network as urban dwellers rework connections to flows of electricity. I also consider the material adjustment of housing and the role of cooperation in responding to threats of demolition and displacement. Together, incremental infrastructures and the ways that they are constituted articulate a prefigurative politics in which residents seek to generate access to new infrastructural worlds.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Incremental infrastructures

Improvisation

Post-colonial cities

Prefigurative politics

Accra

DIY verticality: The politics of materiality in Luanda

Claudia Gastrow (2020)

City and Society 32(1): 93–117

Available at: anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ciso.12242 (paywall)

A growing body of work has highlighted the centrality of verticality to the making of contemporary urbanism, pushing scholars to begin conceptualising inequality, politics and planning as multi-scalar in nature. This paper builds off these interventions to argue that verticality should be understood as a fragile and unstable achievement, a fragility heightened when the oft taken-for-granted workings of the state and private sector, which enable the appearance of verticality as a seamless achievement, fail. Drawing on research conducted in Luanda, Angola, this paper explores how residents,

planners and real estate developers discuss the difficulties of maintaining the experience, materiality and imaginations of verticality, as embodied in the architectural form of the high-rise. The paper shows that in the context of ongoing urban decay and the seeming abnegation of most state responsibility for provision, urban residents are forced to engage in the production of a DIY verticality – constantly patching and repairing buildings to keep them viable, actions which in turn pull them into relationships of privatised belonging with the city. As such, the paper argues that the material politics of the high-rise in Luanda both highlights the fragility at the heart of verticality as well as the shifting forms of privatised belonging immanent to this fragility. [Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Angola

Materiality

Verticality

High-rise

Urban

3.3. Urban (re)development

Urban fortunes and skeleton cityscapes: Real estate and late urbanization in Kigali and Addis Ababa

Tom Goodfellow (2017)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 41(5): 786–803

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.12550 (paywall)

In many parts of Africa, societies that remain primarily rural are experiencing accelerated urban growth and highly visible booms in property development. In the absence of significant industrialisation, investment is pouring directly into what Lefebvre and Harvey characterised as the “secondary circuit” of capital. Debates about the drivers of investment in real estate are longstanding in relation to the global North, but have given little consideration to low-income and late-urbanising countries in Africa. Yet such contexts offer important opportunities to reflect on existing theory. Focusing on Kigali and Addis Ababa (both transformed virtually beyond recognition over the past two decades), this article explores the drivers and consequences of investment in urban real estate in countries striving to structurally transform their economies. It argues that a range of formal and informal incentives and constraints have led to high-end real estate being viewed as the “safest bet” for those with resources to invest, even where demand is limited and governments are promoting other kinds of investment. While some people are reaping urban fortunes in largely untaxed rents, much of the construction is purely speculative, creating landscapes of unused and underused high-end properties, in contexts where investment is desperately needed elsewhere.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

Urban fortunes

Skeleton cityscape

Real estate

Late urbanisation

Accumulation by urban dispossession: Struggle over urban space in Accra, Ghana

Tom Gillespie (2016)

Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 41(1): 66–77

Available at: [rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tran.12105](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tran.12105) (open access)

This article draws on original empirical research in Accra, Ghana, to explore the particular dynamics that contemporary processes of class-based dispossession assume at the urban scale, posing the concept of “accumulation by urban dispossession”. It responds to recent calls to shift the focus of urban theory from North to South and demonstrates how widely used concepts must be interrogated and reworked as they travel from place to place. Accra is home to a large informal proletariat that is excluded from formal wage labour and housing markets and therefore has to create urban commons in order to reproduce itself. Since these commons place limits on capital's ability to valorise the urban fabric, state-led accumulation by urban dispossession is a strategic response that employs a range of physical-legal and discursive mechanisms to overcome these limits through the enclosure of the urban commons and the expulsion of the informal poor. This argument problematises Harvey's capital centric theory of accumulation by dispossession, which treats enclosure as a fix for capital's inherent crisis tendencies. Furthermore, it demonstrates that primitive accumulation in this context differs from the classic form described by Marx, on the grounds that it is based on the expulsion of the dispossessed rather than their incorporation into the capital relation as labour power.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Ghana

Urban scale

Squatting

Informality

Accumulation by dispossession

Commons

New city visions and the politics of redevelopment in Dar es Salaam

Ilda Lindell, Jennifer Norstrom and Andrew Byerley (2016)

NAI Working paper 2016: 1, Nordic Africa Institute

Available at: www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1070397/FULLTEXT01.pdf (free access)

In the midst of widespread urban deprivation, African governments increasingly give priority to large-scale ultra-modern urban projects, intended to increase national income and propel their urban settlements onto the global stage of “world-class” cities. However, such projects are often in tension with the realities of local residents. This study explores one such initiative, a redevelopment project, the Kigamboni New City, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It discusses the vision and multiple rationalities underpinning the project, as well as the tensions that the plans gave rise to, as residents in the area were to be resettled or displaced to make way for the New City. It shows that the urban vision underlying the New City project took shape without taking the different realities and desires of the local residents of Kigamboni into consideration. The study discusses how residents perceived and acted upon the redevelopment plans. A local organisation claiming to represent the people of Kigamboni was mainly concerned with issues of compensation and the particular interests of landowners, and seemed to marginalise women and the concerns of tenants. The difficulties in implementing the futuristic plans finally brought them to a standstill, leaving the remaining residents in a state of uncertainty about the future. The paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork, including interviews with urban planners and local residents, as well as analysis of urban plans and other relevant documents.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Fieldwork

Case study

Keywords

Redevelopment

New city

Politics

Dar es Salaam

Bulldozers, homes and highways: Nairobi and the right to the city

Ambreena Manji (2015)

Review of African Political Economy 42(144): 206–224

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03056244.2014.988698 (paywall)

In Kenya, road building, widely viewed as an “unqualified human good”, is closely linked to an “Africa Rising” narrative. In this paper, the author argues that road building is an attempt to assert political authority derived from a longstanding developmentalist impulse, one in which private accumulation and spectacular public works go hand in hand. In light of massive infrastructural transformations, the author develops a

conceptualisation of the right to the city: what is needed is a radical understanding of the city and its potentialities that wrests control of the idea away from a bureaucratic vision, and imbues it instead with collective meaning.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Roads

Infrastructure

Slums

Evictions

Satrose Ayuma case

Kenya

Cement citizens: Housing, demolition and political belonging in Luanda, Angola

Claudia Gastrow (2017)

Citizenship Studies 21(2): 224–239

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13621025.2017.1279795 (paywall)

Slum demolition in the name of urban renewal is a common practice in contemporary African cities. Many organisations have tracked the rights violations that demolitions entail. What has been overlooked, however, is the political significance of slums, which, this paper argues, produce their own imaginations of “good urbanism” becoming critical sites for the imagining of urban political belonging. Exploring the case of urban redevelopment and slum demolition in Luanda, Angola, this paper argues that in this megacity, quotidian notions of citizenship are mediated through the material and aesthetic worlds of slum housing construction, more specifically the cement-block house. It draws on theories that understand citizenship and belonging not simply as juridical categories but more substantively produced through shared imaginations and symbolic worlds. This paper shows that urban politics needs to be understood as mediated through deeply material struggles over emplacement and incorporation that hinge on competing normative visions of the urban.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Citizenship

Materiality

Urbanism

Slums

Luanda

Urban layers of political rupture: The “new” politics of Addis Ababa’s megaprojects

Biruk Terrefe (2020)

Journal of Eastern African Studies 14(3): 375–395

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2020.1774705 (paywall)

From the Derg’s restoration of Meskel Square for its military parades and Meles Zenawi’s Light-Rail Transit (LRT) and condominium social housing projects to Abiy Ahmed’s high-end luxury real estate and urban tourism schemes, megaprojects have collapsed Ethiopia’s political history into an urban bricolage of shifting ideologies and new priorities. At this critical juncture, where questions of political rupture and continuity become salient, this paper examines what we can learn about Ethiopia’s political dynamics through its latest urban megaprojects. Drawing on “*LaGare*” and “*Beautifying Sheger*” as case studies, this article argues that there is a new urban aesthetic emerging in Addis Ababa targeting domestic elites, the Ethiopian diaspora and tourists. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s Gulf-emulated luxury real estate projects and major riverside renewal schemes are intended to generate revenue through increased land values and urban tourism. At the same time, issues around inclusive consultation with local stakeholders, the lack of coordination with the relevant bureaucracies and the highly centralised decision-making process are reminiscent of the modus operandi of previous Ethiopian regimes. These urban megaprojects are useful analytical lenses to disentangle political rupture from operational continuity.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Ethiopia

Prosperity party

Cities

Infrastructure

Urbanisation

Enclaving: Spatial detachment as an aesthetics of imagination in an urban sub-Saharan African context

Morten Nielsen, Jason Sumich and Bjørn Bertelsen (2021)

Urban Studies 58(5): 881–902

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0042098020916095 (paywall)

While detachment and separation continue to be central to urban development across the globe, in several sub-Saharan African cities they have acquired a particular form of acute social and political efficacy. In many European and American cities, the making of fortified enclosures is considered to be an effect of an endemic fear of societal dissolution, and a growing number of sub-Saharan African cities are, seemingly,

affected by a similar sociopolitical and economic dynamic. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, the spatial lines of separation that isolate the affluent few from surrounding urban spaces follow both a much wider and less coordinated meshwork of social divisions and political fissures, and draw on a deeper sociocultural, economic and historical repertoire. In this article, we trace the contours of enclaving as a critical urban driver, which is rapidly changing the social and physical fabric of cities across the sub-Saharan continent. Rather than considering enclaving simply as a physical manifestation of dominance and privilege, however, we consider it as an “aesthetics of imagination” that migrates through the cities and thereby weaves together otherwise dissimilar and distinct social practices and spaces, political desires and economic aspirations.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Aesthetics of imagination

Enclaving

Maputo

Migrating spaces

Mozambique

Sub-Saharan Africa

Urban development

Urban theory

3.4. Sanitation

“Toilet wars”: Urban sanitation services and the politics of public–private partnerships in Ghana

Joseph Ayee and Richard Crook (2003)

Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, Sussex

Available at: <http://www2.ids.ac.uk/gdr/cfs/pdfs/wp213.pdf> (free access)

There is a continuing debate over the value of public–private partnerships in providing public services in poor urban areas. Many policymakers in the developing countries have been persuaded that the main problem with established direct public service provision lies in principal-agent problems, that is, the alleged lack of incentive for regularly employed public servants to provide a good service. They have therefore sought to involve local communities, citizens and the private sector more directly in the management of services. This paper examines the impact of the new forms of partnership between the public authorities and private/citizen-based organisations on urban environmental sanitation in the two largest cities of Ghana – Accra and Kumasi. It traces the history of public toilet policies in the two cities and analyses the factors that contributed to their relative failure in poor neighbourhoods. Toilets consistently have been poorly managed and have been the site of local political conflicts – toilet wars –

despite efforts at franchising them and involving communities in their management. This is attributable to the politics of patronage at the urban level, the relationship between city government patronage and community-level groups, and the failure of regulation. Public–private partnerships have not worked. The provision of reasonable sanitation facilities may require: full public provision of basic infrastructure; transparent, independent and rigorous regulation of any contracts for service provision given to non-state agencies; and the enforcement of “conflict of interest” laws applying to elected local representatives.

[Authors’ summary]

Method

Case study

Keyword

Toilet wars

Urban sanitation services

Politics

Public–private partnership

The poolitical city: “Seeing sanitation” and making the urban political in Cape Town

Colin McFarlane and Jonathan Silver (2016)

Antipode 49(1): 125–148

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/anti.12264 (paywall)

In an urbanising world, the inequalities of infrastructure are increasingly politicised in ways that reconstitute the urban political. A key site here is the politicisation of human waste. The centrality of sanitation to urban life means that its politicisation is always more than just service delivery. It is vital to the production of the urban political itself. The ways in which sanitation is seen by different actors is a basis for understanding its relation to the political. We chart Cape Town’s contemporary sanitation syndrome, its condition of crisis, and the remarkable politicisation of toilets and human waste in the city’s townships and informal settlements in recent years. We identify four tactics – poolitical tactics – that politicise not just sanitation but Cape Town itself: poo protests, auditing, sabotage, and blockages. We evaluate these tactics, consider what is at stake, and chart possibilities for a more just urban future.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban politics

Sanitation

Social movements

Cape Town

Garbage Citizenship: Vital Infrastructures of Labor in Dakar, Senegal

Rosalind Fredericks (2018)

Duke University Press, Durham, NC

Available at: www.dukeupress.edu/garbage-citizenship

Over the last 25 years, garbage infrastructure in Dakar, Senegal, has taken centre stage in the struggles over government, the value of labour, and the dignity of the working poor. Through strikes and public dumping, Dakar's streets have been periodically inundated with household garbage as the city's trash collectors and ordinary residents protest urban austerity. Often drawing on discourses of Islamic piety, garbage activists have provided a powerful language to critique a neoliberal mode of governing-through-disposability and assert rights to fair labour. In *Garbage Citizenship*, Rosalind Fredericks traces Dakar's volatile trash politics to recalibrate how we understand urban infrastructure by emphasising its material, social and affective elements. She shows how labour is a key component of infrastructural systems and how Dakar's residents use infrastructures as a vital tool for forging collective identities and mobilising political action. Fleshing out the materiality of trash and degraded labour, Fredericks illuminates the myriad ways waste can be a potent tool of urban control and rebellion.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Citizenship

Garbage activists

Trash collectors

Senegal

Maintenance space: The political authority of garbage in Kampala, Uganda

Jacob Doherty (2019)

Current Anthropology 60(1): 24–46Available at: www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/701514 (paywall)

In the name of cleaning up Kampala's political institutions and public space, a new municipal body, the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), was established in 2010, replacing an elected city council with a presidentially appointed executive director. To legitimise its highly contested and explicitly antipolitical authority, the KCCA made garbage collection and beautification its top priority, promising to deliver routine urban repair and mundane maintenance work, in exchange for suspending the norms of electoral democracy in Uganda's capital city. This article argues that the exceptional space of the repair site is paradigmatic of municipal power over the city as a whole. Based on an ethnography of municipal waste management infrastructure and an analysis of the KCCA's visual account of itself, it elaborates the concept of

maintenance space to theorise how the entanglement of sovereign and governmental power produces the city as a particular kind of territory. Because the work of maintenance and repair is continuous and ongoing, maintenance space endures. Far from a short-lived inconvenience, its exception becomes the foundational norm of technocratic authority. Not limited to Kampala, the enduring exception of maintenance space, I conclude, identifies a widespread mode of urban spatial production and depoliticisation.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Maintenance space

Political authority

Garbage

Kampala

Public things, excremental politics, and the infrastructure of bare life in Ghana's city of Tema

Brenda Chalfin (2014)

American Ethnologist 41(1): 92–109

Available at: anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/amet.12062

(paywall)

In Ghana's planned city of Tema, public toilets and sewerage systems are a formative terrain of urban political praxis, giving tangible form to what Henri Lefebvre calls "the right to the city". Revealing the political potentials and determinations of both waste and municipal infrastructure, excreta and the systems devised to contain and channel them serve as *res publicae*, or "public things". At the same time, they embody the inequities of bare life and biopolitical proscription in Tema's urban margins, waste management arrangements underwrite collective outlooks and entitlements and wrest a space for urban existence outside the grasp of state bureaucracies and political elites.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Africa

Ghana

Urban

Infrastructure

Sanitation

Public sphere

Bare life
Toilet

3.5. Transport

Drive left, look right: The political economy of urban transport in Ghana

Franklin Obeng-Odoom (2009)

International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development 1(1–2): 33–48

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19463130903561475 (free access)

Car usage in Ghana is growing at an alarming rate. Logically, a growth in total number of cars must be because either (a) population is increasing or (b) car ownership per capita is rising, or both. However, these do not sufficiently explain the increasing car population in Ghana. The article argues that the high demand for mobility in the country is an intrinsic part of the political economic track on which Ghana has been travelling since the mid-1980s. This demand is created by, and is in turn stimulated by, the accumulation of capital through economic liberalisation and imperial town planning laws that separate home from work. The result is manifest in human lives lost, environmental conditions worsened and property damaged. The article recommends alternative ways of improving urban transportation in Ghana.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Ghana
Cities
Transport
Sustainability
Political economy

The political economy of an urban megaproject: The bus rapid transit project in Tanzania

Matteo Rizzo (2015)

African Affairs 114(455): 249–270

Available at: academic.oup.com/afraf/article/114/455/249/1754621 (paywall)

This article analyses the political economy of the bus rapid transit project implemented in Dar es Salaam between 2002 and 2014. It discusses the recent rapid growth of bus rapid transit systems and the vested interests of the actors promoting them as a “win-win” solution to tackle the crisis of public transport in developing countries. The article discredits such “win-win” narratives by showing what some Tanzanian actors stood to lose from the implementation of the Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit scheme and their capacity to resist the project. It analyses tensions over the inclusion of the current public transport workforce, employment destruction, displacement of current paratransit

operators, compensation, and the affordability of the new service. The article argues that slow implementation of the transport system was rooted in the tepid commitment to the project by the Tanzanian government. In turn, this lack of political will can be explained by domestic politics, and in particular the government's attempt to respond to the priorities of the World Bank without alienating local actors, some of whom wield considerable electoral power.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Political economy

Urban megaproject

Bus rapid transit system

Dar es Salaam

Tanzania

The Political Economy of Public Transport in Greater Kampala: Movers, Spoilers and Prospects for Reform

Tom Goodfellow and Paul Isolo Mukwaya (2021)

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Uganda

Available at: library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/uganda/17870-20211019.pdf (free access)

In the context of current efforts to develop a governance framework for the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area (GKMA), this report offers an analysis of the interacting challenges relevant to the reform of public transport in the GKMA. The report brings together the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders to document the main “movers” in the contemporary urban public transport scene in the GKMA, and highlights 15 specific challenges, framed as “spoilers” to the progress of effective and inclusive transport reform. It situates this analysis against the historical evolution of public transport in Kampala from colonial times to the present day. This helps to contextualise the political economy analysis in the report, tracing how vested interests and the relationships between key stakeholders have evolved over time.

[Extract from authors' executive summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Public transport

Greater Kampala

Movers

Spoilers

Reform

3.6. Market trading

Contestations for urban space: Informality and institutions of disenfranchisement in Zimbabwe – the case of Masvingo City

Chigwenya Average (2020)

Geojournal 85: 1277–1289

Available at: link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10708-019-10022-4.pdf (free access)

Informality has been viewed as the seedbed for economic development, especially in the cities of the Global South, and many cities have been trying to integrate this sector for economic development. The sector has been seen as the option for economic development in cities of the Global South in the face of dwindling resources for economic development. However, the development and growth of informal activities in some of these cities have been stunted by institutional reforms that have taken so long to accommodate such activities. Most of the cities have acknowledged the need to integrate informality in their economies but they have remained illusioned by the neo-liberal urbanisation policies that have kept the informal activities on the periphery of the development agenda. As a result, the role of informal sector in economic development in cities of the Global South has not been fully realised. The study was taken to examine the institutional impediments in the growth of informal activities in the city of Masvingo, to see how the laws and policies of the city have been applied for the integration of informal sector in the mainstream economy. The research found out that there are institutionalised systems that disenfranchise the informal sector in the city of Masvingo. These institutions include the planning approach and the way the city has been practising their planning. These two institutions have been the chief disenfranchising instruments that have denied the people in the informal sector their right to the city. The research utilised a mixed methods approach to the inquiry, where both qualitative and quantitative data were used. The research found that there is space for informal integration in the city of Masvingo, but the existing regulatory framework is stifling the growth and development of the informal sector in the city of Masvingo. There is therefore need for the city to be flexible enough to embrace the realities of the city, because informality is really the new form of urbanisation in cities of the Global South.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Informality

Rights to the city

Inclusivity

Economic growth

Zimbabwe

The politics of order in informal markets: Evidence from Lagos

Shelby Grossman (2020)

World Politics 72(1): 47–79Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/world-politics/article/politics-of-order-in-informal-markets-evidence-from-lagos/B3234307F029AFE5A4FAA2CD0F615FD2

(paywall)

Property rights are important for economic exchange, but in many parts of the world, they are not publicly guaranteed. Private market associations can fill this gap by providing an institutional structure to enforce agreements, but with this power comes the ability to extort from group members. Under what circumstances do private associations provide a stable environment for economic activity? The author uses survey data collected from 1,179 randomly sampled traders across 199 markets in Lagos, Nigeria, and finds that markets maintain institutions to support trade not in the absence of government, but rather in response to active government interference. The author argues that associations develop protrade policies when threatened by politicians they perceive to be predatory and when the organisations can respond with threats of their own. The latter is easier when traders are not competing with one another. To maintain this balance of power, an association will not extort; it needs trader support to maintain the credibility of its threats to mobilise against predatory politicians.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Politics

Order

Informal markets

Lagos

Urban governance in Ghana: The participation of traders in the redevelopment of Kotokuraba Market in Cape Coast

Lewis Abedi Asante (2020)

African Geographical Review 39(4): 361–378Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19376812.2020.1726193 (open access)

This article contributes to the discourse of participatory urban governance through a qualitative analysis of the redevelopment of a market infrastructure in Cape Coast, Ghana. It demonstrates that problems arise with the quantity, distance and size of trading spaces when traders are not made to participate at the construction phase of market redevelopment. The responses of the municipal authorities and the market traders in Cape Coast to these problems are discussed. The wider implication of the

findings of this study is that citizens should be engaged from the conception through planning to the implementation of urban regeneration.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban governance

Market redevelopment

Participation

Kotokuraba Market

Cape Coast

Ghana

3.7. Urban infrastructure

“Where there is fire, there is politics”: Ungovernability and material life in urban South Africa

Kerry Ryan Chance (2015)

Cultural Anthropology 30(3): 394–423

Available at: journal.culanth.org/index.php/ca/article/view/ca30.3.03 (open access)

This article combines theories of liberal governance, material life, and popular politics to examine the unruly force of fire in state–citizen struggles. Tracking interactions between state agents and activist networks during South Africa's celebrated democratic transition, I analyse how the urban poor leverage the material properties of fire to secure techno-institutional claims to energy infrastructure, and more broadly to political inclusion and economic redistribution. I highlight how fire, as a social and historical as well as a chemical process, becomes a staging ground for the promise and endangerment of infrastructure. Approaching fire as intertwined with power, I argue, illuminates how those living on the margins of the city come to inhabit political roles that transform economic relationships in the context of liberalism.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Democracy

Energy

Material life

Race

Urban poverty

Making a smart city for the smart grid? The urban material politics of actualising smart electricity networks

Harriet Bulkeley, Pauline M McGuirk and Robyn Dowling (2016)

Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space 48(9): 1709–1726

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0308518X16648152 (paywall)

In a growing debate about the smart city, considerations of the ways in which urban infrastructures and their materialities are being reconfigured and contested remain in the shadows of analyses which have been primarily concerned with the management and flow of digitalisation and big data in pursuit of new logics for economic growth. In this paper, we examine the ways in which the “smart city” is being put to work for different ends and through different means. We argue that the co-constitution of the urban as a site for carbon governance and a place where smart energy systems are developed is leading to novel forms of governmental intervention operating at the conjunction of the grid and the city. We seek to move beyond examining the rationales and discourses of such interventions to engage with the ways in which they are actualised in and through particular urban conditions in order to draw attention to their material politics. In so doing, we argue that the urban is not a mere backdrop to transitions in electricity provision and use but central to its politics, while electricity is also critical to the ways in which we should understand the politics of urbanism.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Fieldwork

Keywords

Smart grid

Urban energy governance

Urban materiality

Actualisation

Material politics

Nairobi in the Making: Landscapes of Time and Urban Belonging

Constance Smith (2019)

Boydell and Brewer, Martlesham, UK

Available at: boydellandbrewer.com/9781847012333/nairobi-in-the-making/

What does it mean to make a life in an African city today? How do ordinary Africans, surrounded by collapsing urban infrastructures and amid fantastical promises of hypermodern, globalised futures, try to ensure a place for themselves in the city's future? Exploring the relationship between the remains of empire and the global city, and themes of urban belonging and exclusion, housing and security, Constance Smith examines the making and remaking of one of Africa's most fragmented, vibrant cities. Nairobi is on the cusp of radical urban change. As in other capital cities across Africa, the Kenyan government has launched “Vision 2030”, an urban megaproject that envisions the capital as a “world class metropolis”, a spectacular new node in a

network of global cities. Yet as a city born of British colonialism, Nairobi also live amongst the dilapidated vestiges of imperial urban planning; spaces designed to regulate urban subjects. Based on extensive ethnographic research in a dilapidated, colonial-era public housing project built as a model urban neighbourhood, but which is now slated for demolition, Smith explores how projects of self-making and city-making are entwined. She traces how it is through residents' everyday lives – in the mundane, incremental work of home maintenance, in the accumulation of stories about the past, in ordinary people's aspirations for the future – that urban landscapes are formed, imaginatively, materially and unpredictably, across time. Nairobi emerges as a place of pathways and plans, obstructions and aspirations, residues and endurances, that inflect the way that ordinary people produce the city, generating practices of history making, ideas about urban belonging and attempts to refashion "Vision 2030" into a future more meaningful and inclusive to ordinary city dwellers.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Fieldwork

Case study

Keywords

Nairobi

Time

Urban belonging

Urban neighbourhood

Aesthetic dissent: Urban redevelopment and political belonging in Luanda, Angola

Claudia Gastrow (2017)

Antipode 49(2): 377–396

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/anti.12276 (paywall)

Over the previous decade, African cities experienced a wave of frenzied construction driven by imaginations of world-city status. While these projects provoked new discussions about African urbanism, the literature on them has focused more on the paperwork of planning than actual urban experiences. This article addresses this lacuna by investigating residents' reactions to the post-conflict building boom in Luanda, Angola. I show that Luandans held highly ambivalent orientations towards the emerging city. Their views were shaped by suspicions about pacts between Angolan elites and international capital that recapitulated longstanding tensions over national belonging. These concerns were voiced via discussions of the very aesthetics of the new city. Buildings became catalysts for expressions of dissent that put into question the very project of state-driven worlding. The paper therefore argues that the politics of aesthetics are central to grasping the contested understandings of urbanism currently emerging in various African cities.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Fieldwork
Case study

Keywords

African cities
Luanda
Aesthetics
Architecture
Political belonging

4. Governing African cities

This section discusses topics such as urban governance; urban fiscal politics; the role of traditional authorities in urban governance; the politics of planning; and the politics of urban service delivery and poverty reduction.

4.1. Urban governance

Urban governance in African cities has evolved and transformed since colonial times, whilst still bearing the traces of this era. In a recent study, Resnick (2021) argues that the key features of urban governance in Africa vary vertically, horizontally and between municipal governments and societal actors, and hence have produced different outcomes. Guma (2016) demonstrates this variation in his analysis of the governance and politics of urban space in Kampala, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. For Obeng-Odoom (2017), the failure of urban governance in Africa is rooted in the disjuncture between urban governance in theory and actually existing urban governance, something that can only be resolved through major structural and institutional change. This kind of change is perhaps what Lagos has experienced in the recent past: de Gramont (2015) found that electoral pressures coupled with elite ambition to construct an orderly and prosperous megacity has driven massive fiscal and infrastructural improvements in the city, thereby transforming the city's image from one associated with urban disorder to being viewed as a model of effective urban governance in Africa.

The politics of urban governance in sub-Saharan Africa

Danielle Resnick (2021)

Regional and Federal Studies 31(1): 139–161

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13597566.2020.1774371 (paywall)

A number of international development initiatives increasingly give recognition and authority to city governments in sub-Saharan Africa. However, key features of urban governance in Africa vary substantively, which can affect the viability of achieving such development goals. This paper focuses on how these features vary vertically (that is, across levels of government), horizontally (that is, across local governments), and between local governments and societal actors. In doing so, it highlights many of the

political issues that come to the fore across countries with different types of decentralisation structures and party systems. While urban governance scholarship traditionally has been the domain of those focused on developed countries, the paper encourages more analysis in the African context, given the range of service delivery issues likely to confront the region as it transitions to become a majority urban in the coming decades.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Literature review

Keywords

Africa

Cities

Decentralisation

Governance

Political economy

Urbanisation

The politics of governing African urban spaces

Edgar Pieterse (2018)

International Development Policy 10: 26–52

Available at: journals.openedition.org/poldev/2626 (open access)

Drawing on the author's direct experiences in urban policy formulation processes on various scales, this article makes a case for a more intimate reading and account of macro policy shifts that may hold the potential to advance transformative politics on the national and the urban scale. It argues that new policy concepts and frameworks can advance a more focused politics based on an analysis of the nature and terms of infrastructure investments and considers whether such investments are advancing a more inclusive, labour-intensive and sustainable pattern of development in African cities and towns. The chapter asserts that urban governance policy discourses are now connecting urban investments and regulation with macroeconomic imperatives, which could lead to a greater awareness of urban governance within centres of state power. Structurally the chapter identifies examples of policy artefacts on the global, pan-African and national scales to demonstrate the shared potential for a new kind of transformative politics. Thereafter, the chapter sets out a potential methodological register to track, analyse and engage these processes on the urban scale in order to arrive at a propositional sensibility with regard to governing diverse spaces. It calls for a form of research and analysis that is not merely evaluative, after the fact, but rather positioned in the processes of unfolding. There are not enough of these kinds of scholarly accounts that can enrich and deepen debates about the politics and practice of multi-scalar urban governance reform in diverse African settings.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Literature review

Keywords

Urban politics

African cities

Urban governance

Infrastructure investments

African urban futures

Julia Bello-Schünemann and Ciara Aucoin (2016)

African Futures Paper 20, Institute of Security Studies

Available at: media.africaportal.org/documents/af20.pdf (free access)

Africa's future is urban, as cities and towns will increasingly shape how people live on the continent. By 2030 Africa will host six of the world's 41 megacities. The urban transition has the potential to accelerate economic and social development, but the structural hurdles are huge. Africa's urban population boom is happening in a context of slow structural transformation, poverty, inequality and urban violence. For Africa to seize the opportunity to build sustainable urban futures for its population, urban governance needs to improve. Megacities are central to national economic performance and should be at the forefront of any governance agenda.

[Authors' summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Africa

Urban futures

Megacities

Politics and Policies: Governing Cities in Africa

Simon Bekker and Laurent Fourchard (eds.) (2013)

HRSC Press, Cape Town

Available at:

www.researchgate.net/publication/301629318_Governing_Cities_in_Africa_Politics_and_Policies

This book by Simon Bekker and Laurent Fourchard sought to enrich our understanding of the various urbanisation processes in East, West and southern Africa. It is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on party politics and the politics of identity, which argues that party politics is not only fundamental to national politics but also pertinent to our understanding of urban politics. The second part, titled "Urban public policies: Problematizing informality", draws on the lenses of four public policies – housing delivery, street trading, solid waste management and security – to demonstrate that the notion of informality is losing its analytical edge and is becoming a blunt conceptual tool

because the meaning state and foreign agencies assign to it differs significantly from that which the local people understand by it.

[Extract from the book]

Methods

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Party politics

Urban politics

Policies

Informality

Urban governance in Africa today: Reframing, experiences, and lessons

Franklin Obeng-Odoom (2017)

Growth and Change 48(1): 4–21

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/grow.12164 (paywall)

Progress in analysing the instrumental view of governance as an engine for growth, poverty reduction and inclusive development has been held back by the difficulty in framing governance. This essay seeks to address this problem by 1) reframing urban governance 2) evaluating its aims, processes and outcomes, and 3) explaining those outcomes on the basis of which some lessons are teased out. Using examples from Africa and an institutional political economy approach (based on institutional economics, Marxist political economics, Georgist political economics and Polanyian political economy), I show that, overall, while urban economies are growing, both urban poverty and inequality levels have risen substantially. Urban governance has paved the way for new forms of urban development that only benefit the few. Not only are there differences in how urban services and resources are experienced, accessed and controlled but the varieties are also socially differentiated. I argue that the underlying reasons for this disjuncture between “urban governance” in theory and “actually existing urban governance” are 1) difficulties in implementing urban governance theory consistently in practice, 2) problems arising because urban governance theory has been implemented in practice, 3) tensions that would entangle most policies which do not address historical and structural economic issues, 4) restrictive assumptions, and 5) incoherence among the different dimensions of urban governance. To resolve these contradictions, I put the case for major structural and institutional change involving: 1) the re-ordering of the roles of the state, market and society as institutions of change; 2) re-working the relationships that bind together land, labour, capital and the state, and 3) re-organising the channels for keeping the attainment of the ends of urban governance in check.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Urban governance
Africa
Experiences
Lessons
Reframing

The governance and politics of urban space in the postcolonial city: Kampala, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam

Prince Karakire Guma (2016)

Africa Review 8(1): 31–43

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09744053.2015.1089014 (paywall)

With the fading of colonial memory in postcolonial Africa, dramatic changes are emerging and are shaping urban cities in quite significant ways. Urbanisation is exploding. Large numbers of Africans are becoming town dwellers. Informal settlements alike are becoming the norm rather than the exception. Urban challenges have thus become complex, hence the need for an infrastructural rethink to urban governance and development in Africa. The interest for this paper is to explore the governance and politics of urban space in the postcolonial African city. My research question, put in its most general form, asks: what constitutes the governance and politics of urban space in postcolonial African city? By taking three East African cities of Kampala, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam as my main analytical units, I focus on: (1) understanding urban structures and dynamics of urban governance and political frameworks and networks of survival, and (2) exploring realities that shape urban governance within the global and neo-liberal context of postcolonial Africa. I draw upon comparative, qualitative and reflective exploratory research within the realm of socio-anthropological, legal–political and architectural–geographical investigation. The article is hoped to invite further debate on this important phenomenon.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Africa
City
Governance
Politics
Postcoloniality
Urban space

Governing Lagos: Unlocking the politics of reform

Diane de Gramont (2015)

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Available at: carnegieendowment.org/files/governing_lagos.pdf (free access)

In 15 years, Lagos has gone from being a symbol of urban disorder to a widely cited example of effective African governance. The Lagos State government has succeeded in multiplying its tax revenues and using these resources to restore basic infrastructure and expand public services and law enforcement. Extensive field research indicates that reform commitment in Lagos was driven by electoral pressures as well as elite ambitions to construct an orderly and prosperous megacity.

[Author's summary]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban governance

Politics

Reform

Lagos

Managing a mega-city: Learning the lessons from Lagos

Nic Cheeseman and Diane de Gramont (2017)

Oxford Review of Economic Policy 33(3): 457–477

Available at: academic.oup.com/oxrep/article-abstract/33/3/457/3926160 (paywall)

Africa is urbanising at a remarkable rate, generating a host of new challenges for those in charge of its towns and cities. This paper assesses the potential for local and regional governments to implement innovative solutions to the demands of managing urban spaces through a case study of the much talked about case of Lagos state in Nigeria. Drawing on over 100 elite interviews and a representative panel survey of Lagosians, we explain how political leaders at the sub-national level were able to embark on a process of impressive state-building and institutional transformation. More specifically, the article develops a comparative analysis of the tax and transport sectors to identify the conditions required for sub-national innovation, demonstrating how federal democracy, strong economic potential, political competition, the ability to mobilise public support, and elite commitment to build a functional mega-city combined to enable state-level politicians to overcome a number of potential barriers to reform. While this suggests that empowering regional and local actors can facilitate more responsive and effective government, we argue that the necessary conditions for sub-national state-building are rare and can only be found in a small number of African states. As a result, the lessons from Lagos cannot easily be applied elsewhere.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Nigeria

Development
Taxation
State building
Urbanisation
Social contract

From protection to repression: The politics of street vending in Kampala

Graeme Young (2017)

Journal of Eastern African Studies 11(4): 714–733

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2017.1378448 (paywall)

The political evolution of Kampala under the National Resistance Movement (NRM) has profoundly affected the fortunes of the city's street vendors. This article examines the effects of institutional changes brought about by the NRM's efforts to monopolise power in the city, arguing that the twin forces of democratisation and decentralisation allowed street vending to flourish, while the reversal of these processes precipitated its dramatic decline. Democratisation and decentralisation initiated a period of intense political competition, in which vendors could trade political support for protection from politicians who were more interested in political survival than the implementation of policy. This ability was lost when the central government introduced a new city government that shifted the balance of power from elected politicians to appointed technocrats. The new city government has since sought legitimacy through development and urban management initiatives that aim to transform Kampala into a supposedly modern, well-organised city. In doing so, it has sought to eradicate street vending, a practice it sees as the antithesis of and an obstacle to its ambitions. Lacking the channels for political influence that they previously enjoyed, street vendors have been forced to face the full brunt of government repression.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Street vending
Informal economy
Kampala
Democratisation
Decentralisation
Urban development

Local governance in South Sudan: Overview

Iffat Idris (2017)

K4D Helpdesk Report, GSDRC, University of Birmingham

Available at: gsdrc.org/publications/local-governance-in-south-sudan-overview/ (free access)

The system of local governance in South Sudan (independent since 2011) comprises both formal state structures and traditional authorities. The three-tier local government structure faces significant capacity and resource constraints – manifested in weak effectiveness – which are being exacerbated by the government's decision to increase the number of states in South Sudan from ten to 32. Chiefs and similar traditional authorities were involved in local administration from colonial times, predominantly in tax collection and conflict resolution. But traditional authorities have been considerably undermined by the previous civil war (1983–2005), and there is lack of precise definition about the role of chiefs in the local government system. The literature does not talk about the impact of the current civil war (since 2013, ongoing) on local governance. Overall, South Sudan presents a mixed and very diverse picture of local governance – one which is failing to meet people's needs.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Local governance

South Sudan

Decentralization and the Politics of Urban Development in West Africa

Dickson Eyoh and Richard Stren (eds.) (2007)

Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Washington, DC

Available at: www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/decentralization-and-the-politics-urban-development-west-africa (free access)

The theme of decentralisation has been part of the development discourse for some time, its application to local and, especially, urban policy issues has been largely unexplored – both in the scholarly literature and in terms of more practical implications. Until now, in spite of a very well-documented analysis of the political economy of Africa from a variety of points of view, overviews of African politics rarely make any mention of local politics, let alone urban governance. And although there are a number of good recent studies that focus on decentralisation and local governance in Africa, the attention given to urban governance has tended to be minimal. Although there are some outstanding exceptions to the facile generalisation that excellent urban governance studies are lacking for Africa, few are done by political economists, and none is regional in scope. But as the participation in our workshop indicated, the subject matter of local urban development evokes considerable interest and attention in Africa. We hope that this volume will help to generate even more attention to a subject – urban governance in a context of decentralisation – that has become a central issue of development today.

[Extract from the introduction of the book]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

Decentralisation
 Politics
 Urban development
 West Africa
 Ghana
 Nigeria
 Chad
 Cameroun
 Senegal

Decentralization is dead, long live decentralization! Capital city reform and political rights in Kampala, Uganda

Christopher D Gore and Nansozi K Muwanga (2013)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 38(6): 2201–2216

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1468-2427.12012 (paywall)

African cities are currently experiencing some of the highest population growth rates in the world. Accompanying this growth is constant and continuing pressure on national and local governments to develop political and institutional structures that respond to the multiple demands this demographic change provokes in relation to service delivery, economic development and social wellbeing. In response to these challenges, national governments are reviewing the political and administrative structures of their capital cities, sometimes recentralising authority. This article examines the reforms to Kampala, capital city of Uganda. The article explains how the national government gradually created the legal conditions necessary to take over the capital city directly, and the political rhetoric and conflict that ensued. We argue that, while Kampala had deep internal problems and fared poorly in service delivery, matters were exacerbated by the national government's historical indifference to the city. Moreover, past service delivery failures offered an easy rationale for recentralising authority. We demonstrate that this recentralisation was a well-planned effort by the central government to regain political control of the capital city. This article illustrates how the national government's recentralisation of authority in Kampala is a significant departure from its longstanding policy of democratic decentralisation.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
 Fieldwork

Keywords

Decentralisation
 Capital city reform
 Political rights
 Kampala

The political economy of Zimbabwean Urban informality since 2000 – A contemporary governance dilemma

Abraham R Matamandaa, Innocent Chirisaa, Munyaradzi A Dzvimbo and Queen L Chinozvinab (2020)

Development Southern Africa 37(4): 694–707

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0376835X.2019.1698410 (paywall)

The article explores the urban informality dilemma in Harare through the lens of a political economy theory. It examines the typologies of urban informality, the influence of political economy on urban informalities, and informs decision-making to address the urban informality dilemma. A qualitative approach was used, where secondary data were collected through document analysis and primary data from interviews with 20 purposively selected key informants. Surveys and in-depth interviews were conducted with 585 individuals engaged in informal activities. It emerged that urban informality in Harare takes on different forms and, aside from the economic crisis, politics played a role in the emergence and proliferation of urban informality. The article provides insight into, and raises awareness with regard to, key areas of concern on how power influences decision-making relating to urban informality. Therefore, the article provides a basis for policy formulation and institutional reforms for effective measures to curb urban informality.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Political economy

Urban informality

Power-based model

Urbanisation

Harare

Quietly chasing Kigali: Young men and the intolerance of informality in Rwanda's capital city

Brandon Finn (2018)

Urban Forum 29(2): 205–218

Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12132-017-9327-y (paywall)

As Rwanda pursues its goals of becoming a middle-income country by 2020, it enacts increasingly intolerant policies towards informal traders – seeking to promote a clean, efficient, contemporary image of itself to the world. In its preoccupation with constructing itself as a modern urban centre, Kigali has become a city that does not cater to the majority of its people. This paper investigates the livelihood practices of young men in Kigali and argues that the city's prescriptive, exclusivist policies are detrimental to the people that are most unable to meet its rigid norms. Arguing for a

more dynamic understanding of Kigali as a post-conflict city, I contend that, since Rwanda's "open moment" after its genocide in 1994, the city's ambitious development goals have been rendered in a way that is both harmful and unrealistic, given the country's current constraints. The work of young men within the informal economy in Kigali is dis-incentivised and criminalised, rather than supported and encouraged. They are chased away from the city's main streets, often towards prisons and "rehabilitation centres". Young people are not able to adequately contest this formation and vision of Kigali, nor can they publicly protest their treatment by the government. These outcomes are exacerbated by their reluctance to face the harsh consequences for doing so, resulting in the proliferation of self-censorship. This paper argues that Rwanda's urban policies are set out of the reach of its youthful population – who, in turn, are forced to "chase" after the city's vision of development.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Informality

Self-censorship

Exclusion

Youth

Disabling governance: Privatisation of city markets and implications for vendors' associations in Kampala, Uganda

Ilda Lindell and Jenny Appelblad (2009)

Habitat International 33(4): 397–404

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0197397508000945

(paywall)

Contemporary international models of governance prescribe the devolution of service provision to a range of non-state actors and the adoption of market-oriented policies. This paper explores the politics that have arisen from changes in the governance framework in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. The focus is on the privatisation of the management of city markets and on the relations between the multiple actors involved – private contractors, vendors' associations, cooperatives and state actors. In particular, the paper looks into the implications of the privatisation process for vendors and their associations. It argues that, while the latter have sometimes adjusted to the changes by turning into cooperative societies or creating their own management firms, increasingly, however, private interests external to the markets are taking over the management functions, sidelining or even repressing, vendors' associations. The general picture is one of weakening associations and endangered possibilities for broad-based organising and interest representation.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Privatisation
Civil society
Informal sector
Associations
Kampala

Changing urban governance in Ghana: The role of resistance practices and activism in Kumasi

Lewis Abedi Asante and Ilse Helbrecht (2019)

Urban Geography 40(10): 1568–1595

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02723638.2019.1631109 (paywall)

This article examines traders' resistance practices in Kumasi, Ghana and their significance for changing urban governance in Africa. Conceptually, we introduce "activism" as a new variable into the present concept of urban governance as decentralisation, entrepreneurialism and democratisation (DED). From an empirical study in Kumasi, Ghana, findings reveal that activism by non-state actors does not only occur at the crucial earlier phases of the urban regeneration process, but extends into the subsequent phases, because urban governance is a continuous process. We demonstrate that activism and a multiplicity of resistance practices are embedded and significant dimensions of everyday urban governance in Africa. This paper argues that the additional dimension – activism – is necessary in rethinking urban governance in Ghana and Africa. This conceptualisation views non-state actors not as resisters of urban governance but as activists whose resistance practices and innovations produce tangible and far-reaching changes in city governance. We learn that non-state actors do not rely on the state to control all aspects of urban governance but invent new practices to secure their socioeconomic interests and provide them with leverage where they have to negotiate with or stand up to authorities. The study shows that successful change in urban governance is a function of the complementary and strategic adoption of contention, subversion and coproduction. When the state perceives that the intervention of other key stakeholders legitimises the grievances of non-state actors, it responds positively.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban regeneration
Urban governance

Activism
Traders
Market infrastructure

Coping with the menace of urban sprawl development through good governance in Maiduguri, Nigeria

IA Abdul-Azeez (2018)

FUTY Journal of the Environment 12(1): 71–90

Available at: www.ajol.info/index.php/fje/article/view/182383 (open access)

The urban environment is increasingly threatened by uncontrolled urban expansion. The majority of low-income groups live in non-formal settlements on the urban fringe, having little access to infrastructure, services and amenities. This has serious implications on public health, quality of life and the natural urban environment. This paper describes the relevance of good governance as an approach to ameliorate the problems of urban sprawl and reviews the development and understanding of illegal status of urban sprawl. Contemporary approaches to cope with sprawl situations were offered and the formation of stakeholders' forum through good governance to participate in decisions of environmental and security importance was recommended as a strategy for solving problems of slum conditions. Most importantly, the paper recommends that a better urban environment could be achieved through all-inclusive decisionmaking, consensus building, review and hearing, awareness building as well as access to sustainable infrastructure. Finally, it concluded that a blueprint to guide and direct growth of the urban settlement is very paramount to curb the menace of urban sprawl in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Review of literature

Keywords

Urban sprawl
Good governance
Sustainable infrastructure

Public–private partnerships in metropolitan government: Perspectives on governance, value for money and the roles of selected stakeholders

Shakespeare Mzikayise Binza (2013)

Development Southern Africa 25(3): 297–315

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03768350802212089 (paywall)

This paper discusses the nature of public–private partnerships (PPPs) and their governance, with specific reference to the types of risks involved and how these are managed. The paper investigates whether there is any regime responsible for providing resources and enforcing contracts and service standards to make metropolitan

governments efficient, effective and economical in designing, managing and exercising control over PPP ventures. In this context, the roles of selected stakeholders are discussed. The basic assumption of this paper is that metropolitan government could improve local economic growth through PPPs when the nature and governance of PPPs and the legalities underpinning them are thoroughly understood.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Public–private partnerships

Metropolitan government

Governance

Value for money

Stakeholders

Urban governance beyond the state: Practices of informal urban regulation in the City of Goma, Eastern DR Congo

Karen Büscher (2012)

Urban Forum 23: 483–499

Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12132-012-9170-0 (paywall)

The city of Goma, situated in the Eastern Congolese borderland, evolved and expanded at the heart of a protracted violent conflict that afflicts the Kivu Region since the early 1990s. In a general context of state decline and profound informalisation, Goma developed itself largely outside the direct scope of the central state, along informal ways of regulation, hybrid modes of governance and fragmented paths of urbanisation. This situation promoted the emergence of parallel power – and regulatory networks and new alliances among urban elites. In urban regulatory practices, the Congolese state is increasingly challenged by other alternative sites of power, such as armed groups, a powerful business elite and an increasing presence of international non-governmental organisations. Justice, security, land allocation, water provision, and so on are all “arranged” by these hybrid institutions. Goma's current reality corresponds to what has been described in recent political scientists' literature as “hybrid governance” or a situation where local power and authority are negotiated between multiple stakeholders. The main argument of this paper is, however, that these alternative modes of urban governance, in which the urban political and socioeconomic space is no longer dominated by a coordinating state structure, are often translated in the form of a strongly contested governance rather than a mere “negotiated” governance. This paper demonstrates that the transformation of urban governance in a context of state failure and violent conflict has turned the city of Goma into a highly fragmented urban space, where power and authority over political, economic and sociospatial resources are being contested between different conflicting forces.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Informality
Hybrid governance
State failure
Violent conflict

An urban twist to politics in Ghana

Franklin Obeng-Odoom (2010)

Habitat International 34(4): 392–399

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0197397509000915
(paywall)

This paper questions the preparedness of Ghanaian politicians for the 2010 urban “explosion” in Ghana. It reveals that urban policy in Ghana is overly focused on curbing the symptoms of urban problems, while leaving the structural causes of the problems intact. Physical beautification of cities and “bright light” ideas have taken precedence over policies that address the political economy of land, poverty and inequality. Although Ghana has a reputation for relatively good governance, this evidence on the limits to urban policies suggests that there are severe limits to the effectiveness of urban policies as a means of meeting social needs and redressing urban inequalities.
[Author’s abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Urban
Policy
Ghana
Poverty
Inequality
Political economy

The political economy analysis of urban governance and management in Malawi

Blessings Chinsinga (2015)

Tilitonse Fund, Lilongwe, Malawi

Available at: www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/PEA-on-Urban-Governance-PV-111215.pdf (free access)

This paper examined urban governance and management in Malawi with respect to two areas: 1) the state of development control, planning and infrastructure development; and 2) the state of community-level governance structures in urban areas, with particular emphasis on modalities for social organisation and capacity for

collective action efforts. The analysis was carried out using the World Bank's Problem Driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis Framework. The framework was preferred because of its ability to shed light on how to shape strategies for operations in ways that range from adjusting them to existing space for change to developing proactive strategies for expanding space for change. This is in line with the underlying objective of any PEA exercise, which is to situate development issues or challenges within an understanding of prevailing political and economic processes in society, specifically the incentives, relationships, distribution and contestation of power between different groups and individuals.

[Extract of author's executive summary]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Political economy

Urban governance

Urban management

Malawi

Governance for Pro-Poor Urban Development

Franklin Obeng-Odoom (2013)

Routledge, London

Available at: www.routledge.com/Governance-for-Pro-Poor-Urban-Development-Lessons-from-Ghana/Obeng-Odoom/p/book/9781138672758

The world development institutions commonly present "urban governance" as an antidote to the so-called "urbanisation of poverty" and "parasitic urbanism" in Africa. *Governance for Pro-Poor Urban Development* is a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the meaning, nature and effects of "urban governance" in theory and in practice, with a focus on Ghana, a country widely regarded as an island of good governance in the sub region. The book illustrates how diverse groups experience urban governance differently and contextualises how this experience has worsened social differentiation in cities. This book will be of great interest to students, teachers and researchers in development studies, and highly relevant to anyone with an interest in urban studies, geography, political economy, sociology and African studies.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Governance

Urban development

Pro-poor

Urban Ghana

4.2. Urban fiscal politics

Urban fiscal politics has provided an increasingly important focus for the literature on urban governance in Africa, with a specific focus on property taxation and participatory budgeting. Studies exploring the difficulties faced in collecting property taxes for urban development have identified a lack of institutional trust and administrative constraints (Fjeldstad et al., 2019), outdated legal frameworks, irregular revaluations of the tax base and a lack of political will (Nyabwengi et al., 2020). Jibao and Prichard (2016) have identified three lessons that African cities struggling with property tax collection can learn from the relative success of a property tax reform programme in Sierra Leone. Bodea and Lebas (2014) emphasise that individuals with a positive experience of public delivery of urban infrastructure and services are more likely to pay property taxes, although those benefiting from community-provided urban infrastructure and services of a better standard than those provided by the state are less likely to pay property tax.

Studies on participatory budgeting in African cities agree that it is usually tokenistic in nature. Marumahoko et al. (2018) argued that participatory budgeting in Kwekwe city is not participatory because it has a top-down orientation and allows for the domination of budgeting by local bureaucrats and elected councillors. Muse (2016) shares a similar concern, finding the participatory budgeting process in Lagos to suffer from a lack of awareness by citizens of what participatory budgeting is about, overdependence on financial handouts from unreliable central governments and a deficit of transparency and accountability. There is very little positive information about the practice of participatory budgeting in African cities, except for Cabannes (2015), who indicates that participatory budgeting improves urban governance and service delivery, whilst doing little to alter existing power relations between city authorities and urban dwellers.

4.2.1. Participatory budgeting in African cities

The impact of participatory budgeting on basic services: Municipal practices and evidence from the field

Yves Cabannes (2015)

Environment and Urbanization 27(1): 257–284

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0956247815572297 (free access)

In 2013, over 1,700 local governments in more than 40 countries were practising participatory budgeting (PB), which entails citizens meeting to agree on priorities for part of the local government budget for their neighbourhood or the city as a whole, and helping to oversee project implementation. This paper reviews PB in 20 cities in different continents, ranging from small urban centres to Chengdu, China, with over 17 million inhabitants, and examines 20,000 recently funded projects worth over US\$ 2 billion. It finds that PB has contributed significantly to improving basic service provision and management, with projects that are usually cheaper and better maintained because of community control and oversight. While in most cases PB improves governance and the delivery of services, it does not often fundamentally change

existing power relations between local governments and citizens. The paper also discusses challenges and solutions for PB's effectiveness and scaling up.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Fieldwork

Case studies

Keywords

Basic services

Budget

Democratic governance

Finance

Innovations

Participatory budgeting

New wine in an old wineskin? Sociopolitical context and participatory budgeting in Kenya

Kibui Edwin Rwigy, Erick Manga and George Michuki (2020)

Journal of Eastern African Studies 14(3): 492–511

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2020.1768469 (paywall)

Participatory budgeting (PB) experiments in municipalities across the world have yielded varied results. The Kenyan experience of participatory experiments has not fared any better. Following the 2013 elections, which initiated county governments in line with the 2010 constitution, Makueni County emerged as a unique case for study, having experimented with its very own PB mechanism. The qualitative study reported in this article examined how Makueni's PB framework is designed and implemented. The emerging outcomes of institutional design and implementation are then contextualised to Makueni's sociopolitical and cultural setting. The study discusses two sets of PB outcomes: outcomes on public participation (questions of inclusion, exclusion and quality of participation in PB); and outcomes of PB (concerned with the endline developmental products of the PB process). The purpose of this article is to recentre the often-ignored considerations on the sociopolitical and cultural in PB experiments in Kenya's devolved governance structures and beyond.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Kenya

Development

Participatory budgeting

Public engagement

Elite privilege

Public Participation in Democratic Governance: A Case Study of Participatory Budgeting in Lagos, Nigeria

Sulaimon Adigun Muse (2016)

PhD thesis, School of Social Sciences, College of Humanities, University of Kwazulu-Natal, Durban

Available at: researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/15719 (free access)

The main objective of this thesis is to assess the extent to which participatory budgeting (PB) is fostering the efficient and democratic allocation of resources and citizens' involvement in the planning and management of their localities in Nigeria; and to identify the reasons for the non-effectiveness of PB in the country. Using largely qualitative and secondary data supplemented with primary data, the study examines the underlying assertions of the existence of participatory budgeting in Nigeria and its influence of on the vulnerable citizens of the country; it addresses the dearth of literature on PB particularly in Nigeria as a sovereign nation. Findings from the thesis show that PB process in Epe local government suffers from: lack of awareness on the part of the citizens of what PB is all about, negative perception of government-initiated programmes or intervention, such as PB and polio eradication programmes as anti-people, lack of funds and overdependence on financial handouts from unreliable central government, lack of qualified personnel from the local government office to drive the PB process, incoherent legal framework and political interference, non-equality of representatives, (in terms of wealth, income and dominant racial groups or ethnicity), solving different problems with the same paradigm, that is, through the CDAs, the dichotomy between city-based participatory democracy and community-based participatory democracy, and the management of scarcity, corruption – leading to extra-budgetary spending, lack of transparency and accountability, political parties – more than any other stakeholders – determine the flow of PB, the ruling political parties always have the final say, influencing the outcome of decisions taken by the other stakeholders as far as PB is concerned.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Participatory budgeting

Public participation

Democratic governance

Lagos

Participatory budgeting in the city of Kwekwe (Zimbabwe): A perspective on the issues, trends and options

S Marumahoko, TC Chigwata and NT Nhede (2018)

African Journal of Public Affairs 10(4): 196–211

Available at: journals.co.za/doi/10.10520/EJC-134c475050 (free access)

Towards the end of 2017, as has been the case every year, the Kwekwe city council produced a budget outlining its various activities for the 2018 financial year. The unveiling of the 2018 budget was, among other things, accompanied by disgruntlement, confrontation, street protests and dejection by the inhabitants of the city. At the centre of the problem, city inhabitants argued, was the failure of the city council to proactively engage and involve them in the budget formulation and claims that previous budgets have failed to tackle poor service delivery. On the other hand, the city council (comprising the administration and elected officials) rebutted these claims, although there was general acceptance that the level of service delivery does not meet the expectations of the citizens of Kwekwe. The article, in the context of contributing to the debate on good governance, challenges the claim that the budgeting process in the city of Kwekwe is participatory.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Fieldwork

Case study

Keywords

Good governance

Budget formulation

Service delivery

Participatory budgeting

4.2.2. Property taxation in African cities

Local government taxation in Sub-Saharan Africa: A review and an agenda for research

Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, Gérard Chambas and Jean-Francois Brun (2014)

Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) Working Paper, Number WP 2014: 2

Available at: www.cmi.no/publications/file/5098-local-government-taxation-in-sub-saharan-africa.pdf (free access)

This paper reviews the state of knowledge on local government revenue systems in Africa, with a particular emphasis on commonalities and differences between francophone and anglophone countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The analysis focuses on the composition of local government “own” revenues, administrative practices, and how the current system affects economic efficiency and accountability. It is not meant as an exhaustive review of these topics. It aims to highlight some key issues that require greater attention and, in some cases, more substantial research. The local government tax systems currently in place in sub-Saharan Africa are largely adopted from the former colonial powers. In contrast to central government tax systems, local government tax systems in many African countries have remained largely unchanged since independence. Exceptions are reforms in East Africa, which have led to the abolishment of some of the most unpopular taxes, including poll (head) taxes in Tanzania and Uganda, and simplification of the local government tax legislation and

administrative practices. Generally, however, fiscal decentralisation reforms in sub-Saharan Africa are limited to addressing the intergovernmental fiscal transfer system. The central government's control of the local revenue system remains strong, and more so in the francophone countries in West Africa than in anglophone East Africa. Due to the overall fiscal constraints, the reform of the local tax system has been considered less important than mobilisation of central government revenues. Local tax systems are often distortive, costly to administer, and exacerbate inequity. Moreover, in most African countries there is little or no coordination between various levels of government with respect to taxation. This has partly to do with lack of capacity at all levels. At the local level, the serious shortage of qualified staff at the treasury and planning departments is particularly critical. Based on findings from the review and knowledge gaps identified, areas for further research are suggested. The need for research on commonalities and differences within and between anglophone and francophone countries in Africa are emphasised. Both technical and political-economy questions are underexplored in the literature. Combining research on the technical and administrative framework for local taxation with the political and economic realities at the local and central levels has the potential to identify constraints and practices that can guide policy work and be used as benchmarks to assess actual policy implementation.

[Authors' summary]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Local government

Taxation

African cities

Taxing property in a neo-developmental state: The politics of urban land value capture in Rwanda and Ethiopia

Tom Goodfellow (2017)

African Affairs 116(465): 549–572

Available at: academic.oup.com/afraf/article/116/465/549/3868619 (open access)

Of the African states experiencing sustained growth and poverty reduction in recent decades, Rwanda and Ethiopia stand out, due to the scope of their development visions and relatively effective state-driven transformation, leading them to be compared to the East Asian “developmental states”. This article argues that these two states are better conceived as “neo-developmental”, due to important differences in the international and national constraints they face compared with the East Asian “tigers”. One effect of these differences is the difficulty of attracting investment into manufacturing industry, and the consequent concentration of capital in high-end urban real estate. This underscores the need for effective land value capture and property taxation, which featured strongly in the East Asian cases. Currently, however, both Rwanda and Ethiopia lack effective mechanisms for capturing the value of urban

property in a way that is sustainable, redistributive and developmental. The article explores the politics of efforts to introduce property tax in both cases. It argues that property taxation has been obstructed by conflicting imperatives on land reform and tax reform, alongside resistance from vested interests created by the rapid generation of real-estate-based wealth in the absence of other sufficiently lucrative investment options.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Property taxation

Land value capture

Politics

Neo-developmental states

Taxing the urban boom: Property taxation and land leasing in Kigali and Addis Ababa

Tom Goodfellow (2015)

International Centre for Tax and Development (ICTD) Working Paper 38

Available at: www.ictd.ac/publication/taxing-the-urban-boom-property-taxation-and-land-leasing-in-kigali-and-addis-ababa/ (free access)

Much contemporary economic growth in Africa is driven by urban service sectors, including construction and real estate. This manifests in rapidly transforming landscapes and the proliferation of valuable property in the continent's booming large cities, often accompanied by growing socioeconomic inequality. In this context, improving systems for property taxation is an urgent and growing need – something that national and international policymakers increasingly recognise. Despite this, even in states considered particularly “developmental” and committed to increasing tax revenue, property taxation has fallen by the wayside. This paper argues that, in addition to the usual technical and political difficulties associated with property taxation, it is crucial in reform-oriented developing countries to understand the nature of land tenure systems and how they are changing, as well as historical legacies relating to land and housing. Moves to introduce or improve property taxation need also to be considered in relation to how contemporary development strategies constrain or facilitate investment in real estate, and the political economy underpinning this sector. Through an analysis of existing property tax and land leasing systems in Kigali and Addis Ababa, as well as failed, stalled and ongoing reform attempts in each, the paper identifies key themes for the study of property taxation systems and their potential to succeed in rapidly transforming cities in the Global South.

[Author's summary]

Method

Fieldwork
Case studies

Keywords

Property tax
Land leasing
Land value capture
Urban land reform
Real estate
Urban development
Africa
Rwanda
Ethiopia

The political economy of property tax in Africa: Explaining reform outcomes in Sierra Leone

Samuel S Jibao and Wilson Prichard (2015)

African Affairs 115(456): 404–431

Available at: academic.oup.com/afraf/article/114/456/404/24597 (open access)

Effective local government taxation is critical to achieving the governance benefits widely attributed to decentralisation, but in practice successful tax reform has been rare because of entrenched political resistance. This article offers new insights into the political dynamics of property tax reform through a case study of Sierra Leone, focusing on variation in experiences and outcomes across the country's four largest city councils. Based on this evidence, the article argues that elite resistance has posed a particularly acute barrier to local government tax reform, but that ethnic diversity has sometimes served to strengthen reform by fragmenting elite resistance. Furthermore, opposition councils have had stronger incentives to strengthen tax collection than councils dominated by the ruling party, in order to increase their fiscal autonomy. More generally, heightened electoral competition can lead to sustained revenue gains, by encouraging city councils to adopt a more contractual approach to tax reform that stresses transparency, engagement, and equity.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case studies
Fieldwork

Keywords

Political economy
Property taxation
Cities
Elite resistance

Policy implementation under stress: Central–local government relations in property tax administration in Tanzania

Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, Merima Ali and Lucas Katera (2019)

Journal of Financial Management of Property and Construction 24(2): 1–20

Available at: www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JFMPC-10-2018-0057/full/html (paywall)

Inter-organisational cooperation in revenue collection has received limited attention in the tax administration literature. This paper aims to examine how inter-organisational cooperation affected implementation of the reforms. The study draws on data from a variety of sources of information collected during a series of fieldworks over the past decade. Two lessons of broader relevance for policy implementation and PT administration are highlighted. First, institutional trust matters. Top-down reform processes, ambiguity related to the rationale behind the reforms and lack of consultations on their respective roles and expectations have acted as barriers to constructive working relationships between the local and central government revenue agencies. Second, administrative constraints, reflected in poor preparation, outdated property registers and valuation rolls and inadequate incentives for the involved agencies to cooperate hampered the implementation of the reforms. This paper contributes to the literature on interorganisational cooperation in revenue collection through a detailed case study of property tax reforms in a developing country context. It also contributes to the literature on policy implementation by identifying political and administrative factors challenging the reform process.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Fieldwork

Case study

Keywords

Tanzania

Policy implementation

Tax reform

Tax administration

Property tax

Interorganisational cooperation

Challenges of county government property taxation in Nairobi City

Lucy Nyabwengi, OA K'Akumu and Mary Kimani (2020)

Africa Habitat Review Journal 14(2): 1819–1830

Available at: uonjournals.uonbi.ac.ke/ojs/index.php/ahr/article/view/537 (free access)

This study evaluates the challenges of property taxation under the county government in Nairobi City. Property taxation, if well exploited, can be a major source of revenue at the county government level, which is required in provision of urban services and infrastructure. Nairobi has not been generating adequate revenue from property

taxation, due to various challenges, as identified in the study. The study uses survey design where interviews were conducted to officials under land valuation directorates of Nairobi. Review of documents was also done. The study establishes that property taxation in Nairobi City faces many challenges that relate to policy and its administration. The legal framework for property taxation is inadequate and has not been reviewed to keep up with the increased property development in the city; Nairobi uses two systems of taxation, namely, site value and area rating, which have resulted in a narrow tax base and reduced uniformity of property taxation, and there are no regular revaluations of the tax base. Property taxation also faces the challenge of lack of political goodwill. These challenges have resulted in low revenue generation from property taxation in Nairobi. The study recommends review of the national laws relating to property taxation, that the city use only capital value-based method of property taxation, with elimination of the current area-based system, reduction of exemptions, widening of the tax base, and use of mass valuation methods.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

County government

Property tax base

Property taxation

The origins of voluntary compliance: Attitudes toward taxation in urban Nigeria

Cristina Bodea and Adrienne Lebas (2014)

British Journal of Political Science 46(1): 215–238

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-political-science/article/origins-of-voluntary-compliance-attitudes-toward-taxation-in-urban-nigeria/B329765F56BB1928FF520C36BE608CB4 (paywall)

Voluntary compliance is an important aspect of strong tax regimes, but there is limited understanding of how social norms favouring compliance emerge. Using novel data from urban Nigeria, where tax enforcement is weak, this article shows that individuals with a positive experience of state services delivery are more likely to express belief in an unconditioned citizen obligation to pay tax. In addition to support for this fiscal exchange mechanism, social context is consequential. Where individuals have access to community-provided goods, which may substitute for effective state services provision, they are less likely to adopt pro-compliance norms. Finally, the article shows that norm adoption increases tax payment. These findings have broad implications for literatures on state formation, taxation and public goods provision.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Voluntary compliance
 Taxation
 Urban Nigeria
 Attitude

Revenue extraction is not enough: The ambiguous effectiveness of the Rwandan Revenue Authority

Benjamin Chemouni (2020)

ESID Working Paper 157, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, The University of Manchester

Available at: www.effective-states.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/esid_wp_157_chemouni.pdf (free access)

The objective of this paper is to understand the RRA's relatively high, and yet uneven, performance. While the organisation is effective regarding overall revenue collection, and processes of tax filling and payment, it is much less so with regard to everyday bookkeeping, reporting and provision of inputs to policymaking. The paper argues that the dominant nature of the political settlement and the ruling elite's paradigmatic ideas of national self-reliance supported the performance of the RRA in extracting revenues. On the other hand, the top-down pressure on the RRA to perform produced a range of perverse incentives in the organisation, making everyday processes of bookkeeping and reporting secondary. In addition, vested interests regarding property tax and the tension between state-centred and market-led ideas about development led to a series of policy gaps that limited revenue mobilisation. Furthermore, the vulnerability of the elite anchored in its minority status, and its origins in the diaspora, meant that the state in general, and the RRA in particular, while autonomous from social pressure, might not be much embedded in society. This led to an uneven performance. The organisation performed well in the raw task of extracting revenue, which requires a high level of autonomy, but much less so when its tasks, such as providing advice to policy formulation, required some embeddedness with key segments of society.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
 Fieldwork

Keywords

Rwanda
 Political economy
 Pockets of effectiveness
 Rwanda Revenue Authority
 State-building
 Taxation

Rebuilding local government finances after conflict: Lessons from a property tax reform programme in post-conflict Sierra Leone

Samuel Jibao and Wilson Prichard (2016)

The Journal of Development Studies 52(12): 1759–1775

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00220388.2016.1153073 (open access)

This research interrogates the factors underpinning the relative success of a property tax reform programme in Sierra Leone. Recognising the importance of politics in shaping reform outcomes, it highlights reform strategies that have contributed to overcoming both technical and political barriers to reform. It highlights three interconnected arguments. First, there is a need for long-term, hands-on, local partnerships that support local capacity, help to confront political resistance and build a constituency for reform. Second, there should be expanded focus on politically contentious efforts to strengthen transparency, public outreach, and enforcement among elites, as they are critical to programme success and sustainability. Third, a focus on the same politically contentious elements of reform can help external actors better assess the extent of local political commitment to reform early on, and thus target reform funding and efforts more effectively.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Local government finances

Property tax

Tax reform

Sierra Leone

Modelling improvement to property tax collection: The case of Addis Ababa

Gabriella Y Carolini, Fitsum Gelaye and Kadeem Khan (2020)

ICTD Working Paper 103, International Centre for Tax and Development (ICTD)

Available at: www.ictd.ac/publication/modelling-improvements-property-tax-collection-addis-ababa/ (free access)

Efforts to reform property tax systems in African cities tend to focus more on how to value properties for purposes of tax assessment than on how to better collect taxes due. The same is true of the literature on property tax reform. There is, however, reason to believe that a greater initial focus on improving collection would be more productive. In this paper, we explore how this might be done in Addis Ababa. This would involve adopting a principle already employed in several African cities: area-based property valuation. This involves linking the tax assessments of individual properties closely to assessments, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, of the quality and density of the available basic public infrastructure and the quality of the built

environment. We demonstrate how to identify and map neighbourhoods for this purpose.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Property tax

Tax collection

Spatial analysis

Infrastructure

Urban development

Africa

Ethiopia

Simplifying property tax administration in africa: Piloting a points-based valuation in Freetown, Sierra Leone

Kevin Grieco, Abou Bakarr Kamara, Niccoló F Meriggi, Julian Michel, Wilson Prichard and Graeme Stewart-Wilson (2019)

ICTD Summary Brief Number 19, International Centre for Tax and Development (ICTD)

Available at: www.ictd.ac/publication/simplifying-property-tax-administration-africa-piloting-points-based-valuation-freetown-sierra-leone/ (free access)

The current method of property valuation in Freetown, Sierra Leone, is highly inaccurate and generally regressive, as it does not take into account subjective property characteristics that are major determinants of value. The newly elected Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr made revenue mobilisation a central pillar of her "Transform Freetown" agenda. As a means of achieving this, the mayor and her advisers began to reach out internationally for reform advice. This brief outlines a pilot project carried out jointly by the IGC and ICTD for a new approach to property valuation in Freetown using a points-based valuation methodology in the Freetown context. The project had six key findings, including that high-level political leadership was a major enabler of the project's success. The authors outline six policy considerations for future scale-ups of the research and for reforming property tax in Freetown.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Case study

Keywords

APTI

Freetown

Points-based valuation

Property tax

Sierra Leone

Taxation, property rights and social contract in Lagos

Tom Goodfellow and Olly Owen (2018)

ICTD Working Paper 73, International Centre for Tax and Development (ICTD)

Available at: www.ictd.ac/publication/taxation-property-rights-and-the-social-contract-in-lagos-summary-of-working-paper-73/ (free access)

Major taxation reforms over the past decade have been interpreted as facilitating the transformation of Lagos: once widely seen as a city in permanent crisis, it is now seen by some observers as a beacon of megacity development. Most academic attention has focused on personal income taxation, which comprises the lion's share of government revenue in Lagos. Less attention has been devoted to another crucial innovation over the same period – the Land Use Charge – and other forms of tax related to property. In this paper we show how the story of property taxation in Lagos since the early 2000s is important, not only in terms of the enormous increase in collection, but because of the ways in which property-related taxes have helped to support personal income taxation and to solidify the fiscal contract between state and society more broadly. Moreover, we explore how the payment of the Land Use Charge is interpreted by taxpayers, and how it is used alongside a plethora of other documents and processes to try and shore up fragile claims to property. In a context of intensely insecure tenure, particularly but not exclusively at the lower ends of the socioeconomic spectrum, both taxation and other kinds of formal and informal payments play a key role in efforts to incrementally build and solidify property rights.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Property tax

Lagos

Nigeria

Tenure security

Property rights

Land taxation

Urban governance reform

4.3. The role of traditional authorities in urban governance

Traditional authorities have played a significant role in the governance and development of towns and cities in Africa from pre-colonial times to date. Tieleman and Uitermark (2019) argue that, while the formation of a modern state has restricted the role of chiefs in urban development, it has afforded them greater power as managers of the land and gatekeepers of the state bureaucracy. Studies by Idris (2017) and Asamoah (2012) demonstrate that traditional authorities play important roles, such as conflict resolution and the socioeconomic and cultural development in African cities. In exploring whether traditional authorities harm or help efforts by central and local

government authorities to deliver projects and programmes to their communities, Baldwin (2016) finds that traditional authorities facilitate the delivery of many local public goods through collaboration with politicians. Beall (2006) suggests that hybrid and collaborative forms of urban governance, involving traditional authorities and city authorities, is crucial for the fast-paced urban transformation that most African cities desire. Olowu and Erero (2000) have, however, cautioned that a possible convergence of state and society institutions should take into consideration the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which characterise these local institutions, otherwise the efforts at achieving good governance will yield little or no appreciable results. While this summary shows a growing number of studies on the role of traditional authorities in urban governance, more scholarly research is encouraged to understand in totality the role of non-state actors in governing African cities

The Paradox of Traditional Chiefs in Democratic Africa

Kate Baldwin (2016)

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/books/paradox-of-traditional-chiefs-in-democratic-africa/A0A5A0A8B513F792F501C82AF5935457#fndtn-information

The Paradox of Traditional Chiefs in Democratic Africa shows that unelected traditional leaders can facilitate democratic responsiveness. Ironically, chiefs' undemocratic character gives them a capacity to organise responses to rural problems that elected politicians and state institutions lack. Specifically, chiefs' longer time horizons encourage investment in local institutions that enable the provision of local public goods. This is the paradox of traditional chiefs in democratic Africa: elected politicians can only effectively respond to rural constituents through institutions constructed and maintained by local leaders who are not worried about electoral terms. Furthermore, the critical role played by chiefs in brokering local development projects forces us to reassess how we understand the basis of their political influence during elections. The book examines the effects of traditional leaders on the electoral connection in Africa through a multi-method approach that combines qualitative research, surveys and experiments, with particular attention to the Zambian case.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Traditional chiefs

Democratic Africa

Zambia

Chiefs in the city: Traditional authority in the modern state

Joris Tieleman and Justus Uitermark (2019)

Sociology 53(4): 707–723

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0038038518809325 (open access)

While forms of authority that descend from social or cultural tradition are commonly understood as archaic, traditional authorities often survive and occasionally even thrive during the formation of modern states. Chieftaincies not only endure in the Ghanaian countryside but also proliferate in new neighbourhoods on the peripheries of Ghana's fast-growing cities. We develop an explanation for the endurance of traditional authorities, based on extensive fieldwork in one recently developed neighbourhood in a previously uninhabited part of Greater Accra, where we conducted interviews and analysed documents from the archives of the chief's divisional council. We show that the formation of a modern state has restricted the chiefs' discretion as sovereigns but afforded them greater power as managers of the land and gatekeepers of the state bureaucracy. Traditional authority is not overwritten but rather refined, transformed and stabilised in the process of state formation.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Africa

Chieftaincy

Colonialism

Ghana

Hybridity

Legal pluralism

State formation

Traditional authority

A qualitative study of chieftaincy and local government in Ghana

Kwame Asamoah (2012)

Journal of African Studies and Development 4(3): 90–95

Available at: academicjournals.org/journal/JASD/article-full-text-pdf/5CCF83F10310

(open access)

It is widely argued that chiefs do not play any meaningful role in local government in Ghana as they used to, since there is an existing structure which is responsible for local governance in Ghana. In recent times, this debate has been raging on ferociously to the extent that people want the chieftaincy institution to be abolished. This qualitative study uses the institutional framework to assess the role of chiefs in local government. The article finds that chiefs play a critical role in socioeconomic and cultural development in Ghana and should be given a prominent role in local government administration in Ghana.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Chieftaincy institution

Local government

Administration,

Socioeconomic

Cultural development in Ghana

Cultural weapons: Traditions, inventions and the transition to democratic governance in metropolitan Durban

Jo Beall (2006)

Urban Studies 43(2): 457–473

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00420980500416966 (paywall)

Traditional leaders have a formal role in South Africa's post-apartheid local government and, in some cities in the country – notably in KwaZulu-Natal – their presence has presented some important political challenges. This paper explores the relationship between longstanding institutional arrangements which support chiefdoms and traditional authority control over land and development, and the emerging democratic local government in the municipality of eThekweni, which covers the Greater Durban Region. Partly a response to a situation of entrenched conflict, the inclusion of amakhosi, or traditional leaders, in local governance structures varies across different areas in the city. The potential for competition between elected councillors and amakhosi remains high and there are ongoing disputes about their roles. Municipal spending has been directed to encouraging the participation of amakhosi in the formal systems of local government and, in places, the amakhosi themselves have been significant agents of urban development. The continuing popular support for traditional leaders is explored and the consequences of this for both democracy and for development are considered. The paper suggests that hybrid forms of political identity, incorporating both formal democracies and lively traditions, are emerging and suggests that urban political culture and institutions have been transformed, not only at the ballot box or through development processes, but through actions, beliefs and practices of residents.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Case study

Keywords

Cultural weapons

Traditions

Inventions

Democratic governance

Cities

Traditional rulers and local government in Nigeria: A pathway to resolving the challenge

Daniel Adetoritse Tonwe and Osa Osemwota (2013)

Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance 13/14: 128–140

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5130/cjlg.v0i13/14.3728> (free access)

This paper examines the problem of integrating traditional rulers into the contemporary local government system in Nigeria with a view to resolving the problems arising from the tradition/modernity nexus in the present scheme. Two basic questions guided this work. The first relates to the relevance of indigenous traditional institutions to the challenges of contemporary democratic processes. The second relates to whether traditional modes of thought, behaviour and institutions constitute resources or impediments to the projects of modernisation and development. This paper concludes that the goal of modernisation is to generate rapid increase in social wealth and its driving force is economic development; and where traditional institutions are able to contribute positively to this goal, their input should not be jettisoned.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Literature review

Keywords

Traditional authority systems

Traditional rulers (emirs, obas)

Cultural revivalism

Antimodern

Governance of Nigeria's villages and cities through indigenous institutions

Dele Olowu and John Eroro (2000)

Available at: dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/bitstream/handle/10535/4145/DOGO95AA.pdf

(free access)

This article seeks to understand how Nigerian urban and rural communities are organised for self-governance in the face of the failure of state-based structures in Africa. Utilising inputs from research findings by a network of Nigerian researchers, the article affirms the existence of local institutions for self-governance across selected urban and rural communities in Nigeria. These local institutions, which include political, administrative, sociocultural, development and economic institutions, are providing most of the goods and services needed by the people. The article identifies the various forms of local non-governmental organisations or local development organs and concludes by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which characterise these local institutions. It is the contention of the article that these elements be taken into consideration in attempting a possible convergence of state and society institutions, if the search for good governance in Africa is not to end in failure.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Governance
Villages
Cities
Indigenous institutions

Local governance in South Sudan: Overview

Iffat Idris (2017)

Available at: gsdrc.org/publications/local-governance-in-south-sudan-overview/ (open access)

Chapter 5 of this report (pages 11–14) is focused on the role of traditional authorities in local governance in South Sudan. In this chapter, the report outlines the role of traditional authorities in local governance in South Sudan, exploring the diversity, functions, link between communities and local government and the challenges of traditional authorities.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Local governance
South Sudan

Traditional authorities in African cities: Setting the scene

Ntombini Marrengane, Lindsay Sawyer and Daniel Tevera (2021)

African Studies 80(2): 125–133

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00020184.2021.1940098 (paywall)

This special issue on the role of traditional authorities in African cities highlights critical debates about governance and urban development on a fast-urbanising continent. The six articles in this issue focus on the following: (1) the roles of traditional authorities as custodians of the values of society; (2) the roles of traditional leaders as moral authorities; (3) the modern chieftaincy as an invention of the colonial state; (4) the “unrelenting co-optation and appropriation” of traditional governance structures by the state; and (5) the stretching of pre-colonial narratives to justify the legitimacy of traditional leadership and its control of community resources. The special issue features contributions from Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ghana, South Africa, Botswana and Eswatini, providing a rare comparison between cases from Southern and West Africa.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case studies
Fieldwork
Special Issue

Keywords

Traditional authorities
African cities
Governance
Chieftaincy
Urbanisation

See selected special issue articles below.

The consolidation of “traditional villages” in Pikine, Senegal: Negotiating legitimacy, control and access to peri-urban land

Emilie Pinard (2021)

African Studies 80(2): 172–189

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00020184.2021.1906205 (paywall)

This article examines the actors, everyday practices and norms involved in the production of periurban land in the prolongation of “traditional villages” in Pikine, Senegal. It refers to the conception of governance in African cities as the outcome of daily transactions and negotiations between various institutions and inhabitants, and of adaptations to changing socioeconomic and political conditions. Using the case of two recent neighbourhoods located on the urban periphery, the article documents planning processes in which traditional authorities and local institutions collaborate to craft new land subdivision and regulation practices, in order to develop and control the territory. It argues that traditional authorities need to create new alliances with municipal actors and share the benefits of land allocation. However, traditional authorities manage to sustain their influence and governance capacity through the possible negotiation and exception of the application of regulation practices. The article contributes to studies on urban governance in Africa on two fronts. First, it challenges normative assumptions about the absence or weakness of planning practices and regulatory power pertaining to periurban areas. Second, by shining light on the particular logic of land allocation, claims and authority, the article deepens our understanding of neocustomary land delivery systems, and their spatial and social consequences.

[Author’s abstract]

Methods

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Traditional authorities
Neocustomary system
Land delivery

Urban governance
Pikine
Senegal

Traditional authorities and spatial planning in urban Burkina Faso: Exploring the roles and land value capture by Moose chieftaincies in Ouagadougou

Gabin Korbéogo (2021)

African Studies 80(2): 190–206

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00020184.2021.1920365 (paywall)

In terms of urban spatial planning, decentralisation and urban growth make it necessary to rethink the sources of legitimacy, agreements and conflicts relating to the actors' strategies for land access in Ouagadougou. By localising the power and land management in local arenas (municipal territories and neighbourhoods), the decentralisation policy – that has promoted the participatory approach – and legal pluralism have exacerbated land-use competition. Institutional change and competition over land have reactivated the authority of the Moose traditional authorities in the urban development (“lotissement”), as well as facilitating land value capture by them. In the urban land configuration, grassroots groups refer to competing normative repertoires (legal/official versus traditional/ local) to negotiate access to land for housing. This proves that traditional chiefs and state institutions were in tandem in the political-administrative management of urban development in Ouagadougou. However, facing the limits of the institutional hybridity and their correlative unsatisfied demand, grassroots people have empowered locally accountable representatives to fight for their land rights. With the growing influence of civil society organisations in urban politics, the domination of the public and traditional authorities is in flux. Based on qualitative empirical research, this article shows that the dynamic interplay between bureaucratic institutions, traditional authorities and grassroots organisations is contributing to reshape governance systems, as well as the construction of statehood in Burkina Faso.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Burkina Faso
Grassroots organisations
Land tenure
Land value capture
Moose chieftaincy
Traditional authorities
“Lotissement”
Ouagadougou

“I cannot stand up to my chief nor the state”: Reflections on development-induced housing mobility in pro-poor housing systems in Tamale, Ghana

Ibrahim Yakubu, Manfred Spöcker and Ronnie Donaldson (2021)

African Studies 80(2): 207–229

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00020184.2021.1910487 (paywall)

In Ghana, housing practices for the majority of urban residents lie outside the scope of formal housing markets and planning regulations. This has made urban upgrading a key component of physical development in cities in Ghana. In the face of accelerated urbanisation and the corresponding upsurge in informal housing practices, local authorities continue to grapple with the challenges of negotiating and implementing upgrading programmes without compromising pro-poor housing systems. As cities grow, mainly through the accretion of rural settlement nuclei, the quest to achieve orderly physical development has meant that new development ought to be planned alongside the upgrading and/or realignment of existing settlements. This complex spatial development trajectory makes forced residential mobility an integral component of post-independence urban development initiatives in many towns. Based on interviews with selected households and key stakeholders at city and neighbourhood levels, this study critically examines the incidence of development-induced residential mobility practices in the pro-poor housing systems of Tamale, Ghana. It makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the operation of dual urban management systems and how the navigation of such systems can be frustrating. The results show how and why sub-district local government actors collaborate with traditional chieftaincies to compel the relocation of poor families under the pretence of providing access roads. Paved roads have thus become deeply engrained in the housing politics of low-income communities, and form part of the narratives of the success or failure of chiefs or elected local government representatives. It is recommended that the scope of stakeholder engagement be broadened to promote inclusive urban development in Tamale.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Ghana

Housing

Pro-poor housing

Residential mobility

Tamale

Navigating traditional and modern institutions in city governance: The role of chieftaincy in spatial planning in Tamale, Ghana

Issahaka Fuseini (2021)

African Studies 80(2): 230–248

Available at: [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00020184.2021.1911623](https://doi.org/10.1080/00020184.2021.1911623) (paywall)

At a time of intensifying urbanisation in Ghana, ineffective spatial planning is one of the symptomatic challenges of urban growth in the country. In the Ghanaian context, traditional authorities (chiefs) play a disproportionate role in urban land management, due to the fact that a vast proportion of the country's land is held in customary tenurial arrangements. The role of the traditional authorities in (urban) land management is given legal status by national constitutional provisions that recognise chiefs as fiduciaries of the land held under customary tenure. The state-supported customary land secretariats (CLSs) perform these responsibilities in conjunction with the local government structures. They are largely being operationalised through urban land-use planning. However, the complex factors and processes of rapid urban growth have had unintended consequences. These include increased urban land values, speculative and informal land markets, and overlapping governance/power structures. The outcome has been the reported commodification and administration of urban land by chiefs for personal gain. These complex processes evolve at the intersection of traditional and modern governance structures, which are opportunistically interpreted and applied to achieve certain ends. This article demonstrates how these changes in customary land administration are evolving in Tamale, Ghana. Qualitative interviews were undertaken with participants from relevant statutory land sector institutions, local government officials and traditional authorities. Using the lens of urban governance and planning practices, the article explores the outcomes of chief-led spatial planning and customary land administration practices and associated land markets in Tamale. These are social, economic and spatial inequalities, as well as urban governance challenges. [Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Tamale

Ghana

Chiefs

Customary tenure

Spatial planning

Urban governance

4.4. The politics and governance of urban planning

African cities are bedevilled with several urban planning constraints, including rapid growth, resource constraints, burgeoning informal settlements and inadequate planning regimes. Over the years, scholars have provided in-depth understanding of these problems and their causes. Bidandi and Williams (2020) argue that urban planning in African cities typically shows an absence of community engagement. Kamete (2009) notes that some African city authorities apply brutal force in their quest to resolve urban

planning problems. Owing to the failures of urban planning, Andersen et al. (2015) demonstrate that urban dwellers adopt collective forms of sociocultural organisation to guide land use practices in unplanned areas, leading them to pose the question: who actually plans the African city?

In explaining the root cause of the urban planning problems in African cities, Lynch et al. (2020) are of the view that colonial planning and policies created African cities which were ill-prepared to cope with post-independence growth. These challenges have been complicated by the numerous post-colonial crises and the failure of successive governments to adopt contemporary practices of urban planning and management. Similarly, de Satgé and Watson (2018) contend that the urban planning crisis in African cities is rooted in the imposition of modernist visions (the Dubai model) on cities which are largely informal and poor, creating conflict between the ambitions of state and slum dwellers. In coping with the failures of urban planning, Deuskar (2019) posits that the urban poor resort to clientelism in order to gain access to state resources, despite the benefits being inadequate and in ways that sometimes interfere with the implementation of formal plans.

Clientelism and planning in the informal settlements of developing democracies

Chandan Deuskar (2019)

Journal of Planning Literature 34(4): 395–407.

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0885412219842520 (paywall)

The informal provision of benefits to the poor in exchange for political support, known as clientelism, often provides access to land and services for the urban poor in informal settlements in developing democracies. This review of multidisciplinary literature finds that while clientelism provides the urban poor with some access to the state, its benefits are often inadequate and inequitable. This kind of informal provision also disincentivises or interferes with the implementation of formal plans. The literature provides some examples of transitions away from clientelism, but lessons for planners in facilitating such transitions are elusive.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Literature review

Keywords

Global contest of planning

Governance

International planning and development

Politics and society

Poverty

Clientelism

Informality

Informal settlement

Global South

“Negotiated planning”: Diverse trajectories of implementation in Nairobi, Addis Ababa, and Harare

Liza Rose Cirolia and Stephen Berrisford (2017)

Habitat International 59: 71–79

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0197397515300709 (open access)

This paper unpacks how plans are implemented in three African cities: Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Harare. Three planning implementation instruments form the basis of the comparison across cities. These instruments aim to give effect to plans and include development regulation, infrastructure investment and land allocation. In contrast to reading African planning efforts as a catalogue of failures, this analysis allows us to see the many actors and complex alliances and dissonances which play out through implementation. Here we propose the concept of “negotiated planning” as a useful conceptual tool. We argue that the concept is useful for: its departure from normative assumptions about good or proper planning; unpacking the everyday nature of implementation; grounding and contextualising practices; and depathologising the African city.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

African cities

Development

Governance

Implementation

Master planning

Negotiated planning

Planning and development regulation amid rapid urban growth: Explaining divergent trajectories in Africa

Tom Goodfellow (2013)

Geoforum 48: 83–93

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718513000791 (paywall)

Why are urban plans, land use regulations and construction codes implemented effectively in some African states but not in others? This constitutes an increasingly urgent development concern with major implications for the environment and the urban poor. Rather than being explained by economic factors, bureaucratic capacity or the nature of the urban policies and regulations in place, this paper argues that divergent outcomes are largely rooted in differing political bargaining environments. Comparing Uganda and Rwanda, it presents an empirical study that analyses contrasting planning and regulation trajectories in contexts of similarly low levels of socioeconomic

development and soaring rates of urban growth. It argues that the divergent outcomes can be explained in relation to the political resources and incentives confronted by governing elites, which in Rwanda impel state actors to implement plans and regulations while in Uganda incentivise overriding them in the interests of political or economic gain. In highlighting political bargaining contexts and how these change over time, the paper illustrates the critical importance of historically informed city-level political economy analysis for understanding divergent urban development outcomes.
[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

East Africa
Urban planning
Land use regulations
Policy implementation
Political economy

Urban planning and politics in Ghana

Patrick Brandful Cobbinah and Rhoda Mensah Darkwah (2017)

GeoJournal 82: 1229–1245

Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10708-016-9750-y (paywall)

Through an analysis of Ghana's political and administrative structure, which established the basis of urban planning practice, this paper shows how urban planning has failed to create liveable and functional cities in Ghana. This paper uses semi-structured interviews and agency consultations to supplement document reviews and newspaper articles to address the dearth of research on the subject in Ghana. Findings show that dominant political elites, with little or no urban planning background, control and dictate urban planning activities, resulting in chaotic scenes and urban blight across Ghanaian cities. Analyses here reinforce the growing recognition that urban planning outcomes in Ghana and most African countries are not shaped by professional practice and do not reflect the aspirations of the community, but instead political elites. Urban planning agencies are left vulnerable as their activities are interfered, dictated and hindered by both traditional and mainstream political elites. This paper advocates for independence of urban planning agencies in the performance of their duties.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Ghana
Urban planning

Politics
Decongestion exercise
Traditional political system
Formal political system

“Transforming Freetown”: Dilemmas of planning and development in a West African city

Kenneth Lynch, Etienne Nel and Tony Binns (2020)

Cities 101: 1–14

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0264275119312016 (paywall)

The urban development and planning challenges facing Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, are typical of the significant issues which face most cities in Africa, including rapid growth, resource constraints, burgeoning informal settlements and inadequate planning regimes. In parallel with many African cities, colonial neglect and racial bias in planning the urban form created a city which is ill-prepared to cope with post-independence growth. This paper examines how these trends have played themselves out in the case of Freetown, and also draws attention to particular issues which have exacerbated urban development, and the environmental and planning challenges facing the city. Notably, the effects of the devastating civil war and Ebola outbreak in 2014/15 are discussed. While the city council and local NGOs are attempting to address local development challenges, significantly more needs to be done to improve the wellbeing of Freetown's population and this paper provides an indication of how urban planning might contribute to this.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Freetown
Sierra Leone
Planning
Urban growth
Development

Understanding urban land, politics, and planning: A critical appraisal of Kampala's urban sprawl

Fred Bidandi and, John J Williams (2020)

Cities 106: 1–9

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264275120312063 (open access)

This paper seeks to make a contribution to contemporary urban land insights and political debates in relation to planning in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. It also

evaluates how the city authorities engage with communities on land and related urban issues. Scholars have generally ignored the important aspect of community engagement regarding planning in Kampala. Moreover, political power relations seem to influence, if not determine, social conditions at the grassroots level. In this paper, urban land is defined from competing perspectives vis-a-vis lived experiences at the grassroots level. This paper seeks to understand the urban land question through the lens of Henri Lefebvre's writings on the production of space and the right to the city. Questions this study seeks to answer include: why is politics at the centre of land in Kampala? How is community engagement on land and planning understood by city government? After exploratory research and a review of extant literature, this study utilised an interview guide to collect primary empirical data.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban land

Kampala

Community engagement

Henri Lefebvre

Politics

Planning and land policy

In the service of tyranny: Debating the role of planning in Zimbabwe's urban "clean-up" operation

Amin Y Kamete (2009)

Urban Studies 46(4): 897–922

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0042098009102134 (paywall)

The paper debates the role of planning in "Operation *Murambatsvina*/Restore Order", Zimbabwe's 2005 controversial urban clean-up campaign. The discussion critically assesses two perspectives regarding the purported contribution and complicity of planning in what critics perceive to be the machinations of a regime that is internationally viewed as nefarious. This is done, first, by interrogating the role and contribution of planners and planning to the instigation and design of the operation *before* it was launched and, secondly, by determining the extent to which planners and planning served as the handmaiden of state repression *during* the operation. After weighing relevant empirical evidence on the culpability of planning, the discussion concludes that, while planning may escape the first charge, it certainly has a case to answer on the second.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Planning

Urban clean-up

Zimbabwe

Abuja is not for the poor: Street vending and the politics of public space

Onyanta Adama (2020)

Geoforum 109: 14–23

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718519303501 (open access)

The article examines how street vendors in Abuja, Nigeria, are experiencing and responding to the attempts to restrict their access to public space. Modernist planning and the increasing trend in the privatisation of public space is limiting the amount and types of public spaces available to street vendors. Drawing largely on primary research, the article reports that street vendors are responding by adopting a range of spatial, relational and temporal tactics. Specifically, it cites the Ready-to-Run tactic, relocating to relatively more secure sites, informal relations and networks and operating at certain times of the day. Access to the street and mobility are key factors that shape the types of tactics adopted. Vendors prioritise proximity to the street in order to maximise access to potential customers. The highly mobile vendors are more likely to adopt spatial and temporal tactics, while the less mobile tend to rely on informal relations and networks. Furthermore, in the absence of formal organising, individual agency is more prevalent. Where collective agency exists, it is often a response to an immediate challenge. Gender and age influence the experiences of vendors and the tactics adopted. The Abuja case is a notable example of the link between modernist planning, particularly the master plan approach, and sociospatial exclusion. As a city built from scratch, the plan laid the foundation for sociospatial exclusion by planning the poor out of the city. The plan remains at the centre of contemporary urban politics, notably the relations between the state and informal workers.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Fieldwork

Case study

Keywords

Modernity

Neoliberalism

Public space

Street vendors

Abuja

Nigeria

“Restoring order”? Operation Murambatsvina and the urban crisis in Zimbabwe

Deborah Potts (2006)

Journal of Southern African Studies 32(2): 273–291Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03057070600656200 (paywall)

Zimbabwe is experiencing a profound economic crisis, which has devastated the livelihoods of most of its urban population and created conditions of extreme poverty in its towns. Since independence, the state has generally adhered to housing policies that have made it both difficult and expensive for low-income urban residents to comply with legal housing requirements. However, in comparison to most other sub-Saharan African countries, in Zimbabwe the extent of illegal, freestanding urban housing areas has remained relatively limited, forcing many to house themselves in illegal backyard shacks within the plots of formal townships. These shacks were, to some extent, increasingly tolerated during the 1990s and early 2000s, as poverty increased. Huge growth in informal employment has also accompanied the country's urban economic crisis. In mid-2005, the Zimbabwean government embarked on a far-reaching and unprecedented campaign within its towns; Operation Murambatsvina (“Restore Order”) was designed to eradicate “illegal” housing and informal jobs, which directly affected hundreds of thousands of poor urban residents. According to the government, this drastic policy was necessary to eradicate illegal housing and activities from the cities, although such justifications obscure far deeper economic and political causes. This article surveys and analyses this campaign with reference to trends in incomes, employment and housing and shifts, both apparent and real, in government policy towards these. The article emphasises the injustice of enforcing urban “order” when the symptoms of poverty thereby tackled have been forced upon the urban poor, and not chosen by them.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Fieldwork

Case study

Keywords

Operation Murambatsvina (“Restore Order”)

Urban crisis

Illegal housing

Urban planning in the Global South: Conflicting rationalities in contested urban space

Richard de Satgé and Vanessa Watson (2018)

Palgrave Macmillan, New York

Available at: www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783319694955

This book addresses the ongoing crisis of informality in rapidly growing cities of the Global South. The authors offer a Southern perspective on planning theory, explaining how the concept of conflicting rationalities complements and expands upon a

theoretical tradition which still primarily speaks to global “Northern” audiences. De Satgé and Watson posit that a significant change is needed in the makeup of urban planning theory and practice – requiring an understanding of the “conflict of rationalities” between state planning and those struggling to survive in urban informal settlements – for social conditions to improve in the Global South. Ethnography, as illustrated in the book’s case study – Langa, a township in Cape Town, South Africa – is used to arrive at this conclusion. The authors are thus able to demonstrate how power and conflict between the ambitions of state planners and shack-dwellers, attempting to survive in a resource-poor context, have permeated and shaped all state–society engagement in this planning process.

[Publisher’s summary]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban planning

Global South

Conflicting rationalities

Contested urban space

See specifically Chapter 3, titled “African cities: Planning ambitions and planning realities”.

Abstract available at: link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-69496-2_3

This chapter indicates the kind of impact which contextless planning ideas have had on sub-Saharan African cities, using the continent as an example of impacts and processes which are echoed in many other parts of the Global South. In Africa, an earlier wave of colonial and postcolonial planning fundamentally shaped the urban built environment, planning laws and institutional processes which still persist today. These planning ideas, with origins in older British and European concepts of what a well-functioning and “orderly” city should look like, are completely at odds with the “on the ground” reality of African cities which have experienced rapid jobless growth under conditions of weak and resource-deprived local government institutions. A more recent wave of contextless planning ideas is attempting to impose visions of cities such as Dubai, Shanghai or Singapore on cities which are largely informal and poor. This new era of planning (using terms such as eco-cities, smart cities and world-class cities) is again imposing a concept of “good cities” derived from other and very different contexts. Again, the impact of these interventions, driven in part this time by the international property development sector, has highly negative impacts on African cities. The conflict of rationalities emerging between this new grouping of urban actors and those attempting to survive in rapidly growing and impoverished cities in Africa is stark. Yet there is little in the way of theoretical resources in the planning field to suggest how these conflicts can be explained or the kind of positioning needed to address them.

[Chapter abstract]

Who plans the African city? A case study of Maputo: Part 1 – the structural context

Jorgen Eskemose Andersen, Paul Jenkins and Morten Nielsen (2015)

International Development Planning Review 37(3): 331–352

Available at: www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/journals/article/46113 (paywall)

Urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa constitutes a radically different context from that in the Global North, in terms of scale and pace of urban change and the nature of political and economic structures where state capacities are limited and non-state action dominates. However, the nature of urban planning generally implemented tends to be based on Northern norms and methods, but without significant impact. This article draws on recent empirical research examining state and non-state activities on urban land development in Maputo, Mozambique. Here, whereas land-use planning based on state control has limited practical impact, urban land is physically structured and planned by urban dwellers aspiring to establish legitimate and viable forms of socioculturally informed physical order. Even where such “ordered” land-use practices are not implemented (whether by state or non-state actors), collective forms of sociocultural organisation still orientate and guide land-use practices in many “unplanned” areas, and this remains the dominant form of land development. This leads to the query: who actually “plans” the African city?

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Case study

Keyword

Physical planning

Rapid urbanisation

Mozambique

Land development

Urban change

Social agency

Tenure systems

Informal urbanisation

Urban planning as a tool of power and social control in colonial Africa

Ambe J Njoh (2009)

Planning Perspectives 24(3): 301–317

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02665430902933960 (paywall)

A power theoretical framework is employed to analyse physical and spatial policies in colonial Africa. Officially, the policies were designed to accomplish public welfare goals, such as ensuring sound architectural standards and promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of the built environment. A more critical analysis reveals that the policies

constituted part of a meticulous and multifarious agenda on the part of colonial powers to harness and reinforce their grip on the territories they had conquered in Africa. This article shows how planning policies found expression as instruments of power, domination and social control in urban space in colonial Africa.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Colonial Africa

Colonial urban planning

Imperialism

Social control

Residential segregation

4.5. The politics and governance of urban service delivery and poverty reduction

For many years, scholars have established that urban governance in African cities does not lead to efficient urban service delivery (for example, Jones et al., 2014). Devas (2001) identifies three key factors that can ensure that urban governance works well for poor people, namely: (1) a political system in which the votes of low-income people count; (2) a city government system with some capacity to deliver; and (3) a dynamic civil society which can press the case of people in low-income communities. Omar (2019) contends that the problem is not necessarily the lack of funds but the lack of transparency and accountability in governance, underqualified staff, and the tenuous relationship between the urban residents and local governments.

The governance of urban service delivery in developing countries: Literature review

Harry Jones, Ben Clench and Dan Harris (2014)

Report, Overseas Development Institute, London

Available at: cdn.odi.org/media/documents/8893.pdf (free access)

- Policymakers, practitioners and researchers need to identify, understand and address the pressing challenges associated with the delivery of services in urban areas in the developing world.
- Specific attention should be paid to urban services that are most important for broader development goals, and those that present unique challenges in urban environments, including solid waste management, water and sanitation and transport services.
- Governance and political economy factors are important in determining the effective delivery of public services, including in urban areas. However, while the literature is more fully developed with respect to some services than others,

the body of knowledge is not strong on the key governance challenges specific to urban areas, or how these challenges can be overcome.

- There is a need for additional comparative research and empirical studies on such under-researched areas. This review aims to provide a basis for such efforts in the future.

[Authors' summary]

Method

Literature review

Keywords

Urban governance

Service delivery

Developing countries

Urban Governance, Voice and Poverty in the Developing World

Nick Devas (2004)

Routledge, London

Available at: www.routledge.com/Urban-Governance-Voice-and-Poverty-in-the-Developing-World/Devas/p/book/9781853839931

Poverty and governance are both issues high on the agenda of international agencies and governments in the South. With urban areas accounting for a steadily growing share of the world's poor people, an international team of researchers focused their attention on the hitherto little-studied relationship between urban governance and urban poverty. In their timely and in-depth examination of ten cities in Africa, Asia and Latin America, they demonstrate that in many countries the global trends towards decentralisation and democratisation offer new opportunities for the poor to have an influence on the decisions that affect them. They also show how that influence depends on the nature of those democratic arrangements and decision-making processes at the local level, as well as on the ability of the poor to organise. The study involved interviews with key actors within and outside city governments, discussions with poverty groups, community organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as analyses of data on poverty, services and finance. This book presents insights, conclusions and practical examples that are of relevance for other cities. It outlines policy implications for national and local governments, NGOs and donor agencies, and highlights ways in which poor people can use their voice to influence the various institutions of city governance.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Urban governance

Voice

Poverty
Developing countries

Metropolitan governance and urban poverty

Nick Devas (2005)

Public Administration and Development 25: 351–361

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/pad.388 (paywall)

In the design of urban governance structures, there is an inherent tension between “scale” and “voice”. Both aspects are important considerations if city government is to address the needs of the poor. Metropolitan-scale government offers the potential for resources (notably finance but also land, natural resources and skills) to be mobilised from across the city to provide services and infrastructure for all, including the poor. But the metropolitan scale can also mean remoteness of decision-makers from citizens and hence a weakened citizen “voice”, especially of the poor. This article explores this tension, using material from recent research on urban governance and poverty in ten cities of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The analysis covers issues of jurisdiction boundaries, responsibilities for services and infrastructure, resource bases and mobilisation, performance in service delivery and access to services, political representation and accountability and mechanisms of citizen participation. The conclusion is that the tension between scale and voice may be best addressed by a two-tier or multi-tier structure involving both a very local level, with statutory rights and a share of resources, accessible and accountable to the poor, together with an upper level, also democratically accountable, covering the whole metropolitan area.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

Metropolitan
Urban governance
City government
Local government
Urban poverty

Does city governance matter for the urban poor?

Nick Devas (2001)

International Planning Studies 6(4): 393–408

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13563470120092395 (paywall)

Decentralisation has focused attention on city government but, at the same time, the growth of civil society means that urban governance is not limited to city government. Little attention has been paid, either in the literature or in practice, to the institutional and political processes which determine whether and how the poor benefit, or how the poor can influence the agenda of city governance. Drawing on studies of nine cities in

Africa, Asia and Latin America, this paper identifies three broad areas which are of importance: a political system in which the votes of the poor count; a city government system with some capacity to deliver; and a dynamic civil society which can press the case of the poor. After reviewing what is involved in each of these areas, the paper identifies a number of specific policies and practices which impact on the urban poor.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

City governance

Urban poor

Urban governance and service delivery in Nigeria

Massoud Omar (2009)

Development in Practice 19(1): 72–78

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09614520802576393 (paywall)

This article examines the inadequate delivery of social services by city governments in Nigeria. It identifies three problems: lack of transparency and accountability in governance; underqualified staff and administration; and the tenuous relationship (an “us versus them” dichotomy) between the urban residents and local governments. It can no longer be argued that lack of funds is the key constraint.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Urban governance

Service delivery

City governments

City governance and poverty: The case of Kumasi

Nick Devas and David Korboe (2000)

Environment and Urbanization 12(1): 123–136

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/095624780001200109 (free access)

This paper discusses the factors that influence the scale and nature of poverty in Kumasi, with a special focus on the role of city government and other governmental bodies. It reviews critically the impact of city government's policies on the livelihoods of poorer groups and their access to essential services, and notes the limited impact of democratisation and decentralisation on improving the performance of government agencies, particularly in relation to the urban poor. It also discusses what factors have helped to limit the scale and extent of poverty, including the role of traditional land allocation systems, donor involvement and supportive ethnic networks.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

City governance

Poverty

Kumasi

5. Elections, party politics and elite bargaining in African cities

The topics discussed in this section on the politics of African cities are elite bargaining and urban governance/development; tensions between national and local government; and political party competition at city-level elections.

5.1. Elite bargaining and urban governance/development

There is a growing literature on how “political settlements” and processes of elite bargaining shape the dynamics of urban governance in African cities, with the term “political settlement” referring to the distribution of power in society amongst contending social groups. Goodfellow (2017) shows how the nature of the political settlement in Kigali, Kampala and Addis Ababa relies significantly on informally allocated side-payments and the inconsistent application of laws to enable ruling elites to continue staying in power. In Luanda, Croese (2017) notes that rent distribution to key constituencies take place at the level of the presidency, in order to manage political stability. Hinfelaar et al. (2020) argue that the key strategy of Lusaka’s governing elites for urban dominance is to target particular groups, and when they perceive political support is dwindling, they modify their strategies by suppressing the sources of opposition and co-opting poorer and numerically larger populations. Likewise, Gebremariam (2020) found that the defunct Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) successfully dominated the political sphere of Addis Ababa for a considerable time, by adopting the strategies of state-led developmentalism, legal manoeuvring and co-optation. These studies, among many others, signify the prevalence of elite bargaining across African cities.

Seeing political settlements through the city: A framework for comparative analysis of urban transformation

Tom Goodfellow (2017)

Development and Change 49(1): 199–222

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/dech.12361 (open access)

This article presents a new analytical framework for studying cities in the developing world based on the “political settlements” approach. This has a dual purpose: to enrich comparative urban research by bringing new theoretical ideas to bear on this field, but

also to use capital cities as a lens to better understand national political settlements. The central argument is that urban built environments and their transformations in situations of late development reflect the workings of different varieties of clientelism, and by analysing the former we can better understand the latter. Specifically, issues such as the nature of urban land use and land allocation, the pace and form of construction, the effectiveness of environmental regulation and the provision of housing for different income groups are all revealing of political settlements and their broader development implications. The potential of this approach is explored through three narrative “sketches” of contemporary urban development in Eastern Africa: the “city as marketplace” (Kampala), the “city as expo” (Kigali) and the “city as construction site” (Addis Ababa). In presenting this framework, the article seeks to advance debate on epistemological and analytical approaches to the study of both power relations and differential patterns of urban development.

[Author’s abstract]

Methods

Case studies

Fieldwork

Comparative analysis

Keywords

Political settlement

Clientelism

Cities

Political informality: Deals, trust networks, and the negotiation of value in the urban realm

Tom Goodfellow (2020)

The Journal of Development Studies 56(2): 278–294

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00220388.2019.1577385 (open access)

This article develops a conceptual framework for analysing political informality, before going on to explore it through a discussion of urban politics in Kampala, Uganda. It builds on recent theoretical developments concerning the relationship between “deals” and “rules”, the role of informal trust networks in politics, and different conceptualisations of patron–client relations, to consider varying forms of informal political negotiation and bargaining. Informal politics is ubiquitous, but varies significantly in terms of its interface with formal institutions and the degree to which it is shaped by shared norms and expectations.

The article draws out some of these variations through a typology setting out four partially overlapping categories that aim to capture the diverse and dynamic nature of informal political interaction: pro-formal, anti-formal, para-formal, and a-formal. It then turns to the application of these in an urban context through an analytical discussion of marketplace politics in Kampala. The article argues that conceptualising political

informality in this way can facilitate granular and comparative analyses of urban political processes often just described as “messy”, “chaotic” or “fluid”.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Literature review

Keywords

Political informality

Urban politics

Deals

Trust networks

Cities and dominance: Urban strategies for political settlement maintenance and change – Zambia case study

Marja Hinfelaar, Danielle Resnick and Sishuwa Sishuwa (2020)

ESID Working Paper 136, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research

Centre, The University of Manchester

Available at: www.effective-states.org/working-paper-136/ (free access)

This paper tracks how the Patriotic Front (PF) – Zambia’s main opposition from 2006 to 2011, when the party won power – shifted its strategies of dealing with the urban poor, civil society and the middle class, in order to manage its vulnerability. While all three groups fully supported the PF in 2011, they are now in a more ambivalent position, thereby creating insecurity for the ruling regime. We contextualise these dynamics vis-a-vis Zambia’s broader political landscape, from 2001 to date, relying on historical processing tracing, in-depth interviews with key elite actors and a survey with informal traders. Using the case study of the PF, the paper demonstrates how political settlements can deepen the analysis of how and why particular strategies for dominance emerge in a given context, where the threats to this dominance emerge, and why governing elites target particular groups for co-optive or coercive interventions. It concludes that, due to its size and influence, the PF’s hold on Lusaka is crucial to its survival past the 2021 elections. Consequently, it is anticipated the party will continue to exert repressive pressure on sources of countervailing power and opposition and co-opt poorer but numerically large support bases (such as marketeers and vendors).

[Authors’ abstract]

Methods

Various

Keywords

Zambia

Politics

Middle class

Urban poor

Civil society

Informal sector

The politics of dominating Addis Ababa (2005–2018)

Eyob Balcha Gebremariam (2020)

ESID Working Paper 148, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, The University of Manchester

Available at: www.effective-states.org/working-paper-148/ (free access)

After surviving the most challenging electoral competition in May 2005, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) (now defunct) remained the dominant political force in Addis Ababa for a considerable time. This paper seeks to answer how the Ethiopian ruling coalition under EPRDF succeeded in dominating the socioeconomic and political spheres in Addis Ababa (2005–2018). The paper argues that three interrelated strategies enabled EPRDF to effectively dominate and govern Addis Ababa during the above-mentioned period. The first, perhaps overarching, strategy is the use of state-led developmentalism as a legitimising discourse. Developmentalist discourses and narratives played an instrumental role in generating acquiescence among the public and as sources of legitimacy for the ruling coalition. The second, no less overreaching, strategy is legal manoeuvring. Politically inspired legal manoeuvring helped EPRDF to shape and reshape formal and informal channels of governance and control for the ruling coalition. The simultaneous role of the formal and informal channels of control was quite instrumental in constraining the organisational power of rival political coalitions. The third strategy is co-optation, which includes a contextual use of both "passive co-optation" and "co-operative empowerment". These context-dependent tactics enabled EPRDF and different social groups in the city to establish dynamic relationships that contribute to the ruling coalition's agenda of dominance in Addis Ababa. The empirical section of the paper analyses the case of Urban Consumers' Cooperatives (UCCs) and urban youth employment programmes in Addis Ababa.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Political dominance

State-led developmentalism

Youth employment

Consumers' cooperatives

EPRDF

Addis Ababa

**State-led housing delivery as an instrument of developmental patrimonialism:
The case of post-war Angola**

Sylvia Croese (2017)

African Affairs 116(462): 80–100

Available at: academic.oup.com/afraf/article/116/462/80/2645426 (paywall)

This article examines state-led housing delivery in post-war Angola as an instrument of developmental patrimonialism. It draws on a growing literature on political settlements to highlight the role of rents, informal institutions and power arrangements in managing political stability and economic growth. In the case of post-war Angola, key forms of rent distribution take place at the level of the presidency through the centralised use of actors and institutions that emerged historically outside of the ambit of regular government structures. These involve foreign business allies and special state agencies, such as the state oil company, Sonangol, that respond exclusively to the Angolan president. While this has kept regular state institutions weak, the approach has been successful in terms of fast-tracking public investments that are important for rent distribution to key constituencies, while keeping political competition at bay. The case of a resource-rich country such as Angola provides insight into the context-specific ways in which developmental patrimonialism translates into practice and the actors, interests, and institutions driving state-led housing delivery.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

State-led housing delivery

Patrimonialism

Post-war Angola

Presidential intervention and the changing “politics of survival” in Kampala’s informal economy

Tom Goodfellow and Kristof Titeca (2012)

Cities 29: 264–270

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S026427511200039X (paywall)

In theory, “urban governance” involves non-state actors and the state working together in formally institutionalised ways to make collective decisions and provide urban services. However, in developing country cities with highly informalised economies, the processes that underpin “real” governance often reflect informal bargaining power much more than formal institutional frameworks. This paper uses the case of Uganda’s capital, Kampala, to explore how political configurations subvert structures of city governance, with particular attention to the increasing engagement between President Museveni and particular groups of informal workers. We present empirical research on market vendors and motorcycle taxi (boda–boda) drivers, showing how this

engagement benefits both the informal groups and the president. Increased political competition has created an environment where informal groups seeking to protect their livelihoods can tactically leverage a presidential intervention in their favour, helping them evade the policies and regulations of the city council. Meanwhile, the president has used these interventions to build support in a city that was largely lost to the opposition. These processes have progressively undermined already weak formal institutions for urban governance.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban governance

Informality

Politics

Africa

Uganda

Kampala

Control the capital: Cities and political dominance

Tom Goodfellow and David Jackman (2020)

ESID Working Paper 135, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, The University of Manchester

Available at: www.effective-states.org/working-paper-135/ (free access)

As optimism about the “third wave” of democratisation has waned in the face of continued and renewed authoritarianism across the world, analyses of authoritarian dominance remain focused primarily on the national scale. We argue that cities, and especially capital cities, play crucial roles in the production of dominance and the politics of maintaining it, as well as being sites of popular resistance. However, the varying ways in which governing elites deploy their resources and strategies in the urban arena in pursuit of dominance remain underexplored. In this conceptual framing paper for a multi-country comparative study spanning Africa and Asia, we suggest that strategies for urban dominance can be analysed in accordance with two overlapping modalities: interventions that are generative by design (their primary intention is to create some new form of support); and those that are repressive by design (their primary aim is to destroy or inhibit some form of opposition). We then present a typology of strategies that cut across these spheres of intervention and include co-optation, legitimising discourses, legal manoeuvres, coercive distribution and violent coercion. This framework is designed to inform empirical analysis of strategies of urban dominance, how these change over time and how they are deployed in varying combinations, facilitating a deeper understanding of how struggles for control shape urban outcomes.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Comparative analysis

Keywords

Political dominance

Capital cities

Authoritarianism

Political settlements

Urban governance

Africa

Asia

Geographies of urban dominance: The politics of Harare's periphery

JoAnn McGregor and Kudzai Chatiza (2020)

ESID Working Paper 162, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, The University of Manchester

Available at: www.effective-states.org/working-paper-162/ (free access)

This paper examines how Zimbabwe's ruling party ZANU(PF) sought to dominate Harare from 2000 onwards, when the city's voters turned to the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The ruling party's quest for control was embedded in broader changes to the state, marked by countrywide repression of the political opposition and civic organisations, securitised state institutions, and a shift into patronage and systemic corruption, in a context of repeated economic crises and infrastructural decay. ZANU(PF) deployed a mix of "repressive" and "generative" strategies, but these have been notably unsuccessful in winning back urban votes overall. The ruling party's "generative" patronage in this solidly opposition-supporting capital hinged on controlling land and new settlements on the periphery, together with dominance of central markets and opportunities for vending. Simultaneously, the powers of the Ministry Responsible for Local Government were used to undermine the city's council, destabilise its finances and restrict its spatial governance. Land reform and land occupations, justified nationwide as a continuation of the liberation struggle, shaped the city's expansion in distinctive ways. The paper makes two contributions to broader conceptual debates over political dominance in urban contexts. First, it advocates a geographical approach that differentiates specific urban spaces, rather than treating capital cities as monolithic. Second, it calls for attention to the qualities of political dominance and change over time. This means looking beyond top-down strategies of co-optation or coercion and open forms of protest politics, to explore authority and political manoeuvres within dominated locales.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Political dominance
 Citizen agency
 Land reform
 Periurban
 Resettlement
 Occupations
 African cities
 Harare
 Zimbabwe

Rwanda's political settlement and the urban transition: Expropriation, construction and taxation in Kigali

Tom Goodfellow (2014)

Journal of East African Studies 8(2): 311–329

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2014.891714 (paywall)

Although still predominantly rural, Rwanda is one of the world's fastest-urbanising countries. This paper considers the Rwandan Patriotic Front's (RPF) approach to urban development in the context of intense pressure on land and a stated long-term agenda of moving towards a future that is "100% urban". The RPF government has won plaudits for its transformation of Kigali, and its Land Tenure Regularisation programme is proceeding at a pace few anticipated. Its approach to the urban question remains, however, both highly controversial abroad and contested within the country. There is widespread acknowledgement that aspects of the government's urban agenda have been disadvantageous to the poor, but it is also unclear whether the implementation of this agenda is furthering or hindering their overarching drive for economic growth, structural transformation and political stability. In particular, the expropriation of urban land and the political–economic interests embedded in the real estate sector have critical impacts on Rwanda's development trajectory. Utilising a "political settlements" approach but introducing a spatial perspective focused on the transformation of Kigali, this paper explores the governance of land reform, urban planning, expropriation and property taxation, analyses how these illuminate the broader settlement in place, and considers the implications for Rwanda's future.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
 Fieldwork

Keywords

Rwanda
 Urbanisation
 Political settlement
 Kigali
 Expropriation

Land
Property tax

Carrot, stick and statute: Elite strategies and contested dominance in Kampala

Nansozi K Muwanga, Paul I Mukwaya and Tom Goodfellow (2020)

ESID Working Paper 146, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, The University of Manchester

Available at: www.effective-states.org/working-paper-146/ (free access)

Although Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) has dominated Uganda's political scene for over three decades, the capital Kampala refuses to submit to the NRM's grip. As opposition activism in the city has become increasingly explosive, the ruling elite has developed a widening range of strategies to try and win urban support and constrain opposition. In this paper, we subject the NRM's strategies over the decade 2010–2020 to close scrutiny. We explore elite strategies pursued both from the “top down”, through legal and administrative manoeuvres and a ramping up of violent coercion, and from the “bottom up”, through attempts to build support among urban youth and infiltrate organisations in the urban informal transport sector. Although this evolving suite of strategies and tactics has met with some success in specific places and times, opposition has constantly resurfaced. Overall, efforts to entrench political dominance of the capital have repeatedly failed; yet challenges to the regime's dominance have also been unable to weaken it in any sustained way. We examine why each strategy for dominance has produced limited gains, arguing that together these strategies reproduced a situation of intensely contested control, in which no single group or elite can completely dominate the city.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Various

Keywords

Uganda
Political repression
Co-optation
Urban administrative reform
Conflict
Protest
Urban youth

5.2. Governance and resource allocation tensions between national and city governments

In most parts of Africa, city mayors are either appointed by national political leaders or elected by urban constituents. Studies have shown that the latter model of political governance is often associated with partisan tensions between cities and national governments, which often extend to processes of resource allocation. Through case

studies of Senegal, South Africa and Uganda, Resnick (2014 a, b), Lambright (2014) and Cameron (2014) demonstrate how central governments in Africa deliberately withheld resource allocation to opposition-controlled cities, limiting their autonomy and ability to provide urban services to low-income communities. Fourchard (2011), Resnick (2011) and McGregor (2013) made similar observation in Lagos, Lusaka and Harare, respectively. While some cities are negatively affected by these tensions, others have internal mechanisms that help them to source external funds for urban service delivery, as in the case of Cape Town (Cameron, 2014).

Urban governance and service delivery in African cities: The role of politics and policies

Danielle Resnick (2014a)

Development Policy Review 32(1): 3–17

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/dpr.12066 (open access)

This is an introduction to a special issue sponsored by UNU-WIDER focusing on key governance challenges related to addressing gaps in urban service delivery in sub-Saharan Africa. First, due to decentralisation policies in much of Africa, the provision of services is often transferred to sub-national authorities. But complex layers of administration and high levels of poverty deprive local governments of adequate resources. Secondly, opposition parties now control a number of African cities, a situation known as “vertically divided authority”. Consequently, central governments do not always have an incentive to help municipal governments improve their performance. Case studies of Senegal, South Africa and Uganda highlight how and when such dynamics become problematic for the delivery of urban services, and offer important implications for the donor community.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Case studies

Comparative analysis

Special issue

Keywords

Africa

Decentralisation

Donor policy

Opposition parties

Urbanisation

Vertically divided authority

Strategies of subversion in vertically divided contexts: Decentralisation and urban service delivery in Senegal

Danielle Resnick (2014b)

Development Policy Review 32(S1): s61–s80

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/dpr.12069 (open access)

Focusing on the case of Senegal under the former President, Abdoulaye Wade, this article examines the impact party politics has on service delivery in urban areas controlled by opposition parties. Senegal's decentralisation process provided opportunities for the central government to deliberately reduce the autonomy of local government, under conditions in which the latter could be held accountable for good service delivery and increase autonomy when local government could be targeted for poor performance – actions manifested through backtracking on political decentralisation, undermining fiscal decentralisation, and augmenting administrative ambiguity. The case offers useful implications for donors involved in decentralisation and urban service-delivery projects in opposition-controlled cities.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Africa

Decentralisation

Party politics

Service delivery

Senegal

Urbanisation

Opposition politics and urban service delivery in Kampala, Uganda

Gina MS Lambright (2014)

Development Policy Review 32(S1): s39–s60

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/dpr.12068 (open access)

Uganda, like other African countries, has implemented reforms to decentralise political authority to local governments and reintroduce multi-party elections. This combination creates opportunities for national partisan struggles to emerge in local arenas and influence local service delivery. This article examines service provision by Kampala City Council and recent reforms to recentralise control over the city. It finds that partisan politics undermines service delivery in Kampala in several ways, including through financing, tax policy and even direct interference in the policies and decisions made by the city council.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Fieldwork

Case study

Keywords

Africa

Decentralisation

Multi-party elections
Service delivery

Vertical decentralisation and urban service delivery in South Africa: Does politics matter?

Robert Cameron (2014)

Development Policy Review 32(S1): s81–s100

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/dpr.12070 (open access)

Focusing on the case of South Africa, this study examines how decentralisation policies and inter-party politics have affected urban service delivery responsibilities and resources. Service delivery does not appear to be worse off in Cape Town than in Johannesburg, even though the former is controlled by the opposition Democratic Alliance. While there have been political attempts to undermine the authority of its officials, the fiscal elements are protected by a relatively strong and well-managed department of finance. Consequently, both donors and the national government steer money towards Cape Town because they know it can deliver on its obligations.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Decentralisation
Party politics
Service delivery
South Africa
Urbanisation

Lagos, Koolhaas and partisan politics in Nigeria

Laurent Fourchard (2011)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 35(1): 40–56

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2010.00938.x (paywall)

Architect Rem Koolhaas and his team from Harvard regard Lagos as an extreme and pathological form of the city in Africa and as a paradigmatic case of a modern avant-garde city. In rehabilitating the informality at work in Lagos, they put forward a romanticised vision of a self-regulatory system working outside state regulation and political influence. In this article, I consider that the crisis of urban infrastructure in Lagos is less the result of the weakness of the Nigerian state than of a historical opposition between the federal government and Lagos State leaders, especially concerning the allocation of resources to the city. I also suggest that informality and state decline analysis are inadequate theoretical frameworks for detailing the way Lagos has been planned or governed since the end of the colonial period. Instead, this

article, based on empirical research covering local government, motor parks and markets, considers that the city's resources have been used to build political networks between state officials and a number of "civil society" leaders. This process and the reinforcement of taxation in the last 30 years are not so much a manifestation of informality and state decline as part and parcel of the historical state formation in Nigeria and in Lagos.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Lagos

Koolhaas

Partisan politics

In the shadow of the city: Africa's urban poor in opposition strongholds

Danielle Resnick (2011)

Journal of Modern African Studies 49(1): 141–166

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-modern-african-studies/article/in-the-shadow-of-the-city-africas-urban-poor-in-opposition-strongholds/74D56E8A92F460D747BBC9684E45D3A5 (paywall)

Sub-Saharan Africa is the fastest urbanising region of the world. This demographic transformation has occurred in concert with two other trends in the region, nascent democratisation and stalled decentralisation. Using the case of Lusaka, Zambia, this study argues that in the context of multi-party competition and limited fiscal decentralisation, the challenges posed by rapid urbanisation are exacerbated for the urban poor living in cities controlled by opposition parties. Semi-structured interviews conducted with local political actors are combined with a survey of 200 informal sector workers in Lusaka. This data reveals the tactics employed by the central government to weaken the popularity of the opposition in Lusaka and shows that from the viewpoint of the urban poor, such tactics ultimately prove counterproductive. The presence of similar dynamics in other African cities has important implications for aid modalities, such as budget support, that are currently used by international donors to fund development projects, including those in the urban sector.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Multi-party competition

Urban poor

Opposition parties

Fiscal decentralisation
Lusaka

Supervision of local government in Zimbabwe: The travails of mayors

Tinashe Carlton Chigwata, Sylvester Marumahoko and Alois Madhekeni (2019)

Law, Democracy and Development 23: 44–67

Available at: www.saflii.org/za/journals/LDD/2019/3.pdf (free access)

The discourse on decentralisation theoretically supports central government supervision of local government. The exercise of such powers by the central government of Zimbabwe is mired in controversy. Mayors are often suspended and/or dismissed to safeguard so-called “public interests”. In particular, those who are from the opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change, have been greatly affected in this regard. The supervisory interventions of the Zimbabwe African National Unity-Patriotic Front led national (central) government have raised questions about the very existence of local democracy and the parameters within which supervision should be implemented. The inadequacy of the laws regulating central supervision over local government and, in some cases, the blatant disregard of such laws by the supervising authority have left mayors vulnerable to arbitrary suspensions and/or dismissal. Such interventions have been motivated mainly by sinister political objectives, rather than a genuine desire to improve local governance. A case study methodology focusing on the supervision of mayors in Zimbabwe since independence has been adopted.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Local government

Local autonomy

Mayors

Supervision

Power politics

Decentralisation

Zimbabwe

Surveillance and the city: Patronage, power sharing and the politics of urban control in Zimbabwe

JoAnn McGregor (2013)

Journal of Southern African Studies 39(4): 783–805

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03057070.2013.858541?src=recsys (paywall)

From 2000, ZANU(PF) suffered repeated electoral defeat in the cities and lost control of municipalities to the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). This turned urban governance into a battlefield, as ZANU(PF) dramatically recentralised

powers over local authorities, developed “parallel” party structures and used militia to control central markets and periurban land. Taking the case of Harare and environs during the period of Zimbabwe's Inclusive Government (IG), this article explores contestations over urban authority, focusing on the office of councillor and urban spaces dominated by ZANU(PF)-aligned militia. I argue that surveillance was central to ZANU(PF)'s strategy for urban control and to the politics of patronage. Inconvenient councillors were disciplined by threats and enticements from the feared Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and were also vulnerable to suspension, while ZANU(PF) militia made political loyalty a condition of access to market stalls, land and housing cooperatives. Dominant political science characterisations of the African postcolonial state and ethnographic accounts of precarity and vigilance mislead in this context if they fail to capture the disciplining roles and social reach of a centralised partisan state security agency and militarised party structures that suffuse work and social life within local government institutions and contested city spaces. Analyses of power-sharing need to reach beyond the national stage, not only because conflict over local authorities can undermine transitional political processes but also for the light they can shed on the changing character of the state and its relationship to reconstituted ZANU(PF) powers.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Surveillance

Urban control

Patronage

Power sharing

Party politics

5.3. Political party competition at city-level elections

Political party tensions exist within cities as well as between central governments and opposition-controlled cities. Angerbrandt (2020) contended that city elections sometimes record higher turnout than national elections because urban residents place importance on subnational issues. He also found that political parties are structured around influential or popular elites, who use their popularity to pursue personal gains. A number of studies have argued that opposition political parties in Africa tend to do well in urban areas, with Resnick (2014c) noting the popularity of populist strategies with the urban poor. Helle and Rakner (2012) argue that opposition political parties are more likely to win elections in cities where there are high levels of urban poverty, while they are likely to lose where rural poverty is higher than urban poverty. Klaus and Paller (2017) show how political parties in Africa can deploy either inclusive forms of mobilisation or exclusive modalities based on narratives of indigeneity, as well as on

coercion. Whilst Nathan (2015) found that city elections are characterised by clientelism and ethnic voting, despite the emergence of a growing middle class, research by Kamete (2006) suggests a more programmatic approach, whereby political parties must address the reasons for their rejection by city voters in earlier election(s).

Party system institutionalization and the 2019 state elections in Nigeria

Henrik Angerbrandt (2020)

Regional and Federal Studies 30(3): 415–440

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13597566.2020.1758073 (paywall)

This article analyses the 2019 state elections in Nigeria, with a focus on party system institutionalisation. The analysis shows that votes shifted and that voter turnout was higher in the state elections than in the national elections two weeks earlier. This indicates that voters regard the state elections as meaningful and that they assess subnational issues. However, the analysis of the 2019 state elections also shows that democratic norms and practices are weakly institutionalised in the political parties. It is argued that the political parties contribute to making elections in Nigeria disconnected from a majority of the citizens. A focus on subnational elections shows how the political parties are structured around regional strongmen that use the parties to pursue personalistic politics based on patronage rewards. Still, Nigeria's federal system, with attractive subnational positions, makes elections competitive and state politics constitute a platform for opposition parties to endure losing national elections.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Democratisation

Elections

Nigeria

Political parties

Regional elections

The return of the jettisoned: ZANU-PF's crack at "re-urbanising" in Harare

Amin Y Kamete (2006)

Journal of Southern African Studies 32(2): 255–271

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03057070600656143 (paywall)

After Zimbabwe's ruling party, ZANU-PF, lost the cities to the opposition in 2000, it mounted a spirited comeback bid. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Harare, the capital city, whose residents had overwhelmingly rejected the party in the parliamentary elections – a trend that was to be repeated with chilling regularity during the next four years. The party's attempt to "re-urbanise" consisted of two strategies, namely, regaining control of institutions of local governance and getting re-elected into council and parliament. The former has been hugely successful, while so far the latter has not

yielded much. This article revisits the party's comeback bid and assesses its strategies in order to explain their contrasting fortunes. The discussion argues that the attempt to win elections failed because, in the first place, the party did not address the reasons for the hostility of the city's voters, and in some cases even exacerbated its alienation from the majority of these voters.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Opposition parties

Re-urbanise

Party politics

Urban Poverty and Party Populism in African Democracies

Danielle Resnick (2014c)

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/books/urban-poverty-and-party-populism-in-african-democracies/4AE03CBFA661306A27B3C79F2B71F35B

When and why do the urban poor vote for opposition parties in Africa's electoral democracies? The strategies used by political parties to incorporate the urban poor into the political arena provide a key answer to this question. This book explores and defines the role of populism in Africa's urban centres and its political outcomes. In particular, it examines how a populist strategy offers greater differentiation from the multitude of African parties that are defined solely by their leader's personality, and greater policy congruence with those issues most relevant to the lives of the urban poor. These arguments are elaborated through a comparative analysis of Senegal and Zambia, based on surveys with informal sector workers and interviews with slum dwellers and politicians. The book contributes significantly to scholarship on opposition parties and elections in Africa, party linkages, populism and democratic consolidation.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban politics

Opposition parties

Urban poor

The interplay between poverty and electoral authoritarianism: Poverty and political mobilisation in Zambia and Uganda

Svein-Erik Helle and Lise Rakner (2012)

CMI Working Paper WP 2012, Chr Michelsen Institute

Available at: www.cmi.no/publications/4393-the-interplay-between-poverty-and-electoral (free access)

In this paper, we wish to analyse the interplay between the political setting of electoral authoritarianism and economic grievances expressed in particular by an urban poor electorate in Africa. We show that the outcomes of this interplay have varied considerably across the region. While opposition politicians in some countries such as Zambia (2011) have been able to channel the political discontent into electoral victories and subsequent electoral turnover, most electoral authoritarian regimes in sub-Saharan Africa have managed to stay in power. Uganda is an example of this. The analysis of recent political developments in these two countries will highlight two interrelated questions: what may explain the variance found? And, are some forms of poverty more challenging for the survival of electoral authoritarian regimes than others? [Authors' abstract]

Methods

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Electoral authoritarianism

Poverty

Political mobilisation

Urban poor

Zambia

Uganda

Electoral Politics and Africa's Urban Transition: Class and Ethnicity in Ghana

Noah Louis Nathan (2015)

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/books/electoral-politics-and-africas-urban-transition/456921B4752867CBCB65ADCBA6BEE89A

Two aspects of contemporary urban life in Africa are often described as sources of political change: the emergence of a large urban middle class; and high levels of ethnic diversity and inter-ethnic social contact. Many expected that these factors would help spark a transition away from ethnic competition and clientelism towards more programmatic elections. Focusing on urban Ghana, this book shows that the growing middle class and high levels of ethnic diversity are not having the anticipated political effects. Instead, urban Ghana is stuck in a trap: clientelism and ethnic voting persist in many urban neighbourhoods, despite changes to the socioeconomic characteristics and policy preferences of voters. Through a unique examination of intra-urban variation

in patterns of electoral competition, Nathan explains why this trap exists, demonstrates its effects on political behaviour, and explores how new democracies like Ghana can move past it.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Electoral politics

Urban transition

Class

Ethnicity

Africa

Defending the city, defending votes: Campaign strategies in urban Ghana

Kathleen Klaus and Jeffrey Paller (2017)

Journal of Modern African Studies 55(7): 681–708

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-modern-african-studies/article/defending-the-city-defending-votes-campaign-strategies-in-urban-ghana/DAC77889B9902DB2D7A327C609E992EB (paywall)

Rapid urbanisation in African democracies is changing the way that political parties engage with their constituents, shifting relations between hosts and migrants. This article examines the strategies that parties use to maintain and build electoral support in increasingly diverse contexts. Drawing on in-depth interviews and ethnographic research in Accra, Ghana, we find that some urban political parties rely on inclusive forms of mobilisation, promoting images of cosmopolitanism and unity to incorporate a broad grassroots coalition. Yet, in nearby constituencies, parties respond to changing demographics through exclusive forms of mobilisation, using narratives of indigeneity and coercion to intimidate voters who “do not belong”. Two factors help explain this variation in mobilisation: incumbency advantage and indigene dominance. In contrast to most scholarship on ethnicity and electoral politics in Africa, we find that these varying mobilisation strategies emerge from very local neighbourhood-level logics and motivations.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Political parties

Campaign strategies

Electoral politics

Urban Ghana

Opposition parties and the urban poor in African democracies

Danielle Resnick (2012)

Comparative Political Studies 45(11): 1351–1378

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0010414012437166 (paywall)

Africa's urban poor increasingly represent a key constituency for electoral mobilisation. Opposition parties, which are pivotal for democratic consolidation, have nevertheless exhibited disparate success at obtaining votes from this constituency. To explain why, this study focuses on the case of Zambia and draws on interviews with political elites as well as a survey of informal sector workers in Lusaka. Instead of vote buying, ethnic alignments or economic voting, these data show that the urban poor's voting decisions are related to the strategies used by political parties to incorporate them into the political arena. Opposition parties that employ populist strategies are more likely to win support from the urban poor than parties reliant on alternative modes of mobilisation. The advantages of a populist strategy include greater differentiation from the myriad of purely personalistic parties in Africa and greater congruence with the policy priorities of the urban poor, including service delivery and jobs.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Africa

Democratisation

Opposition parties

Populism

Urbanisation

Voting

Behaviour

6. The political sociology of African cities

African politics is being reshaped by various sociological trends, including in relation to class, gender, religion and ethnicity, and much of this plays out in urban areas.

However, only a limited number of studies tracking these trends have located them within the urban context and explored what they mean for urban politics. In terms of gender, UN-Habitat (2013) argue that women are under-represented or excluded in both formal and informal urban politics in developing countries. Hassan et al. (2020) shows how multiple intersecting forms of vulnerability – social, economic and spatial – act as barriers to women in accessing shelter in Hawassa, Ethiopia. Amidst the burgeoning literature on class in Africa, Mercer (2020) found that the middle class and the suburbs are mutually constitutive in the Tanzanian city of Dar es Salaam.

Stockmans and Buscher (2017) observed that political-religious struggle in Addis

Ababa shapes the current urban landscape, as use of and control over urban public space and place forms a crucial element in efforts by multiple actors to exert public authority. Ukah (2016) shows how the process of urban expansion in and around Lagos was propelled by religious expansionism – specifically prayer camps – that transcends the borders of economic, spirituality and territorial conquest. In terms of ethnicity, Nathan (2016) shows that voting for ethnically affiliated parties is far from universal and is influenced directly by the diversity and wealth of the local neighbourhood in which parties and voters interact. Mains and Kinfu (2016) have also shown that ethnicity influences the distribution of public infrastructure in urban neighbourhoods in Ethiopia and Uganda, respectively.

State of Women in Cities 2012–2013: Gender and the Prosperity of Cities

UN-Habitat (2013)

UN-Habitat: Nairobi

Available at: unhabitat.org/gender-and-prosperity-of-cities-state-of-women-in-cities-20122013 (free access)

See specifically Chapter 2.4, titled “Gender, equity-based development and prosperity”, where the issues of gender and formal/informal urban politics are discussed.

There are two main standpoints that propagate the benefits of urbanisation. One is that cities are associated with opportunities for wealth generation. Concomitant to this is the idea that urban women supposedly enjoy greater social, economic, political opportunities and freedoms than their rural counterparts. However, the notable gender gaps in labour and employment, decent work, pay, tenure rights, access to and accumulation of assets, personal security and safety and representation in formal structures of urban governance, show that women are often the last to benefit from the prosperity of cities. The *State of Women in Cities 2012/2013 Report* focuses on gender and the prosperity of cities. The report examines the gender dimensions of the defining characteristics of a prosperous city – productivity, infrastructure development, quality of life, equity and social inclusion and environmental sustainability. It provides a conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between gender and prosperity and also reviews policies and institutional framework relevant for mainstreaming gender concerns in cities.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Women

Cities

Gender

Prosperity

Present, yet unaccounted for: Women's participation in civil society-led peacebuilding activities in South Kivu, the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Kirsten Van Houten (2020)

Peacebuilding 8(2): 240–255

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21647259.2018.1562661 (paywall)

This paper examines the role of women in local civil society peacebuilding organisations in Bukavu, South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Situating the study in postliberal peacebuilding theory, it examines the questions of who has an agency to articulate local knowledge and needs in local peacebuilding processes and how. The paper concludes that while local civil society peacebuilding organisations present women with opportunities to participate in peacebuilding processes at the grassroots level, that these organisations do not have the capacity to challenge entrenched power and gender norms.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Peacebuilding

Women

Agency

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Understanding shelter from a gender perspective: The case of Hawassa, Ethiopia

Faraz Hassan, Emma Grant and Sophie Stevens (2020)

Environment and Urbanization 32(2): 463–480

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0956247820942109 (open access)

The city of Hawassa is growing fast, driven by construction of a flagship industrial park that is expected to attract up to 60,000 workers by 2021, mostly young women, arriving without families or dependents, and living off very low wages. Along with these young women, female-headed households; divorced, separated and widowed women; elderly women; and women with disabilities; all face severe/acute shelter vulnerabilities. These groups are most likely to struggle to access both formal and informal shelter, related to their below-average income levels but also to other forms of bias and discrimination.

This paper draws out key findings on gender and housing from a collaborative study investigating shelter provision in Hawassa, part of a wider research study on inclusive cities in East Africa led by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). It aims to highlight specific constraints faced by women in accessing shelter, and around such issues as informality, safety and security, and infrastructure provision.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Ethiopia
Gender
Hawassa
Housing
Shelter

Boundary work: Becoming middle class in suburban Dar es Salaam

Claire Mercer (2020)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 44(3): 521–536

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-2427.12733 (paywall)

Suburban space provides a useful window onto contemporary class practices in Africa, where it is difficult to identify social classes on the basis of income or occupation. In this article, I argue that the middle classes and the suburbs are mutually constitutive in the Tanzanian city of Dar es Salaam. Using interviews with residents and local government officials in the city's northern suburbs, I discuss the material and representational practices of middle-class boundary work in relation to land and landscape. If the middle classes do not presently constitute a coherent political-economic force, they are nevertheless transforming the city's former northern periurban zones into desirable suburban residential neighbourhoods.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Boundary work
Middle class
Suburban
Dar es salaam

Ambiguous pleasures: Sexuality and Middle Class Self-Perceptions in Nairobi

Rachel Spronk (2012/2014)

Berghahn Books, New York

Available at: www.berghahnbooks.com/title/SpronkAmbiguous

Among both male and female young urban professionals in Nairobi, sexuality is a key to achieving a “modern” identity. These young men and women see themselves as the avant garde of a new Africa, while they also express the recurring worry of how to combine an “African” identity with the new lifestyles with which they are experimenting. By focusing on public debates and their preoccupations with issues of African heritage, gerontocratic power relations and conventional morality, on the one hand, and personal sexual relationships, intimacy and self-perceptions, on the other, this study works out the complexities of sexuality and culture in the context of modernity in an African

society. It moves beyond an investigation of a health or development perspective of sexuality and instead examines desire, pleasure and eroticism, revealing new insights into the methodology and theory of the study of sexuality within the social sciences. Sexuality serves as a prism for analysing how social developments generate new notions of self in postcolonial Kenya and is a crucial component towards understanding the way people recognise and deal with modern changes in their personal lives.
[Publisher's summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Sexuality

Middle class

Self-perception

Ambiguous pleasure

Doing being middle-class in the Global South: Comparative perspectives and conceptual challenges

Carola Lentz (2020)

Africa 90(3): 439–469

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/africa/article/abs/doing-being-middleclass-in-the-global-south-comparative-perspectives-and-conceptual-challenges/6A317E413D5694B7B978251BD4336EB0 (paywall)

Like many key terms in history and the social sciences, “middle class” is at once a category “of social and political analysis” and a category “of social and political practice”, in Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper's terms – two aspects that were, and continue to be, entangled in complex ways. Since the end of the 18th century, the term “middle class”, or the “middling sorts”, has been a catchword in political discourse, and it became one long before scholars defined it in any systematic fashion. Once it became a more-or-less well-established conceptual tool of research, however, it began to take on an academic life of its own, with scholars also using it to describe people who did not invoke this category for their own self-description. But scholarly terms could – and indeed did – also feed back into folk understandings of social stratification. In particular, the recent global popularity of the term “middle class” seems to be at least in part a result of the appropriation of academic categories by policymakers. This article contributes to the discussion on African middle classes by tracing the genealogy of theoretical perspectives on class and by outlining some findings from studies of the history of European and American middle classes as well as recent research on middle classes in the Global South. I discuss both the history of scholarly debates on the middle classes and what empirical studies tell us about people's contested self-categorisations, and how their understandings and practices of being middle class have changed over time. The article argues that future research on the dynamics of African social stratification has much to gain from a regional and historical comparative perspective.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Middle class

Global South

Comparative perspectives

Conceptual challenges

Housing middle-classness: Formality and the making of distinction in Luanda

Claudia Gastrow (2020)

Africa 90(3): 509–528

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/africa/article/housing-middleclassness-formality-and-the-making-of-distinction-in-luanda/364B6EDAF34D481750561382BF70AD90 (paywall)

As one of the primary personal sites of financial investment, expression and public performance, housing has stood at the centre of contemporary studies of class in Africa. This article adds to the existing literature on housing and class by exploring residents' desires for formal housing in post-conflict Luanda, Angola. Luanda's residents increasingly believed that access to formal housing, not necessarily always legally but rather aesthetically defined, was a primary means of affirming middle-class status. By highlighting the links between class, urban formality and the state, the article argues that formal housing became a means for both the state and Luandans to produce middle-classness. Existing beliefs about comportment and urban aesthetics, which anchored subjective understandings of class in the house, intersected with a political economy in which the state played a central role in enabling access to new residences. As such, formality has become a key means through which middle-classness is transforming urban landscapes, opening up discussions about aesthetic belonging, financial stability and the role of the state in the making of Africa's middle classes.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Housing

Middle class

Formality

Luanda

Middle Classes in Africa: Changing Lives and Conceptual Challenges

Lena Kroeker, David O'Kane, Tabea Scharrer (2018)

Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland

Available at: link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-3-319-62148-7.pdf (open access)

This volume challenges the concept of the “new African middle class” with new theoretical and empirical insights into the changing lives in sub-Saharan Africa. Diverse middle classes are on the rise, but models of class based on experiences from other regions of the world cannot be easily transferred to the African continent. Empirical contributions, drawn from a diverse range of contexts, address both African histories of class formation and the political roles of the continent’s middle classes, and also examine the important interdependencies that cut across intergenerational, urban–rural and class divides. This thought-provoking book argues emphatically for a revision of common notions of the “middle class”, and for the inclusion of insights “from the South” into the global debate on class.

[Publisher’s summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Middle classes

Africa

Changing lives

Conceptual challenges

Middle class construction: Domestic architecture, aesthetics and anxieties in Tanzania

Claire Mercer (2014)

Journal of Modern African Studies 52(2): 227–250

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-modern-african-studies/article/middle-class-construction-domestic-architecture-aesthetics-and-anxieties-in-tanzania/121A60413113E3609D7F6E55D4844722 (paywall)

This paper examines the new styles of houses under construction in contemporary Tanzania and suggests that they can be understood as the material manifestation of middle-class growth. Through an examination of the architecture, interior decor and compound space in a sample of these new houses in urban Dar es Salaam and rural Kilimanjaro, the paper identifies four domestic aesthetics: the respectable house; the locally aspirant house; the globally aspirant house; and the minimalist house; each of which map on to ideas about ujamaa, liberalisation and the consumption of global consumer goods in distinct ways. The paper argues that these different domestic aesthetics demonstrate intra-class differences, and in particular the emergence of a new middle class.

[Author’s abstract]

Methods

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Middle-class construction

Domestic architecture

Aesthetics

Anxieties

Tanzania

Building God's City: The political economy of prayer camps in Nigeria

Asonzeh Ukah (2016)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 40(3): 524–540Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.12363 (paywall)

The proliferation of religious spaces is a relatively recent development in Nigeria. Nowadays there are more than a hundred religious camps belonging to different religious groups in the country. The most popular of these camps, the Redemption Camp of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, is located 42 kilometres outside of Lagos and measures several thousand acres. Although initially not designed as such, developments in and around Lagos have compelled the managers of the Redemption Camp to present it as an urban alternative to the city of Lagos, which is generally deemed chaotic. The prestige of this camp and its activities have led to expansive urban development that involves the creation of numerous residential estates stretching from Lagos to beyond the Redemption Camp. Based on a recent ethnographic study of the Redemption Camp, this article argues that the process of urban expansion in and around Lagos is propelled by an aggressive form of religious revival that transcends the borders between economics, spirituality and territorial conquest. This article thus illustrates how church-driven, religio-urban developments follow a different logic of city making than often presumed by theorists of African cities, who generally neglect the religious forces that inform urban transformations in Africa.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

God's City

Prayer camps

Political economy

Nigeria

A spatial reading of urban political–religious conflict: Contested urban landscapes in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Jep Stockmans and Karen Buscher (2017)

Journal of Modern African Studies 55(1): 79–104

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-modern-african-studies/article/spatial-reading-of-urban-politicalreligious-conflict-contested-urban-landscapes-in-addis-ababa-ethiopia/8EFD74FCE11C441B15133A7555AFD04E (open access)

This article presents a spatial approach to the recent history of conflict and confrontation between the Ethiopian government and Ethiopian Muslim communities in Addis Ababa. Based on original ethnographic data and inspired by existing academic studies on political–religious relationships in Addis Ababa, this study takes a closer look at the significance of the urban public landscape in power struggles between the EPRDF and the Muslim communities. The article argues that political–religious struggle in Addis Ababa shapes the current urban landscape, as use of and control over urban public space and place forms a crucial element in the strategies of public authority of all involved actors.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Various

Keywords

Cities

Political–religious conflict

Contested urban landscape

Addis Ababa

Local ethnic geography, Expectations of favoritism, and voting in urban Ghana

Noah L Nathan (2016)

Comparative Political Studies 49(14): 1896–1929

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0010414016655540 (paywall)

African democracies are increasingly urban. While ethnicity is generally correlated with vote choice, recent research suggests there may be less ethnic voting in cities. But I show that voting for ethnically affiliated parties is as common in some neighbourhoods in urban Ghana as in rural areas, while virtually non-existent in other neighbourhoods elsewhere within the same city. This intra-urban variation is not explained by differences in the salience of ethnic identities or other individual-level characteristics of voters themselves. Instead, it is influenced by the diversity and wealth of the local neighbourhoods in which parties and voters interact. These neighbourhood characteristics change otherwise similar voters' expectations of the benefits they will receive from an ethnically affiliated party when living in different places, producing intra-urban differences in the importance of ethnicity for vote choice.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

African politics
Elections
Public opinion
Voting behaviour
Race
Ethnicity and politics

Making the city of nations and nationalities: The politics of ethnicity and roads in Hawassa, Ethiopia

Daniel Mains and Eshetayehu Kinfu (2016)

Journal of Modern African Studies 54(4): 645–669

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-modern-african-studies/article/making-the-city-of-nations-and-nationalities-the-politics-of-ethnicity-and-roads-in-hawassa-ethiopia/6A457A17AB9732A1CDFE19C2952D5AAC (paywall)

This article examines the relationship between the politics of ethnicity and road construction in Hawassa, Ethiopia. The Ethiopian state has recently invested unprecedented amounts of money in the construction of urban roads. These roads both undermine and reinforce longstanding ethnic hierarchies within Ethiopian cities. Contrary to the image promoted by the state of harmony among residents of different ethnic backgrounds, our research revealed a great deal of tension, particularly concerning the distribution of benefits from state-led infrastructural development. The experiences of residents in rapidly changing neighbourhoods demonstrate that the benefits of recent road construction are not necessarily distributed according to the policies of the current regime. Instead, historical inequalities interact with contemporary urban development in ways that may actually disrupt the state's vision of unity through diversity. Stratification is built into the city and attempts to reshape the city necessarily interact with recent and long-standing inequalities.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Politics of ethnicity
Road construction
Hawassa
Ethiopia

Creole and tribal designs: Dar es Salaam and Kampala as ethnic cities in coalescing nation states

Deborah Fahy Bryceson (2008)

Crisis States Working Papers Series 2, Working Paper 35

Available at: www.lse.ac.uk/international-development/Assets/Documents/PDFs/csdc-working-papers-phase-two/wp35.2-dar-es-salaam-and-kampala.pdf (free access)

Have East African cities contributed to or hindered nation-state formation and political stability? This paper explores ethnic dynamics and the interface between urban ethnic and national identities in two capital cities, Dar es Salaam and Kampala, suggesting that the dampening of an ethnic factor in the politics and economy of the national capital can facilitate the stability of the nation-state as a political entity. In the East African region, the transplanting of rural tribal identities to the urban capitals has often sparked urban tension, if not national dissension and violence, but Dar es Salaam's creole foundations and cosmopolitan outlook have helped to chart a more peaceful urbanisation path.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Case studies

Keywords

Ethnic cities

Dar es Salaam

Kampala

7. Civil society and popular agency in African cities

This section covers topics such as the presence and agency of civil society in African cities, urban protests, and clientelism, citizenship and everyday politics.

7.1. The presence and agency of civil society

Urbanisation has long been closely associated with the rise of civil society in Africa, from the advent of hometown associations through to the formation of professional or student associations. However, in this annotated bibliography, the focus is on those that have emerged to address urban governance and development problems. Mitlin (2018), for instance, explores the strategies adopted by social movement organisations working in cities in Kenya and South Africa to secure justice for their members and address poverty and inequality. Lier and Stokke (2006) examine the efforts of organised municipal workers and urban social movements trying to unite their forces against the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF). Agbibo (2018a, 2018b, 2019) micro-analysis of the organisation and politics of informal public transport in African cities provides an in-depth understanding of the precarious existence and agency of its workforce. Klopp and Paller (2019) asked whether social movements, populist

opposition parties, and stronger citizenship claims by residents from low-income communities ultimately emerge from slum – and wider city – politics and, if so, are they able to address the political problem of inequality that the slum represents. The work by Nwankwo (2019) introduces gendered elements into the discussion by showing how women traders in Lagos devised strategies of resistance, sometimes pushing the boundaries of legality, to oppose their subordination and to secure their livelihoods.

Slum politics in Africa

Jacqueline M Klopp and Jeffrey W Paller (2019)

Politics: 1–24

Available at:

oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-985 (paywall)

Africa's growing slums are complex, diverse neighbourhoods with their own histories. Currently, these places, characterised by spatially concentrated poverty and human rights abuses, are where large proportions and, in many cases, the majority of Africa's growing urban populations live. These slums often have a politics characterised by clientelism and repression, but also cooperation, accountability and political mobilisation. Importantly, they must be understood within a wider political context as products of larger historical processes that generate severe inequalities in standards of living, rights and service provision. Varied approaches (modernisation vs more critical historical and political economy approaches) attempt to explain the emergence, dynamics and persistence of slums and the politics that often produces, characterises, and shapes them in Africa. While raising important questions about the link between urbanisation and democracy, modernisation theories, which are typically ahistorical, do not fully explain the persistence and actual growth of slums in African cities. More historically grounded political economy approaches better explain the formation and dynamics of slums in African cities, including the complex, uneven and inadequate service delivery to these areas. Whether the conditions of Africa's slums and the social injustice that undergirds them will give birth to greater democratisation in Africa, which, in turn, will deliver radical improvements to the majority, is a critical unanswered question. Will social movements, populist opposition parties, and stronger citizenship claims for the poor ultimately emerge from slum – and wider city – politics? If so, will they address the political problem of inequality that the slum represents? A focus on cities, slums and their politics is thus a core part of growing concern for the future of African cities and democratic politics on the continent.

[Authors' abstract]

Methods

Review of literature

Keywords

Slums

Democracy

Spatial injustice

Inequality
 Land
 Urban planning
 Informal settlements
 Citizenship
 Political economy
 Urbanisation
 African politics

Spatial politics and gendered strategies: Women traders and institutions in Oke Arin market, Lagos

Nkechi Eke Nwankwo (2019)

Africa 89(1): 61–78

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/africa/article/spatial-politics-and-gendered-strategies-women-traders-and-institutions-in-oke-arin-market-lagos/26746C001EC6806B97D8FB335FE08FFE (open access)

Markets in Lagos, as in other parts of Yorubaland, are discursively constructed as spaces where women are in charge, perhaps based on their numbers. However, this article on the spatial relationships between women traders, the state and market institutions at Oke Arin in Lagos points to women's subordination and reflects Doreen Massey's concept of gendered spaces. Massey explains that spaces are in themselves gendered and that they also reflect and affect how gender is constructed and enforced in a specific context. The study is based on a sample of 80 Lagos (Yoruba) women traders and uses a combination of surveys, in-depth interviews, observation and secondary data to examine gendered strategies for survival and accumulation. I argue that, contrary to the perceptions of powerful Lagos market women, Massey's "internal structures of domination and subordination" are evident in spatial governance, ownership and access at Oke Arin. Therefore, in response to spatial politics and the dominating structures of market and government authorities, women traders devise strategies of resistance, sometimes pushing the boundaries of legality to secure their livelihoods.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Fieldwork
 Case study

Keywords

Spatial politics
 Gendered politics
 Women traders

Beyond contention: Urban social movements and their multiple approaches to secure transformation

Diana Mitlin (2018)

Environment and Urbanization 30(2): 557–574

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0956247818791012 (free access)

This paper explores the strategies of social movement organisations working in towns and cities of the Global South to secure justice for their members and address poverty and inequality. The paper argues that there has been a false distinction between alternative strategies of resistance. Drawing on research in Kenya and South Africa, I argue that, rather than seeing strategies of contention, collaboration and subversion as separate approaches, they can best be understood as alternative strategies, adopted simultaneously and iteratively by urban social movements. Movements, I suggest, move among contentious politics, efforts at collaboration with the state, and subversion (often taking the form of encroachment), to address the survival imperatives of their members

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Contentious politics

Co-production

Encroachment

SDI

Urban social movements

Maximum working class unity? Challenges to local social movement unionism in Cape Town

David Christoffer Lier and Kristian Stokke (2006)

Antipode 38(4): 802–824

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2006.00477.x (paywall)

Joint political mobilisation between trade unions and community groups, often referred to as “social movement unionism”, has been upheld as a way forward for organised labour in a neoliberal world economy. Analysing the interaction between unions and communities is critical for understanding the potential and actual roles played by trade unions in voicing the concerns of marginalised workers and poor communities. This article examines the efforts of organised municipal workers and urban social movements trying to unite their forces in post-apartheid South Africa, by looking at the politics of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF). While the participants of the APF have in common their opposition to commercialisation and privatisation of service delivery, their political unity is fragile. By contrasting the “ideal-type” social movement

unionism depicted in the contemporary literature on labour and globalisation with the findings of this particular case, we uncover some main dimensions along which this organisational cooperation is challenged. In contrast to the political unity experienced during the anti-apartheid struggle, the APF initiative operates in a restructuring post-apartheid economy, where bridging internal organisational differences and confronting the hegemonic position of the African National Congress (ANC) in civil society have proved particularly challenging.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Working class

Social movement unionism

Trade unions

Urban social movement

The untamed politics of urban informality: “Gray space” and struggles for recognition in an African city

Ilda Lindell and Christine Ampaire (2016)

Theoretical Enquiries 17(257): 257–282

Available at: www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/til-2016-0010/html (paywall)

This article examines the ways in which market vendors in Kampala, Uganda, responded to plans to redevelop their markets through the concession of long-term leases to private investors. These plans met with massive resistance from the marketers, with significant outcomes. The article uncovers how the marketers actively negotiated a “gray space” between legality and illegality and creatively used the law, with a view to asserting themselves as the legitimate rulers of their markets. It shows how the marketers engaged in highly diverse modalities of struggle, stretching across the legal/illegal boundary. They organised in multiple configurations which were flexible, hybrid and mutant in character, rather than being fixed in particular organisational categories. In their struggles, the marketers engaged in shifting alliances and with a disparate range of political allies. Their politics were fluid, untamed and pragmatic, but also contradictory and fractured. This flexibility and pragmatism enabled them to navigate a complex political landscape and to make instrumental use of a generally unfavourable legal environment.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Privatisation

Urban governance
Market vendors
Politics

Social movement and the struggle for shelter: A case study of eThekweni (Durban)

Diana Mitlin and Jan Mogaladi (2013)

Progress in Planning 84: 1–39

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305900613000226 (open access)

The needs of informal settlement dwellers across towns and cities in the Global South are acute. While much emphasis has been placed on income poverty, for urban dwellers affordable access to improved secured accommodation and basic services such as water and sanitation is essential for wellbeing. In part due to the lack of such access, urban citizens organise in multiple ways to address these needs and to press for state investment and redistribution. South Africa, despite relatively high levels of income and a state with redistributive capacity, is no exception. Indeed, this country is particularly interesting for those seeking to understand effective approaches to addressing housing need because of the efforts that have been made and the resultant scale of state investment in the housing sector. This paper draws on the experiences of urban social movement organisations in South Africa to understand better how shelter needs can be addressed. We reflect on their goals, strategies and activities and explore what this means for themes discussed within the social movement literature. The research has a specific focus on the city of eThekweni/Durban, primarily because of the scale of social movement activities there.

The paper describes the core concerns with respect to shelter, as elaborated by social movement activists, staff of other civil society agencies and officials. While there is a broad consensus about the shelter problems, there is less agreement about solutions. The discussion summarises the shelter objectives and core strategies used by the social movement activists, and considers the success they have had. This includes reviewing their understanding of what success is and how success is achieved. Movement organisations have been able to secure access to the housing subsidy scheme for their members. However, their progress has been limited. The paper concludes that there is a primary focus on what is offered through state programmes and policies, despite evident shortcomings. While there is an awareness of the misfit between available programmes, the needs of movement members and more general shelter needs, no fundamental challenge is being made to the dominant approach. A second finding is that while movement members and leaders have an explicit focus on material improvements, underlying their motivations and some of their strategies and actions is the more fundamental goal to be treated as equal citizens. In this dimension, movement organisations seek both recognition of their citizenship as well as the redistribution of state resources. Third, we argue that while social movement progress is related to the political opportunity structures, it also depends on the ability of

movement organisations to manage the emerging opportunities, particularly their relationships with the state, professional support organisations and other movement organisations. Relations shift between contention and collaboration to improve negotiating positions, secure access to shelter and achieve greater political inclusion.
[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Housing policy
eThekweni/Durban
South Africa
Low-income shelter
Urban social movements

Struggles to remain in Kigali's "unplanned" settlements: The case of Bannyahe

Shakirah Esmail and Jason Corburn (2020)

Environment and Urbanization 32(1): 19–36

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0956247819886229 (open access)

Examining the precarious status of informal settlements in Kigali at a time of large-scale planning-induced expropriation, this article considers urban contestation in the context of the city's changing spatial-legal regime. We analyse the case of one informal settlement's expropriation and relocation – the settlement of Bannyahe – and the contestation that has ensued as resident property owners take the District of Gasabo to court. Through interviews with settlement residents, we follow the fates of these displaced urban citizens and consider their struggles to remain in their homes. Finally, we suggest that such contestation over legal procedural regularity and negotiation over property valuation at the neighbourhood level forms the limit of overt opposition to the city's masterplan. Terming these limits to contestation "silent boundaries" that circumscribe contestation for property owners in the Bannyahe settlement, we offer perspectives on contestation and compromise amidst urban socio-spatial reordering in the "new Kigali".

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Expropriation
Housing
Informality
Juridical contestation
Kigali

Sub-Saharan Africa
Urban planning

Popular Politics in South African Cities: Unpacking Community Participation

Claire Bénit-Gbaffou (2015)

HRSC Press, Cape Town

Available at: www.hsrcpress.ac.za/books/popular-politics-in-sa-cities (open access)

Community meetings seldom lead to significant change in urban policies, and have been accused of being sterile, sedative or manipulative. This book starts from a simple question: why do people then continue to participate in these meetings, sometimes massively, and on a regular basis? Authors from a variety of disciplines explore the multiple roles of these invited spaces of participation. From consolidation of individual social status and networks, to the construction and framing of the local community, the display of political or group loyalties and maintenance of clientelist exchange, access to information, rumours or gossip but also forms of education on who and what is the state, invited spaces of participation are also, crucially, places of emergence of collective awareness, through shared expressions of frustration, that can lead to political mobilisation and other, less institutionalised forms of participation. This book, unpacking community politics and rethinking the complex articulations between invited and invented spaces of participation, is of relevance for international and national audiences interested in urban governance and local democracy.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Democracy

Governance

Service delivery

Society

The tangled web of associational life: Urban governance and the politics of popular livelihoods in Nigeria

Kate Meagher (2010)

Urban Forum 21: 299–313

Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12132-010-9089-2 (paywall)

This paper examines how decentralisation and informalisation are reshaping urban governance in contemporary Africa. By exploring the interface between urban institutional failures and popular organisational solutions, the paper considers how informal governance processes feed into wider structural and political outcomes. Attention paid to issues of institutional process and power relations reveals how the limited access of the poor to resources and decision-making structures may distort

rather than enhance their agency within decentralised urban governance systems. Drawing on case studies of informal enterprise associations in Christian and Muslim parts of Nigeria, this paper explores the differing ways in which networks of ethnicity, class and religion are used to forge links between dynamic informal organisational systems and formal institutions of government. The varied outcomes of these efforts raise uncomfortable questions about whether the proliferation of popular networks and associations amid weak formal institutions is tipping African cities onto trajectories of popular empowerment and pro-poor growth, or instigating a downward slide into violence and urban decay.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Informal economy

Urban governance

Nigeria

Enterprise clusters

Civil society

Informal urban governance and predatory politics in Africa: The role of motor-park touts in Lagos

Daniel Agbibo (2018a)

African Affairs 117(466): 62–82

Available at: academic.oup.com/afraf/article/117/466/62/4788579 (free access)

This article draws on in-depth fieldwork in Lagos, Nigeria, to explain the changing role of motor-park touts (agberos) in urban transport. Situating the emergence of agberos within the insecurity and radical uncertainty caused by the structural adjustment programme of the 1980s, this article explains the transformation of agberos in the light of their tacit incorporation into the National Union of Road Transport Workers, which politicised and altered their role in urban transport. It further argues that current efforts to rid motor-parks of agberos is inspired by the post-1999 urban renewal project of the Lagos State Government to transform Lagos into a “world class” megacity. Yet, the embedded role of “big politics” (that is, the strategic alliance between the union and the state) helps to explain the difficulty of doing away with agberos in Lagos. By focusing on their changing role in Lagos, this article foregrounds the critical and mediating role of agberos in the day-to-day management of urban public transport, while illuminating the politics of violent patronage and extortion rackets in which they are popularly implicated.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Informal urban governance

Predatory politics

Motor-park touts

Lagos

Transport, Transgression and Politics in African Cities: The Rhythm of Chaos

Daniel Agbiboa (2019)

Routledge, London

Available at: www.routledge.com/Transport-Transgression-and-Politics-in-African-Cities-The-Rhythm-of-Chaos/Agbiboa/p/book/9780367479039

This collection of field-based case studies examines the role and contributions of Africa's informal public transport (also referred to as paratransit) to the production of city forms and urban economies, as well as the voices, experiences and survival tactics of its poor and stigmatised workforce. With attention to the question of what a micro-level analysis of the organisation and politics of informal public transport in urbanising Africa might tell us about the precarious existence and agency of its informal workforce, it explores the political and socioeconomic conditions of contemporary African cities, spanning from Nairobi and Dar es Salaam to Harare, Cape Town, Kinshasa and Lagos. Mapping, analysing and comparing the everyday experiences of informal transport operators across the continent, this book sheds light on the multiple challenges facing Africa's informal transport workers today, as they negotiate the contours of city life, expand their horizons of possibility and make the most of their time. It thus offers directions for more effective policy response to urban public transport, which is changing fundamentally and rapidly in light of neoliberal urban planning strategies and "world class" city ambitions.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Informal public transport

Urban politics

African cities

Transport workers

Conflict analysis in "world class" cities: Urban renewal, informal transport workers, and legal disputes in Lagos

Daniel Agbiboa (2018b)

Urban Forum 29: 1–18

Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12132-017-9312-5 (paywall)

This paper focuses on the disconnect between, on the one hand, the neoliberal aspirations to make Lagos a model megacity for the 21st century and, on the other hand, the precarious temporality of the present in which many informal workers weave their routine existence. In particular, the paper examines the corrupt and violent manner in which the Lagos State Road Traffic Law of 2012 has been adapted by the government to restrict the space and mobility of informal workers as a function of making Lagos a “world class” megacity and “Africa’s big apple”. Focusing on commercial motorbike-taxi (okada) riders and their association, the analysis extends to how one group of informal workers in Lagos are responding to neoliberal urban planning that impinges on their opportunities in, and rights to, the city. In this way, the paper illuminates our rather tenuous understanding of how informal workers exercise agency as they attempt to intervene in the unequal processes of urban renewal projects.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Lagos

World class city

Neoliberal urbanism

Informal transport

Right to the city

Workers’ power in resisting precarity: Comparing transport workers in Buenos Aires and Dar es Salaam

Matteo Rizzo (2020)

Work, Employment and Society 34(6): 1114–1130

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0950017020928248 (open access)

The growing precariousness of employment across the world has radically altered the conditions upon which the representation of workers’ interests has traditionally been built, as it has posed challenges for established trade unions: individualised employment and fragmented identities have displaced the centrality of the workplace and the employee–employer relationship in framing collective issues of representation. In this article, we compare the processes of collective organisation of two groups of precarious workers in the transport and delivery sector of Buenos Aires and Dar es Salaam. Through this comparison we investigate how existing trade union structures, industrial relations frameworks, sociopolitical contexts and labour processes interact with the processes of workers’ organisation that take place even in the harsher conditions of informal work, critically engaging with the argument that the growing precariousness of work represents the end of trade unionism as we know it.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Comparative analysis

Keywords

Africa

Buenos Aires

Dar es Salaam

Informal employment

Labour process

Latin America

Precarity

Trade union

Transport

Work

Taken for a Ride: Grounding Neoliberalism, Precarious Labour and Public Transport in an African Metropolis

Matteo Rizzo (2017)

Oxford University Press, Oxford

Available at:

oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780198794240.001.0001/oso-9780198794240

The growth of cities and informal economies are two central manifestations of globalisation in the developing world. *Taken for a Ride* addresses both, drawing on long-term fieldwork in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and charting its public transport system's journey from public to private provision. The book investigates this shift alongside the increasing deregulation of the sector and the resulting chaotic modality of public transport. It reviews state attempts to regain control over public transport, the political motivations behind these, and their inability to address its problems. The analysis documents how informal wage relations prevailed in the sector, and how their salience explains many of the inefficiencies of public transport. The changing political attitude of workers towards employers and the state is investigated: from an initial incapacity to respond to exploitation, to political organisation and unionisation, which won workers concessions on labour rights. A longitudinal study of workers throws light on patterns of occupational mobility in the sector. The book ends with an analysis of the political and economic interests that shaped the introduction of Bus Rapid Transit in Dar es Salaam and local resistance to it. *Taken for a Ride* is an interdisciplinary political economy of public transport, exposing the limitations of market fundamentalist and postcolonial scholarship on economic informality and the urban experience in developing countries, and its failure to locate the agency of the urban poor within their economic and political structures. It is both a contribution to and a call for the contextualised study of "actually existing neoliberalism".

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork
Longitudinal study

Keywords

Public transport
Informal economy
Urban studies
Labour and class
Neoliberalism
Post-socialism
Postcolonial theory
Tanzania
Dar es Salaam
Africa

“No condition is permanent”: Informal transport workers and labour precarity in Africa’s largest city

David Agbiboa (2017)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 40(5): 93–957

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.12440 (paywall)

This article pieces together an understanding of everyday life grounded in the social imagination and everyday experiences of informal transport workers (ITWs) in Lagos, Nigeria’s commercial capital and Africa’s largest city. The article has two core objectives: to elevate the everyday practices of ITWs to the status of a critical concept in order to advance a sociology of everyday life; and to ground these practices on the precarious rhythm of everyday life, as lived by people with the experience of radical uncertainty. By using crisis as a context of action and meaning, the article shows how uncertainty serves as a social resource that ITWs leverage to negotiate the precarious nature of everyday life and to make the most of their time. This foregrounding of uncertainty enhances our hitherto tenuous grasp of labour precarity, informal agency and the everyday struggle for survival in Africa’s informal transport sector.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban Lagos
Culture
Transport
Informal transport workers
Labour precarity

Nigeria
 Danfo slogan
 Agberos

Informalisation and the end of trade unionism as we knew it? Dissenting remarks from a Tanzanian case study

Matteo Rizzo (2013)

Review of African Political Economy 40(136): 290–308

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03056244.2013.794729 (paywall)

This paper analyses the political organisation by informal transport workers, and their partial achievements in claiming rights at work from employers in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's largest city, from 1995 to the present. The paper takes issue with the influential view that, due to widespread economic informalisation, trade unionism and workplace labourism are no longer a viable option for defending workers' interests. From less despondent approaches to the possibilities for labour(ism), it borrows the insight that making sense of workers' unrest requires a political economy approach. This entails, first and foremost, locating workers within their economic structure, and understanding their relationship to capital. The paper thus starts by sketching out the state of public transport in Dar es Salaam, the predominant employment relationship in the sector, and the balance of power between bus owners and workers. It then analyses workers' organisation since 1997, workers' strategies to achieve (in conjunction with the Tanzania transport workers union) the formalisation of the employment relationship with bus owners, and their progress towards it. The conclusion reflects on the broader lessons that can be learned from this case study.
 [Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
 Fieldwork

Keywords

Trade unions
 Informal economy
 Labour rights
 Urban transport
 Urban governance
 Tanzania

7.2. Urban protests

In recent years, African cities have experienced a plethora of urban protests linked to citizens' dissatisfaction with socioeconomic and political conditions, some of which have helped catalyse political change at national level. Based on a longitudinal study, Asante and Helbrecht (2018) argue that contemporary urban protests in African cities are influenced by issues such as the high cost of living, poor participatory governance,

erratic power supply, unemployment, poor road infrastructure and corruption. Goodfellow (2014) observed that the semi-authoritarian nature of the regime in Uganda is propagating a cycle of legal manoeuvres that are responded to by violent urban protests. Harsch (2009) found in Burkina Faso that the urban protests in 31 municipalities from 1995 to 2007 were strongly influenced by the national political context. In Maputo, large-scale urban protests were caused by the government's announcement of successive rises in the price of public transport fares and basic commodities (Bertelsen, 2016). Goodfellow (2013) notes that urban protests need not always be noisy: silent forms of collective mobilisation may also achieve some impact.

Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change

Adam Branch and Zachariah Mampilly (2015)

Zed Books, London

Available at: www.bloomsburycollections.com/book/africa-uprising-popular-protest-and-political-change/

From Egypt to South Africa, Nigeria to Ethiopia, a new force for political change is emerging across Africa: popular protest. Widespread urban uprisings by youth, the unemployed, trade unions, activists, writers, artists and religious groups are challenging injustice and inequality. What is driving this new wave of protest? Is it the key to substantive political change? Drawing on interviews and in-depth analysis, Adam Branch and Zachariah Mampilly offer a penetrating assessment of contemporary African protests, situating the current popular activism within its historical and religious contexts.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Fieldwork

Case studies

Keywords

Popular protest

Political change

Africa uprising

Urban geography and protest mobilization in Africa

Sean Fox and Andrew Bell (2016)

Political Geography 53: 54–64

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629816000305 (paywall)

Urbanisation has long been seen by scholars and policymakers as a disruptive process that can contribute to social and political unrest, yet there is little cross-national quantitative empirical research on the topic. In this paper, we provide a comprehensive analysis of the links between urban geography and the incidence of protests (that is, demonstrations, riots and strikes) in African countries since 1990. In contrast to previous studies, we are careful to distinguish between urban population scale effects,

urban population ratio effects, population rate-of-change effects and urban population distribution effects. We also provide an explicit test of the long-standing hypothesis that “over-urbanisation” increases the risk of civil unrest. Employing multilevel negative binomial models that control for key political and economic variables, we find that urban population size and the number of large cities in a country are both positively and significantly associated protest incidence. By contrast, we find that a country’s level of urbanisation is negatively associated with protest incidence and reject the over-urbanisation hypothesis: higher levels of urbanisation are associated with less frequent protests at all income levels. We find no evidence that the pace of urban population growth or urban primacy significantly influences protest mobilisation. In sum, our results provide a nuanced picture of the relationship between urban geography and protest incidence that challenges conventional wisdom and contemporary hyperbole about the dangers of “rapid urbanisation” in Africa, in particular, and developing countries more generally.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Urbanisation

Protest

Civil unrest

Democratisation

Economic development

Africa

Crystallising contention: Social movements, protests and riots in African Studies

Joschka Philipps (2016)

Review of African Political Economy 43(150): 592–607

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03056244.2016.1171206 (paywall)

This article critically reviews the recent debate on social movements and protests in African Studies. It problematises prevailing conceptualisations, addresses the methodological difficulties of data gathering and scrutinises theoretical references in contemporary scholarship. As an alternative to established approaches, and based on fieldwork in Conakry and Kampala, the author suggests capturing the dynamic nature of protest movements through the concept of crystallisation. Inspired by philosopher Gilbert Simondon, the crystallisation concept grasps protests as processes emerging from everyday urban politics and reflexively considers the researcher as part of the phenomena he or she describes.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Social movements
 Protest
 Riots
 African Studies
 Theory
 Crystallisation

The institutionalisation of “noise” and “silence” in urban politics: Riots and compliance in Uganda and Rwanda

Tom Goodfellow (2013)

Oxford Development Studies 41(4): 436–454

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13600818.2013.807334 (paywall)

Amid ongoing debates about institutions and development, the importance of informal institutions (or norms) is widely recognised. Relatively little, however, is known about how informal institutions form and persist over time in particular contexts. This paper combines a concern with the process of informal institutionalisation and a focus on everyday politics in urban areas. Drawing on a comparative study of Kampala (Uganda) and Kigali (Rwanda), it argues that in the former the regular mobilisation of urban social groups into protests and riots has institutionalised what might be termed “noise” as the most meaningful form of political participation. In Kigali, by contrast, comparatively “silent” processes of collective mobilisation that involve structured activities and community “self-policing” have become institutionalised. The paper analyses these differential patterns, considering the tacit norms of negotiation in each case and the incentives for urban social and political actors to adhere to them.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Case study
 Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban politics
 Institutionalisation
 Noise
 Silence

Effervescence and ephemerality: Popular urban uprisings in Mozambique

Bjørn Enge Bertelsen (2016)

Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology 81(1): 25–52

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00141844.2014.929596 (open access)

This article analyses the large-scale popular urban uprisings that shook Mozambican cities on 1 and 2 September 2010, following the government’s announcement of

successive rises in the price of public transport fares and basic commodities. Using ethnographic material from the city of Chimoio and the capital Maputo, the following work highlights the organisational character of the “strikes” (*grèves*), as the popular uprisings were called, and explores them as a new form of organising political discontent. Comparing them to other historical and contemporary popular uprisings, this article argues that the strikes violently and rhizomically generated ephemeral and egalitarian forms of political authority and order that simultaneously confronted, replicated and undercut the aspects of Mozambican statehood. Deploying Durkheim’s notion of effervescence, the work further argues that the creative fervour, multisemic aspects and festive character of the popular uprisings need to be recognised; thus, this analysis challenges the reductive labelling of these events as “riots” or “food riots”.
[Author’s abstract]

Method

Fieldwork

Case study

Keywords

Effervescence

Mozambique

Popular uprising

Rhizome

Sovereignty

Urban protest in Burkina Faso

Ernest Harsch (2009)

African Affairs 108(431): 263–288

Available at: academic.oup.com/afraf/article/108/431/263/9660 (paywall)

Burkina Faso has embarked on a course of decentralisation, in which elected local governments are assuming a share of decision making over a range of services and activities previously under central authority. But many of these municipalities have also become sites and targets of popular contestation, a reality that has rarely been acknowledged in the official discourses of decentralised governance. By employing social movement research methods, this article examines more than 200 public demonstrations, marches, sit-ins, strikes, riots and other forms of protest over local issues in 31 of Burkina’s urban municipalities, from 1995 to 2007. It finds that both local government reactions and the protests themselves are strongly influenced by the national political context. The analysis highlights some of the main grievances raised by protesters, from opposition to police violence and merchants’ frustrations over the management of marketplaces, to residents’ concerns about municipal corruption and resistance to neighbourhood displacement resulting from urban “modernisation” schemes. By challenging the performance of Burkina’s municipal councils and mayors, ordinary residents are exercising “voice” and seeking to give some real substance to notions of participatory decentralisation.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban protest
Burkina Faso
Municipalities

The metastable city and the politics of crystallisation: Protesting and policing in Kampala

Joschka Philipps and Jude Kagoro (2016)

Africa Spectrum 51(3): 3–32

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/000203971605100301 (open access)

When protests break out in downtown Kampala, they tend to transform a fluid urban environment into bounded political camps, and myriad ambiguous concerns into comparatively clear-cut political issues. This article traces this process and conceptualises Kampala's urban politics as a politics of crystallisation: as attempts to structure highly fluid dynamics into something concrete. The article is based on ethnographic research amongst opposition activists and the police forces. Both seek to activate political boundaries and make people gravitate towards their respective side. But, in line with the fluidity of urban everyday life, they also work and collaborate across these boundaries. The national regime and the opposition thus function not as permanent, stable structures, but as processes, as fields of gravity whose emergence is incited and inhibited, financed and policed. Drawing on Gilbert Simondon's theory of individuation and AbdouMalik Simone's work on urbanity, this analytical framework offers a dynamic reading of urban contentious politics in general, and a reinterpretation of the paradoxes of power in African politics in particular.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Uganda
Kampala
Political protest
Power and rule
Police
Gilbert Simondon

Seeing through African protest logics: A longitudinal review of continuity and change in protests in Ghana

Lewis Abedi Asante and Ilse Helbrecht (2018)

Canadian Journal of African Studies 52(2): 159–181

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00083968.2018.1477607 (open access)

Protests in Africa have a long history. Yet, for many years, western misconceptions in protest studies have hindered our understanding of the particularities and commonalities of African protests. In this study, we scrutinise the historical continuity and discontinuity of protests in Africa, using Ghana as a case. We situate a longitudinal analysis of protests in Ghana within the theoretical model of protest logics, using the institutional-analytical method. The study finds historical continuity largely in terms of proletarian (high cost of living, dispossession and inadequate infrastructure), republican (participatory governance and corruption) and corporatist (working conditions and unemployment) mobilisation themes in Ghana. These themes are underpinned by the processes of class struggle, accumulation by (urban) dispossession, neoliberalism, splintered urbanism, gentrification and corruption. The implication of this study is that contemporary protests in Africa would be influenced by issues such as high cost of living, participatory governance, erratic power supply, unemployment, poor road infrastructure and corruption. These issues should be prioritised in the agenda of African governments in order to avert spontaneous protests.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Protest logics

Longitudinal review

Continuity

Change

Ghana

Practices of protest in Luanda, Angola: A chronology of recent urban change in Chicala

Paulo Moreira (2021)

African Geographical Review 40(3): 274–287

Available at:

www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19376812.2021.1911817?src=recsys (paywall)

At the heart of this article is an investigation of the reciprocal relationship between the city of Luanda and one of its informal neighbourhoods, Chicala. The study situates Chicala among conflicts that have arisen in its urban densification process. It aims to understand the “slow” and “small” practices of protest acting in and around the case. These practices help to complexify the discourse on the city, bringing the local dwellers

closer to the rest of the population – everyone reacts to change. Actions of protest are in themselves an expression of citizenship, they present alternative visions for Luanda's future development.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Architecture

Protest

Chicala

Negotiation committee

Residents' commissions

7.3. Clientelism, citizenship and everyday politics

Recent studies have explored the nature of both clientelism and citizenship in African cities, including in relation to everyday practices of street trading, water infrastructure, waste collection and street-level politics. For instance, Gillespie (2017) and Dragsted-Mutengwa (2018) show that crackdown exercises in and around the central business districts of Accra and Nairobi catalysed street traders into a sociopolitical force. Paller (2019) argues that informal practices of public discussion and the politics of belonging in the context of daily urban life enrich the debates about public goods provision, civic participation, ethnic politics and democratisation in a rapidly changing world.

Paller (2014) contends that informal institutions of leadership – friendship, capitalist entrepreneurship, family and religion – shape political clientelism and democratic citizenship in urban Ghana. Additionally, clientelism could manifest through distributive politics. Chirisa et al. (2015), for instance, reveal that housing cooperatives in Harare had to associate themselves with political leaders in order to have access to housing land. Asante and Helbrecht (2020) expand the discussion by showing that distributive politics also manifest if state-led displacement is accompanied by the dispossession of supporters of opposition political parties in favour of individuals who are affiliated with ruling political parties. Research on different forms of clientelism interface with efforts to establish alternative forms of political subjectivity such as citizenship is difficult to come by. Rather, recent studies by Diouf and Fredericks (2014) and Lemanski (2020) have sought to explore the connection between citizenship and the everyday infrastructure of water, electricity, housing and sanitation.

From quiet to bold encroachment: Contesting dispossession in Accra's informal sector

Tom Gillespie (2017)

Urban Geography 38(7): 974–992

Available at: [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02723638.2016.1191792](https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2016.1191792) (open access)

This article draws on Asef Bayat's theory of "quiet encroachment" to analyse the political agency of street hawkers and squatters in Accra, Ghana. It demonstrates how squatters and street hawkers in Ghana's capital city are engaged in everyday practices of quiet encroachment, whereby they occupy urban space as a means to reproduce themselves. It then explores how encroachers take collective action to defend their access to urban space from state-led dispossession. In a context of competitive partisan politics, where the management of urban space has become highly politicised, hawkers' and squatters' organisations have been empowered to seek active engagement and dialogue with the authorities. Whereas Bayat argues that the informal proletariat in authoritarian contexts desire autonomy and invisibility from the institutions of the state, therefore, the particular characteristics of Ghana's multiparty system have created the possibility for bold acts of encroachment on urban space.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Street hawking

Squatting

Activism

Quiet encroachment

Urban governance

Democracy in Ghana: Everyday Politics in Urban Ghana

Jeffrey Paller (2019)

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/books/democracy-in-ghana/20E72D3CCE54A8636AC900430C9F2C47

Rapid urbanisation and political liberalisation are changing the nature of African politics and societies. This book develops a framework for the study of democracy and development that emphasises informal institutions and the politics of belonging in the context of daily life, in contrast to the formal and electoral paradigms that dominate the social sciences. Based on 15 months of field research, including ethnographic observation, focus group interviews and original quantitative survey analysis in Ghana, this book intervenes in major debates about public goods provision, civic participation, ethnic politics and democratisation, and the future of urban sustainability in a rapidly changing world. By developing new understandings of democracy, as well as providing novel explanations for good governance and development in poor urban neighbourhoods, the book transcends the narrative of a failing and corrupt Africa and charts a new way forward for the study of democracy and development.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Democracy
Everyday politics
Urban Ghana

Transformative top-down planning in a small African city: How residents in Bagamoyo, Tanzania connect with a city in motion

Seth Schindler, Nancy Duong Nguyen and Desdery Gerase Barongo (2019)

Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space 39(2): 336–353

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2399654419864605 (paywall)

The New Urban Agenda commits UN member states to the implementation of national urban plans, and this recentralisation of urban governance reverses nearly three decades of political decentralisation and devolution. The recentralisation of urban governance is evident in Tanzania, where the most recent industrial development strategy articulates a spatial plan aimed at integrating the country with regional and global markets. The lynchpin of this spatial plan is Bagamoyo, a small city located approximately 60 km north of Dar es Salaam. It is situated at the confluence of two development corridors, and as a result it was designated the most appropriate location for a greenfield port and an export processing zone. In the context of Bagamoyo's top-down transformation, authorities situated at the city and district levels struggle to expand services and infrastructure to accommodate a growing population and expanded urban area. In this article, we present original research and narrate the evolution of a city in motion; we focus on the city's fragmented water network and hybrid solid waste management services, and we explain how residents secure access to water and reduce exposure to waste on an everyday basis. We show that residents connect with the "heterogeneous infrastructure configuration" in a range of ways, and many residents effortlessly switch from one to another in the event of a disruption (for example, water shortage in the formal public system). We conclude that Bagamoyo's infrastructure and services should be configured to foster meso-level connections, as neighbourhood water kiosks and waste collection depots would result in more equitable and efficient outcomes.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Governance
Everyday politics
Regional planning
Tanzania

Infrastructure planning

The everyday politics of waste collection practice in Addis Ababa (2003–2009)

Nebiyu Baye Alene (2018)

Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space 36(7): 1195–1213

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2399654418757221 (paywall)

This article examines the unique approach the Addis Ababa City Administration put in place to address the city's municipal solid waste collection problems between 2003 and 2009. During this period, the city administration introduced a variety of governmental technologies to discipline waste as a material and to institute government-initiated cooperative micro-enterprises as a major actor in waste collection. In this article, I examine how the variety of measures the city administration introduced during the waste management reform disciplined waste collectors. I unpack this issue through examining the specific spaces of engagement between waste collectors (formal and informal) and city administration's representatives, by paying close attention to the everyday practices of waste collection. I also examined how the emphasis on reducing unemployment over the idea of creating a clean city can be better explained as a political exercise. Primary data collected included interviews of purposely selected experts (n=28) and waste collectors (n=42). Secondary data were also consulted. I use the concept of the everyday state and the notion of governmentality for the purpose of examining the intricate social relations that materialised between waste collectors and city administration and how this shaped waste collection spaces and practices. The findings reveal that the city administration was more focused on assisting cooperative micro-enterprises, with the aim of reducing unemployment, over the idea of creating a clean city. It is also shown that the different governing technologies the city administration employed to discipline waste as a material were in fact aimed at assisting cooperative micro-enterprises and reconfiguring the power relationship between waste governing institutions and waste collectors.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Cooperative micro-enterprises

Informal waste collectors

Power relations and counter-conduct

Disciplinary techniques

Governing unemployment

De-democratisation and the rights of street vendors in Kampala, Uganda

Graeme Young (2018)

The International Journal of Human Rights 22(8): 1007–1029

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13642987.2018.1492915 (paywall)

For a large segment of the urban poor in Kampala, Uganda, street vending has long served as a key livelihood strategy in the absence of formal employment opportunities and a public social safety net. This article explores the effects of de-democratisation on the rights of street vendors in Kampala, describing how changes to local government institutions and processes have forced vendors to adopt new strategies to assert their rights in an environment of closed political space. It argues that for street vendors in the city, economic and social rights are fundamentally rooted in political rights. As de-democratisation has robbed them of their political rights, it has also robbed them of their ability to assert their right to engage in their economic activities, leaving them increasingly vulnerable and marginalised. Barring a fundamental change in the city's political landscape, the hardships that vendors face appear to have no end in sight.
[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Street vending
Informal economy
De-democratisation
Political rights
Economic and social rights
Uganda

Politics in everyday Kenyan street-life: The people's parliament in Mombasa, Kenya

Stephanie Diepeveen (2016)

Journal of Eastern African Studies 10(2): 266–283

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2016.1187806 (paywall)

The presence of politics in everyday experiences – popular arts, culture and dialogue – is not new to the study of politics in Africa. Yet, most often, attention to political possibilities in the everyday appears preoccupied with their relationship to rule and authority, making it difficult to imagine political significance outside of an influence on forms of dominance. Hannah Arendt's early political thought provides an alternative way to imagine politics in everyday publics, by separating politics from rule and locating it in public speech and action. Drawing on Arendt's ideas around political significance of publics, this paper examines the nature and scope of political possibilities of a street parliament in Mombasa, Kenya. It reveals how possibilities for Arendtian political action are present in informal practices of public discussion, which are both contingent upon and compromised by competing interests, including elite and partisan competition.
[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Street parliaments
Public sphere
Kenya
Hannah Arendt

Street traders and “good officers”: Crackdowns as a relational form of urban governance in Nairobi

Brigitte Dragsted-Mutengwa (2018)

Articulo: Journal of Urban Research (online) 17–18

Available at: journals.openedition.org/articulo/3391 (open access)

In central Nairobi, crackdowns on illegal street trading by officers from the local authorities are a daily occurrence. Based on an ethnographic study of encounters between street traders and officers during crackdown operations in and around the Nairobi central business district (CBD), this article argues that crackdowns work as a platform for exchanges and thereby for the formation of social relationships. It explores how such relationships are formed and maintained during crackdowns, and how a range of urban actors has interests invested in them. The article contributes to regional literature on street trading by proposing a view of urban governance as emerging through everyday interactions and relations between urban actors. Furthermore, the article contributes to scholarship on relational urban governance by exemplifying how anthropological notions of exchange provide an analytical avenue through which such everyday interactions and relations can be explored.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Nairobi
Street traders
Exchange
Relations
Policing
Urban governance

Everyday practices in the production of uneven water pricing regimes in Lilongwe, Malawi

Lejla H Pihljak, Maria Rusca, Cecilia Alda-Vidal and Klaas Schwartz (2019)

Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space 39(2): 300–317

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2399654419856021 (paywall)

Recent scholarship has called for widening investigations of cities through the analysis of everyday practices that shape urban life. Critical water studies have contributed to

this emerging debate by using an everyday lens to document the diversity of practices of accessing and distributing water. Thus far, little attention has been given to the everyday practices of setting water prices and how these shape access. We contribute to this gap by investigating the practices of setting prices in two distinct service modalities within Lilongwe's water supply network. Our study reveals the hybrid and dynamic arrangements that shape pricing regimes, formed through the formal and informal negotiations on subsidies, incentives, tariff increases and distribution of profits. In these negotiations, the decision makers opportunistically mobilise their different and at times conflicting mandates (business and social) and guiding principles (equity versus cost-recovery). We conclude that pricing regimes are the outcome of intertwined structural processes and everyday practices that exacerbate uneven water flows in the city.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Everyday practices

Urban water supply

Pricing regimes

Uneven waterscape

Distributive politics at play in Harare, Zimbabwe: Case for housing cooperatives

Innocent Chirisa, Elmond Bandaiko and Nyasha Takawira Mutsindikwa (2015)

Bandung: Journal of the Global South 2(15): 1–13

Available at: bandungjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40728-015-0015-9

(open access)

This paper is a case in distributive politics (and hinges on land-based power dynamics), arguing that in the absence of state capacity to provide for housing, housing cooperatives have emerged and controlled largely by patronage. In this case, there is exclusion of those individuals, households and families not politically connected; and this has deep and undesired consequences in the management of urban areas in the end. In the Greater Harare urban (and peri-urban) landscape, the housing cooperatives have the power to control their members with respect to the contributions that each member can make in terms of finance and sweat equity (labour). Nevertheless, land as a resource remains a prerogative of the state, which the ZANU PF regime has controlled for a span of more than 30 years now. Housing cooperatives in Harare, as elsewhere in the country, try to identify with ZANU PF as a party identifying with conservatism enshrined in the existing laws (albeit the New Constitution that came about in 2013) and a party advocating for equity in the distribution of the land. Cooperatives have become a tool in which ZANU PF has re-asserted its influence and hegemony

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Social capital

Manipulation

Control

Governance

State capacity

Homelessness

Housing land

The Arts of Citizenship in African Cities: Infrastructures and Spaces of Belonging

Mamadou Diouf and Rosalind Fredericks (2014)

Palgrave Macmillan, New York

Available at: www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9781137481870

The Arts of Citizenship in African Cities pushes the frontiers of how we understand cities and citizenship and offers new perspectives on African urbanism. Nuanced ethnographic analyses of life in an array of African cities illuminate the emergent infrastructures and spaces of belonging through which urban lives and politics are being forged.

[Publisher's summary]

Method

Case studies

Ethnography

Keywords

Citizenship

African urbanism

Emergent infrastructures

Urban politics

Street traders and the emerging spaces for urban voice and citizenship in African cities

Alison Brown, Michal Lyons and Ibrahima Dankoco (2010)

Urban Studies 47(3): 666–683

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0042098009351187 (paywall)

As informal commerce has grown to become the lifeblood of African cities, street trade – among the largest sub-groups in the informal economy – has become a visible but contested domain. Yet the increase in street traders has not been accompanied by a corresponding improvement in their status as citizens or in their political influence. The paper first discusses the implications of theoretical debates on “citizenship” and “voice” for street traders and then explores characteristics of traders’ associations and

influence in four case study countries: Senegal, Ghana, Tanzania and Lesotho. Drawing together the authors' findings from research between 2001 and 2008, the paper identifies a fluidity of both formal and informal traders' organisations which fail to achieve lasting impact. Finally, the paper discusses urban policy implications, arguing for a more flexible definition of urban citizenship, based on rights and responsibilities, and an understanding of the complexity of grassroots associations of the marginalised poor.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keyword

Street traders

Urban voice

Urban citizenship

African cities

Infrastructural citizenship: The everyday citizenships of adapting and/or destroying public infrastructure in Cape Town, South Africa

Charlotte Lemanski (2020)

Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 45(3): 589–605

Available at: rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/tran.12370 (paywall)

This paper develops infrastructural citizenship as an analytical framework that bridges geography's sub-disciplinary silos. While urban geography promotes infrastructure as a core lens for understanding the city, recognising that political struggles are mediated through infrastructure, discourses of citizenship are rarely employed. Similarly, while political and development geography promote citizenship as vital in understanding sociopolitical life, often framed by citizen-led action to secure basic rights and services, critical debates on urban infrastructure are typically overlooked. Consequently, despite the growth in studies recognising the politicised nature of urban infrastructure and the centrality of citizenship to urban life, the multiple ways that citizenship and infrastructure relate in diverse urban settings has received limited critical attention. This paper demonstrates how urban dwellers' relationship to public infrastructure in the domestic spaces of the home and settlement, and the temporal scale of the everyday, offers a representation of broader political identities and perceptions, framed through the language of citizenship. In South Africa, despite 25 years of significant post-apartheid public investment in housing and services, frustration at poor service delivery and beneficiary (mis)use of public infrastructure remains dominant. While citizens adapt and consume public infrastructure in ways deemed "illegal" and "uncivil" by the state, citizens view these actions as a legitimate form of "citizenship-in-action" in the context of rapid urbanisation and poverty, and are frustrated by perceptions of state neglect. Using the analytical framework of infrastructural citizenship, the paper reveals how this state–society disjuncture represents a citizenship mismatch that is embodied

in infrastructure, rather than a material product of state disinterest or citizen destruction per se.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Infrastructural citizenship

Public infrastructure

Cape Town

Informal institutions and personal rule in urban Ghana

Jeffrey Paller (2014)

African Studies Review 57(3): 123–142

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/african-studies-review/article/informal-institutions-and-personal-rule-in-urban-ghana/83F1297B32DC322A2E4D940EDC1469D9 (open access)

Contrary to expectations of modern democratic development, the establishment of liberal-democratic institutions in Ghana has not led to the demise of political clientelism. Instead, the underlying informal institutions of leadership – friendship, capitalist entrepreneurship, family and religion – contribute to the persistence of personal rule in urban Ghana. Leaders amass political power by accumulating followers in daily life. The article provides empirical evidence to substantiate these theoretical claims in the form of two ethnographic case studies – a politician's primary campaign and the screening of a football match in an urban slum. It proposes an alternative model for the study of democracy and political accountability that extends beyond the formal institutional realm to include informal mechanisms that shape political clientelism in a democratic environment.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

African politics

Democracy

Personal rule

Informal institutions

Clientelism

Ghana

Urban regeneration and politically-induced displacement in a secondary African city: A case of the Kotokuraba Market Project, Cape Coast, Ghana

Lewis Abedi Asante and Ilse Helbrecht (2020)

Geoforum 115: 21–33.

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0016718520301755
(paywall)

This article presents the concept of politically induced displacement (PID) as a new theoretical construct for analysing displacement processes during regeneration of urban infrastructure in Africa. PID is a particular form of state-led displacement that entails the dispossession of supporters of opposition political parties in favour of individuals who are affiliated with ruling political parties. PID does not only draw on the familiar concepts of state-led displacement and clientelism, but also conceptualises the two as nuanced characteristics of urban development in Africa. Through an empirical scrutiny of the regeneration of market infrastructure in Cape Coast, we contend that PID is a function of urban regeneration, because it facilitates the exit and entry of political actors into newly developed urban infrastructure. The study demonstrates that clientelism and, hence, PID is as pervasive in urban development of secondary cities in Africa, as it is in capital cities. It concludes with a discussion of the theoretical rationale for the process-oriented concept of PID. We also highlight the implication of PID for the micro-geographies of market trading as well as urban and marketplace governance in Ghana and Africa.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Politically induced displacement

Urban regeneration

State-led displacement

Clientelism

Ghana

Citizenship and Infrastructure: Practices and Identities of Citizens and the State

Charlotte Lemanski (2020)

Routledge, London

Available at: www.routledge.com/Citizenship-and-Infrastructure-Practices-and-Identities-of-Citizens-and/Lemanski/p/book/9780367660901

This book brings together insights from leading urban scholars and explicitly develops the connections between infrastructure and citizenship. It demonstrates the ways in which adopting an “infrastructural citizenship” lens illuminates a broader understanding of the material and civic nature of urban life for both citizens and the state. Drawing on examples of housing, water, electricity and sanitation across Africa and Asia, chapters

reveal the ways in which exploring citizenship through an infrastructural lens, and infrastructure through a citizenship lens, allows us to better understand, plan and govern city life. The book emphasises the importance of acknowledging and understanding the dialectic relationship between infrastructure and citizenship for urban theory and practice. This book will be a useful resource for researchers and students within Urban Studies, Geography, Development Studies, Planning, Politics, Architecture and Sociology.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Various

Keywords

Citizenship

Infrastructure

Practices and identities

Citizens

State

8. Crime, violence and conflict in African cities

Crime, violence and conflict, including in relation to armed conflict and post-election disputes, continue to have devastating effects on socioeconomic and political activities in most African cities. Beall et al. (2013) indicated that “cities are often endpoints of wars largely fought in rural terrain”. Nevertheless, there is little dedicated research on the rising pressures on African cities from in-migration/resettlement issues that arise from conflicts and their implication for urban politics. In one exception, Peyton (2018) argues that conflict-induced urbanisation renders property markets increasingly lucrative, thereby producing speculation and competition among private-sector actors competing for ownership of urban land.

Studies have proposed measures for mitigating crime, violence and conflict in African cities. Chinwokwu (2018) argues that cooperation between police and private security companies should be enhanced. Fox and Beall (2012) suggest that city authorities must address the underlying risk factors of urban insecurity, such as urban poverty, inequality and fragile political institutions. Goodfellow and Smith (2013) draw on the case of Kigali to argue that keeping post-conflict cities secure, orderly and well-governed is crucial to African governments because cities bear the weight of many of the country's development aspirations. Research is needed on how conflict in secondary and less known cities has shaped urban politics. Additionally, not much is known about how crime, violence and conflict affect the socioeconomic activities and wellbeing of women in African cities.

An assessment of the relationship between private security companies and the police in crime prevention in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria

Eke Chijoke Chinwokwu (2018)

International Journal of Police Science and Management 20(1): 80–93

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1461355718756413 (paywall)

This study examined the relationship between private security companies (PSCs) and the police during crime prevention in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria. The study elicited data from 1,500 randomly selected respondents to a self-administered survey. Data were further collected through purposive in-depth interviews. Descriptive statistics was used for data analysis. The results showed that operational collaboration and networking between PSCs and the police during crime-prevention strategies in Lagos Metropolis were imperative for achieving a crime-free society. The study shows that PSCs and the police are in a collaborative relationship that has had a positive impact on the reduction in crime; however, synergy between PSCs and the police is weak. The study further found that areas in which PSCs and the police collaborate include: escort duties; static guards; investigation; crowd control; and patrol duties. The study also showed that most of the respondents identified areas of future collaboration and improvement between PSCs and the police, including: training; intelligence sharing; investigation; and prosecution. The study findings show that both PSCs and the police see their relationship as cordial and complementary, although sometimes unequal and competitive. The study highlights a need to improve interagency collaboration and networking; strengthen collaboration between PSCs and the police; and pool technical resources to fight crime in Lagos Metropolis in particular, and Nigeria in general.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Private security companies

Police

Crime control

Lagos Metropolis

Cities and conflict in fragile states in the developing world

Jo Beall, Tom Goodfellow and Dennis Rodgers (2013)

Urban Studies 50(15): 3065–3083

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0042098013487775 (paywall)

Our starting-point was the neglect of cities in contemporary discourses of state-building and state fragility, despite the fact that it is widely accepted that cities have historically played a critical role in processes of state consolidation, transformation and erosion. Our research has found that cities are still central to such processes, but in much more complex ways. The articles that make up this Special Issue represent a sample of the

larger research output of the programme, which we also refer to throughout this introductory article.

[Extract from article's introduction]

Methods

Various

Special issue

Keywords

Cities

Conflict

Fragile states

Developing world

A System of Insecurity: Understanding Urban Violence and Crime in Bukavu

Michel Thill (2019)

Rift Valley Institute, London

Available at: oenz.de/sites/default/files/a_system_of_insecurity_by_michel_thill_-_rvi_usalama_project_20191.pdf (free access)

Despite their rapidly growing populations, cities have largely been sidelined in discussions about conflict and insecurity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). But researching insecurity in cities is crucial to gain a better understanding of how state and society engage around key prerogatives such as security and justice. Crucial to Bukavu – the subject of this report – are its experiences of war, rebellion and occupation, in particular the Rwandan genocide and its consequences, and the Congo Wars of the 1990s and early 2000s. A continuing rural exodus, growing pressures on urban land, dispossession and oppression by occupying forces and easily available small arms have seriously tested the social cohesion of Bukavu residents. Facing growing urban insecurity, the residents of Bukavu have taken matters into their own hands either by engaging in criminal activities to survive or by mobilising against them. Improvising, fending for yourself (*débrouillez-vous*) and taking care of oneself (*auto-prise en charge*) have become logics of personal action engrained in the minds of the city's inhabitants.

Insecurity is a fact of everyday life for most inhabitants of Bukavu. Two of its more turbulent neighbourhoods – Essence and Nkafu – display a staggering diversity in the forms that this takes. Coping with this drains physical and mental energy, steals time, hampers mobility, triggers anxiety and undermines neighbourhood trust. Some people also benefit from insecurity. Facing a state withdrawing from public security and a stagnant formal economy, many residents of Bukavu have carved out spaces to make a living where opportunities exist. This has led to the flourishing of a complex economy around insecurity, marked by a degree of collective complicity. Despite the daily struggles to make ends meet, the majority of Bukavu's residents manage to stay clear of this economy, often showing considerable creativity and bravery in responding to its many challenges. There are, however, clear limits to what can be done to fight a

system upon which so many rely. Security has become inextricably linked to insecurity. At the heart of this system are the tensions between structural forces and the agency of the people who are affected by them. This has produced an ambiguous order, in which a plurality of actors compete to achieve the near impossible: to survive, thrive and provide security all at once.

[Author's summary]

Method

Various

Keywords

Insecurity

Urban violence

Crime

Bukavu

From rural rebellions to urban riots: Political competition and changing patterns of violent political revolt in Uganda

Frederick Golooba-Mutebi and Anders Sjögren (2017)

Commonwealth and Comparative Politics 55(1): 22–40

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14662043.2017.1248215 (paywall)

Violent political revolt has been common in independent Uganda. For a long time, such revolts were exclusively expressed as rural-based rebel groups fighting the government. Since the mid-2000s, however, this seems to have come to an end. Instead, urban riots, very rare in the past, have become much more common. This article analyses these changing patterns of types and location of violent political revolt in Uganda under the National Resistance Movement government. It argues that the earlier prevalence of rural rebellions can be explained by the combination of a coercive and militarised state, and weak and ethnically factionalised political forces who took their violent resistance to rural regional bases. Over time, however, government counterinsurgency became more effective and the conditions for insurgency were undermined by withdrawal of external support. Furthermore, the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 2005 opened up new avenues for political expression. The changes to the political system were, however, more nominal than real in many respects. While the rebel option had become less attractive and feasible, a series of social, economic and political grievances remained, which were only partly channelled through party politics. They also found expression through sporadic urban violent revolt.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Rebellions

Riots

Political revolt
Urban–rural politics
Uganda

Humanitarian urbanism in a post-conflict aid town: Aid agencies and urbanization in Gulu, Northern Uganda

Karen Büscher, Sophie Komujuni and Ivan Ashaba (2018)

Journal of Eastern African Studies 12(2): 348–366

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2018.1456034 (paywall)

This paper focuses on the urban outcomes of protracted humanitarian intervention in Gulu town, Northern Uganda. Using the concept of humanitarian urbanism, we demonstrate how intensive external donor-aid has shaped urbanisation in the capital of Northern Uganda. The starting point for our analysis is the recent process of withdrawal of humanitarian NGOs and the shifts from humanitarian to development interventions. This shift was characterised by a special focus on urban development, coordinated by the Ugandan state while largely donor supported. We argue that this shift, instead of introducing an urban involvement of aid agencies in Gulu town, actually reveals a protracted continuum of aid agencies' interventions in Gulu's urbanity. The current withdrawal of humanitarian organisations in fact makes the long-term effects of these interventions especially visible. As such, it offers an interesting starting point to investigate processes of humanitarian urbanism and its profound impacts on the urban material, socioeconomic and political landscapes. This paper demonstrates how aid agencies, since the armed conflict in Northern Uganda, have been key actors in shaping different dimensions of urban governance. Three case studies are presented, which variously focus upon the urban educational sector, Gulu's physical urban planning, and Gulu's cultural institution. They reveal how today's reconfigurations of the urban aid landscape have redrawn the complex relations between urban inhabitants, aid agencies and the Ugandan state.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Humanitarianism
Gulu
Uganda
Urbanisation
Aid town
Donor withdrawal

Colonial policing and urban space in the notorious Commune Rouge of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo

Simon De Nys-Ketels (2020)

Urban History: 1–20

Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/urban-history/article/colonial-policing-and-urban-space-in-the-notorious-commune-rouge-of-lubumbashi-democratic-republic-of-congo/E2CD15BC89BBF33BA8E70526F5BE6391 (paywall)

Zooming in on the urban history of the Kenya neighbourhood in Lubumbashi, this article deals with the relation between urban space, colonial policing and African unrest. Colonial policymakers feared the populous neighbourhood and its African masses, and deployed urban planning to materialise an ambiguous agenda of “welfare colonialism” and discipline. The implementation of these planning projects was incomplete, and a spatial analysis of subsequent African local unrest, everyday colonial policing and military schemes sheds additional light on how colonial forces and Africans utilised urban space as a resource for protest and control. As such, the article aims to contribute to the academic debate on colonial policing, in which spatiality has been lacking.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Colonial policing

Urban space

Lubumbashi

African cities and violent conflict: The urban dimension of conflict and post conflict dynamics in Central and Eastern Africa

Karen Buscher (2018)

Journal of Eastern African Studies 12(2): 193–210

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2018.1458399 (free access)

This article forms the introduction of a special issue on the relation between dynamics of violent conflict and urbanisation in Central and Eastern Africa. The aim of this collection of articles is to contribute to a profound understanding of the role of “the urban” in African conflict dynamics, in order to seize their future potential as centres of stability, development, peace-building or post-conflict reconstruction. This introduction argues for the need to bridge both the “urban gap” in African conflict studies as well as the “political” gap in African urban studies. Building on empirical and analytical insights from multi-disciplinary research in different African conflict settings, the author presents urban centres in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo, South Sudan and Kenya as crucial sites of socio-spatial and political transformations and productions. The main argument running through its analysis is that emerging urbanism in the larger Great

Lakes region and its Eastern neighbours presents fascinating lenses to better understand the transformative power of protracted violent conflict. This will be demonstrated by elaborating on the conflict-induced production of urban landscapes, urban governance and urban identities. Finally, this will lead us to crucial insights on how protracted regional dynamics of political violence, forced displacement, militarised governance and ethnic struggles strongly reinforce the conflictual nature of emerging urbanisation and urbanism.

[Author's abstract]

Methods

Case studies

Comparative analysis

Special issue

Keywords

Urban

City

Africa

Conflict

Urbanisation

Violence

Post-conflict

Wartime speculation: Property markets and institutional change in eastern Congo's urban centers

David Peyton (2018)

Journal of Eastern African Studies 12(2): 211–231

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2018.1452554 (paywall)

Conflict alters economic conditions and drives institutional change in cities. This article explores these phenomena through the lens of real estate markets and property rights institutions in eastern Congo's urban areas. These cities have experienced dramatic demographic growth and spatial expansion over the past two decades of instability and warfare. Conflict-induced urbanisation has rendered the cities' property markets increasingly lucrative and, consequently, produced speculation and competition among private-sector actors vying for ownership of urban land. New institutions, or "rules of the game", are layered over prior ones as state and non-state authorities attempt to manage an increasingly valuable and capitalised asset. This article draws from empirical data gathered in Beni and Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, to explore cases of institutional change. In the first case, the state's property rights institutions are layered over customary institutions, while in the latter case, a neo-customary institution – the Baraza Intercommunautaire – is foisted upon extant state institutions to produce hybrid land tenure systems. Drawing from historical institutionalist notions of path dependence, this article concludes that institutions that emerge during periods of conflict are capable of sustaining long-range impacts on urban governance and development.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Conflict

Urbanisation

Real estate

Property rights institutions

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The politics of everyday policing in Goma: The case of the Anti-gang

Maarten Hendriks (2018)

Journal of Eastern African Studies 12(2): 274–289

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2018.1459976 (paywall)

This article takes an ethnographic look at the phenomenon of the Anti-gang, a rather ambiguous everyday policing actor in the city of Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, which finds itself at the very heart of the over two-decades-old protracted armed conflict in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Like other everyday policing actors in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, the Anti-gang of Goma defy simple categorisation. They are rather situated in between categories: state/citizen, public/private, formal/informal and crime fighters/criminals. They are thus liminal subjects, who embody the blurriness of these supposedly binary categories' boundaries. Sometimes they can be framed as a vigilante organisation; at other times, or indeed at the same time, they can be depicted as a criminal youth gang, a delegated municipal policing – or even a paramilitary – unit. The aim of this article is, then, not to pin them down in one of these categories, but to examine what kind of politics their everyday practices produce. The main argument is that their in-between position is what makes them politically significant, and at the same time stuck in a liminal political space.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Anti-gang

Everyday policing

Vigilantism

Liminality

North Kivu

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Goma

Hybrid security governance, post-election violence and the legitimacy of community-based armed groups in urban Kenya

Moritz Schuberth (2018)

Journal of Eastern African Studies 12(2): 386–404

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2018.1457277 (paywall)

Many cities in contemporary Africa are characterised by hybrid modes of security governance that are co-produced by a variety of state and non-state actors of violence. While the (il)legitimacy of informal non-state security providers on the local level has featured prominently in discussions on hybrid security governance, there is a paucity of empirical case studies of what actually contributes to their (de)legitimisation, notably in the urban context. In order to fill this gap in knowledge, this article investigates how the legitimacy of community-based armed groups – such as vigilantes, militias and gangs – that are operating in Kenyan cities is influenced by the shifting functions they fulfil on behalf of various stakeholders. Based on field research in the informal settlements of Nairobi and Mombasa, I found that their involvement in organised criminal activities often costs vigilantes the legitimacy they had gained by providing protection and crime control for their community. At the same time, their involvement in repeated cycles of post-election violence leads not only to increasing ethnic segregation of the slums in which they operate, but also to the bifurcation of their legitimacy along ethnic lines. Taken together, the article contributes to our understanding of urban violence and conflict in Eastern Africa by tracing the trajectory of the (de)legitimisation of hybrid security actors in the two main cities in Kenya.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Hybrid security governance

Post-election violence

Legitimacy

Kenya

Urban violence

Non-state armed groups

Ethnic conflict

Vigilantism

Organised violence

Political violence

Mitigating conflict and violence in African cities

Sean Fox and Jo Beall (2012)

Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy 30: 968–981.

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1068/c11333j (paywall)

The process of urbanisation has historically been associated with both socioeconomic development and social strain. Although there is little evidence that urbanisation per se increases the likelihood of conflict or violence in a country, in recent decades Africa has experienced exceptional rates of urban population growth in a context of economic stagnation and poor governance, producing conditions conducive to social unrest and violence. In order to improve urban security in the years ahead, the underlying risk factors must be addressed, including urban poverty, inequality and fragile political institutions. This, in turn, requires improving urban governance in the region by strengthening the capacity of local government institutions, addressing the complex political dynamics that impede effective urban planning and management, and cultivating integrated development strategies that involve cooperation between various tiers and spheres of government and civil society.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keyword

Urbanisation

Africa

Conflict

Violence

Urban governance

An overview of the situation of women in conflict and post-conflict Africa

Grace Maina (2012)

African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Dispute (ACCORD) Conference Paper

Available at: www.accord.org.za/publication/overview-situation-women-conflict-post-conflict-africa/ (free access)

Conflict and post-conflict environments in Africa present unique challenges and opportunities for women. While violence and war periods have negative effects on women, it is suggested that "peace time" has implications for women as well. For most women, the end of war and conflict is marked by the excessive effects of trauma and shame. There are still numerous accounts of rape and forced marriages that undermine the social position of these women in society. Due to these circumstances, many women struggle to participate effectively in the affairs of their societies. The lack of skills or education among many of these women means that their access to economic opportunities is greatly challenged. It is critical that the implications of conflict on these women be clearly understood. Furthermore, the post-conflict environment must also be interrogated, as there are concerning social, psychological, physical and economic implications that continue to challenge women.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Women

Conflict

Post-conflict

Addressing the Problem of Political Vigilantism in Ghana through the Conceptual Lens of Wicked Problems

Kwame Asamoah (2020)

Journal of Asian and African Studies 55(3): 457–471

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0021909619887608 (paywall)

Ghana entered into the Fourth Republic in 1993 after experiencing political instability over two decades. A defining feature that has characterised the Fourth Republic of Ghana and marred Ghana's democratic credentials is the emergence of political vigilantism. Political vigilantism has basically been perpetuated by the two leading political parties in Ghana: the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress. The major political actors in the political system of Ghana continue to express the debilitating effects of political vigilantism on Ghana's democratic advancement; nevertheless, it continues to persist in monumental proportion in our political dispensation. Using a qualitative research approach, the paper examines the factors responsible for the pervasiveness of political vigilantism under the Fourth Republic of Ghana and proffer some plausible solutions to address this political canker. [Author's abstract]

Method

Secondary data

Keywords

Ghana

Africa

Political

Vigilantism

Wicked problem

Democratic

The politics of mobilization for security in South African townships

Laurent Fourchard (2011)

African Affairs 110(441): 607–627

Available at: academic.oup.com/afraf/article/110/441/607/98926 (free access)

Taking account of the myriad of policing initiatives that have emerged both from the grassroots and from the state in post-apartheid South Africa, this article investigates the politics of mobilisation for security. Focusing on the coloured townships of the Western Cape, it argues that there is no clear distinction between vigilantism and

community policing, but that they are best understood as two sides of the same process of mobilisation for security. The provision of security in poor neighbourhoods is an important resource in the struggle for political support, and the article argues that the willingness of government to ban vigilante organisations is not simply a reaction to their supposed violence, but also a way of defeating political opponents. By the same token, community policing initiatives are established both to reassert the authority of the state over communities that are supposed to be prone to vigilantism and to promote a specific political party agenda. The article concludes that rather than posing a threat to state sovereignty, local mobilisation for security in South Africa can be seen as part of a dynamic process of state formation.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Politics

Mobilisation

Security

Urban areas

South Africa

Community policing and vigilantism in Kisii: Towards non-violent and inclusive non-state policing

Wycliffe Nyachoti Otiso (2015)

The East African Review 50: 99–111

Available at: journals.openedition.org/eastafrica/298 (open access)

The paper studies the changing nature of local policing and argues that there has been a shift from vigilantism, where the vigilante has been the dominant non-state actor, to community policing in Taraacha location situated in Kisii County. The changes are characterised by a move towards non-violent forms of policing. Notwithstanding a number of changes, the transition is not seamless, as the discourses on inclusion are nuanced by asymmetries in administration and community cooperation, inadequate support for community policing and existing cultural constructs on governance. The state's continued reliance on the constitutive force of law as the main intervention in the regulation of public order has had minimal success thus far. Rather, local democratisation processes appear to have had better success in regulating and facilitating non-state policing activities. The case of Kisii County exemplifies the place of local conceptions and applications of democratic ideals including wider representation, accountability, equitable relations with the police and positive impact on the policing environment generally, hence contributing to the emergence of an inclusive and non-violent community policing structure.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keywords

Community policing

Vigilantism

Violence in the city that belongs to no one: Urban distinctiveness and interconnected insecurities in Nairobi (Kenya)

Emma Elfversson and Kristine Hoglund (2019)

Conflict, Security and Development 19(4): 347–370

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14678802.2019.1640493 (open access)

Rapid urbanisation in the Global South has prompted attention to the causes and dynamics of urban violence. Yet, much research tends to either analyse urban violence without attention to the broader conflict complexes of which it forms a part, neglecting linkages between different forms of urban violence and between urban and rural dynamics, or conversely study violence in cities without acknowledging the particularities of the urban context. In this article, we conceptualise urban violence, theorise how it is shaped by urban dynamics and explore its manifestations in Nairobi, Kenya. We find that while Nairobi is not uniquely violent inside Kenya, violence takes on distinct urban forms given city-level processes, and also that urban violence has led to policies that increase securitisation and militarisation of the city. Our analysis thus improves knowledge of how criminal and political violence is shaped by and shapes the stability of developing cities.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Urban

City

Violence

Nairobi

Electoral violence

Police

Security and party politics in Cape Town

Laurent Fourchard (2012)

Geoforum 43(2): 199–206

Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718511002132 (paywall)

Despite a long academic debate on the patrimonial dimension of the state in Africa and a more recent interest in African political parties, the effect of patronage and party

politics on governability in Africa's cities remains poorly addressed in the academic literature. This includes the case in South Africa when one looks at the security sector, which, to a certain extent, looks like a depoliticised field of expertise. Popular claims for security seem to be a side issue in the literature on social movements, while vigilante specialists and policing experts do not place party politics at the core of security issue challenges, especially in poor townships. The provision of security in poor neighbourhoods is an important resource in the struggle for political support, however. This is examined through two case studies in Cape Town Coloured townships, considering the role played by political leaders, NGO leaders and key officials in grassroots mobilisations for security. These mobilisations are not only about politicking, however; "ordinary members" of local security organisations also get involved, for motivations which have nothing to do with confrontational party politics. These different agendas between ordinary members and local leaders cannot be read as the manifestation of a fundamental opposition between the popular classes and a westernised elite, as suggested by Charterjee. They reveal instead prevalent and ambivalent relationships between partisan politics and popular mobilisations for security in a context of high insecurity.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Party politics

Vigilantism

Security

Community policing

South Africa

The spatiality of violence in post-war cities

Emma Elfversson, Ivan Gusic and Kristine Hoglund (2019)

Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal 4(2–3): 81–93

Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23802014.2019.1675533 (open access)

The world is urbanising rapidly and cities are increasingly held as the most important arenas for sustainable development. Cities emerging from war are no exception, but across the globe, many post-war cities are ravaged by residual or renewed violence, which threatens progress towards peace and stability. This collection of articles addresses why such violence happens, where and how it manifests, and how it can be prevented. It includes contributions that are informed by both post-war logics and urban particularities, that take intra-city dynamics into account, and that adopt a spatial analysis of the city. By bringing together contributions from different disciplinary backgrounds, all addressing the single issue of post-war violence in cities from a spatial perspective, the articles make a threefold contribution to the research agenda

on violence in post-war cities. First, the articles nuance our understanding of the causes and forms of the uneven spatial distribution of violence, insecurities, and trauma within and across post-war cities. Second, the articles demonstrate how urban planning and the built environment shape and generate different forms of violence in post-war cities. Third, the articles explore the challenges, opportunities and potential unintended consequences of conflict resolution in violent urban settings.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keyword

Violence

Peace

Urban

Cities

Space

Post-war

The city as barracks: Freetown, Monrovia, and the organization of violence in postcolonial African cities

Danny Hoffman (2007)

Cultural Anthropology 22(3): 400–428

Available at: anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1525/can.2007.22.3.400

(open access)

Responding to characterisations of the postcolonial African city as a negative space, theorists of African urban processes have begun to focus on the city's unique modes of production. But what does this emphasis on productive capacity mean if “the city” is not Johannesburg or Nairobi but the West African urban warscape of Freetown or Monrovia? I explore that question by examining how the labour of male urban youth is organised according to the logic of the barracks. I suggest that these West African capitals make labour simultaneously available for use on regional battlefields or mines, logging camps or rubber plantations. Focusing on the Brookfields Hotel in central Freetown and Monrovia's Duala neighbourhood underscores how urban spaces are increasingly configured by the structure and function of the barracks: as spaces for the organisation and deployment of violent labour.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case studies

Keywords

Capitalism

Labour

Masculinity

Violence
Africa

“The boys are coming to town”: Youth, armed conflict and urban violence in developing countries

Josjah Kunkeler and Krijn Peters (2011)

International Journal of Conflict and Violence 5(2): 277–291

Available at: www.ijcv.org/index.php/ijcv/article/view/2873 (open access)

Young people are major participants in contemporary intra-state armed conflicts. Since the end of the Cold War there has been a trend to portray this as criminal violence for private (economic) ends, rather than politically or ideologically motivated. Hence, the perception of young people’s role has moved from “freedom fighters” to “violent criminals”. Our discursive and conceptual reconsideration, based on a case study of Sierra Leone, finds that the associated dichotomies (“new war/old war”, “greed/grievance”, “criminal/political violence”) are grounded in traditional modernisation assumptions and/or constructed for policy purposes, rather than reflecting reality on the ground. Urban and rural youth violence in developing countries cannot be separated from its political roots. Moreover, the violent dynamics in which urban youth violence is embedded challenge our conceptions of what an armed conflict is. Including this form of violence in mainstream conflict theory would open the way for a new interpretation and more effective policy interventions. Extrapolating the experience of Latin American cities plagued by drug violence, the recent and significant increase in drug trafficking on the West African seaboard could mark the beginning of another armed conflict with high youth involvement, this time playing out in urban settings.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Youth
Armed conflict
Urban violence
Developing countries

Violence and urban order in Nairobi, Kenya and Lagos, Nigeria

Adrienne LeBas (2013)

Studies in Comparative International Development 48: 240–262

Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12116-013-9134-y (paywall)

This article examines the interaction between politics and informal institutions of order in two of Africa’s most violent and crime-ridden cities, Nairobi, Kenya and Lagos, Nigeria. In both cities, governments have failed to provide basic public services and security to citizens, especially to those who reside in informal settlements or slums. A

variety of informal institutions, including ethnic militia and block-level vigilante groups, fulfil security and enforcement roles in these relatively ungoverned urban spaces. This article examines the differences in the character and organisation of these “specialists in violence”, and it argues that these differences are often integrally linked to the political strategies and aims of elites. The article makes two primary contributions to existing understandings of informal order in violent cities in the developing world. First, I find that organisations seemingly organically linked to local communities, such as ethnic militia, are strongly influenced by national-level political struggles. Violent organisations can gain a foothold and degree of legitimacy by appealing to traditional loyalties, including ethnicity, but organisations with these advantages are also attractive targets for cooptation by political actors. Secondly, both direct state repression and electoral use of militia lead to more predatory forms of interaction between these groups and local communities.

[Author’s abstract]

Method

Case studies

Fieldwork

Keywords

Violence

Urban governance

Ethnicity

Policing

State capacity

Militia

Rethinking access to land and violence in post-war cities: Reflections from Juba, Southern Sudan

Gabriella McMichael (2014)

Environment and Urbanization 26(2): 389–400

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0956247814539431 (open access)

It is often assumed that violence diminishes after civil war, but in fact urban areas can turn into highly violent places with the end of open hostilities. The new forms of violence that can emerge are widespread but poorly understood and have been attributed to a range of factors, including rapid urbanisation, lack of economic development, continuing ethnic tensions and poverty. This paper examines urban violence in Juba, the “new” capital of Southern Sudan, through the lens of informal urban land access. The city experienced rapid population growth and an increase in land-associated violence after open hostilities with the north of Sudan ended in 2005. While the literature tends to emphasise the role of such actors as (ex-) combatants and unemployed and disenfranchised urban youth in urban violence after war, the analysis presented here aims to demonstrate the complexity of the underlying causes of land violence and the opportunism of a range of civilian and military actors seeking to benefit from the fluid post-war context.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Case study

Fieldwork

Keywords

Africa

Ethnic conflict

Informal settlements

Post-conflict

Urban land

Urban violence

Local politics and the circulation of community security initiatives in Johannesburg

Claire Benit-Gbaffou, Laurent Fourchard and Alex Wafer (2012)

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 36(5): 936–957

Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01137.x (free access)

The article analyses the emergence and circulation of community-driven security initiatives in two types of setting in Johannesburg, South Africa: street patrols and community courts in pre-apartheid and apartheid townships on the one hand; road closures in post-apartheid middle-class suburbs on the other. In spite of the obvious contrasts, the two types of community security initiatives share two important features: originating in a series of confrontations between the state and community groups; and being shaped, used and driven in accordance with local political interests, by existing or emerging local elites building their constituencies in the city. This grid of analysis stressing the political dynamics of community-driven security initiatives is applied to the global model of community policing, recently imported to South Africa. It usefully complements more classic neoliberal understandings of what community policing means for the governance of security in contemporary African cities.

[Authors' abstract]

Method

Case study

Keywords

Local politics

Community security initiatives

Johannesburg

Population growth, governance and urban social conflicts in Africa

Shaibu Bala Garba (2016)

Chapter 77 in: Umar G Benna and Shaibu Bala Garba (eds.), *Population Growth and Rapid Urbanisation in the Developing World*

IGI Global, Hershey, PA

Available at: www.igi-global.com/chapter/population-growth-governance-and-urban-social-conflicts-in-africa/215797 (paywall)

Many African countries are witnessing an increase in social conflicts, with negative impacts on their development. Most conflicts are urban centred, with causes rooted in social, economic and political issues and fatalities, property destruction and displacement as outcomes. This chapter asserts that issues of growth and governance are at the heart of conflict, with growth challenging the ability of most governments to deliver services. The chapter undertakes a broad examination of social conflict in the African context, with focus on understanding their cause and effects and the role that population growth, urbanisation and governance play in country conflict situation. The chapter examined conflict in three countries – Algeria, Kenya and Nigeria – from a macro and micro level, along with the role that population growth, urbanisation and governance play. The chapter concludes with findings and recommendations on ways to mitigate conflicts.

[Author's abstract]

Method

Review of literature

Keyword

Population growth

Urbanisation

Governance

Urban social conflict

Urban Africa and Violent Conflict: Understanding Conflict Dynamics in Central and Eastern Africa from an Urban Perspective

Karen Buscher (ed.) (2019)

Routledge, London

Available at: www.routledge.com/Urban-Africa-and-Violent-Conflict-Understanding-Conflict-Dynamics-in-Central/Buscher/p/book/9780367730376

Urban centres are at the heart of the dynamics of war and peace, of stability and violence: as “safe havens” for those seeking protection, as concentrations of public administrative and military apparatus, and as symbolic bases of state sovereignty and public authority. Heavy fighting in South Sudan’s capital city of Juba, post-electoral protests and brutal killings in Bujumbura, Burundi, and violent urban uprisings in Congo’s cities of Goma and Kinshasa, all demonstrate that cities represent critical arenas in African conflict and post-conflict dynamics. This comprehensive volume offers a profound analysis of the complex relationship between the dynamics of violent conflict and urbanisation in Central and Eastern Africa. The authors underline the need to look simultaneously at cities to understand ongoing conflict and violence, and at conflict dynamics to understand current urbanisation processes in this part of the world. Building on empirical and analytical insights from cities in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi,

DR Congo, South Sudan and Kenya, this collection demonstrates how emerging urbanism in the larger Great Lakes region and its Eastern neighbours presents a fascinating window to investigate the transformative power of protracted violent conflict. [Publisher's summary]

Method

Comparative analysis
Case studies

Keywords

Conflict
Urbanisation
Violence
Post-conflict

From urban catastrophe to “model” city? Politics, security and development in post-conflict Kigali

Tom Goodfellow and Alyson Smith (2013)

Urban Studies 50(15): 3185–3202

Available at: journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0042098013487776 (paywall)

In the years immediately after the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Kigali was a site of continuing crisis amid extraordinary levels of urban population growth, as refugees returned to Rwanda in their millions. Yet, unlike many post-conflict cities that spiral into endemic crime and instability, it was rapidly securitised in the context of political consolidation and large amounts of foreign aid, and hailed by the UN as a “model, modern city”. This paper analyses the government’s approach to securitising Kigali, interrogating how its rapid trajectory from epicentre of conflict to carefully planned showcase for development has been achieved. It is argued that Kigali bears the weight of many of Rwanda’s development aspirations and keeping it secure and orderly is viewed as critical by the government. After examining the national and local processes through which the government has aimed to achieve “secure urbanisation”, the potential longer-term implications of its urban development strategy are considered.

[Authors’ abstract]

Method

Case study
Fieldwork

Keywords

Post-conflict cities
Politics
Security
Development
Kigali

Political killing in South Africa: The ultimate intimidation

David Bruce (2014)

Policy Brief 64, Institute for Security Studies

Available at: www.files.ethz.ch/isn/185397/PolBrief64.pdf (free access)

This policy brief provides a summary of current information on the nature and extent of the problem of political killings in South Africa. The province of KwaZulu-Natal accounts for the overwhelming majority of these killings and in recent years these have been increasingly localised to specific areas, such as the Umtshezi (Estcourt) municipal area, Ulundi and KwaMashu. Though Mpumalanga was also associated with these killings, there appear not to have been any in the province since early 2011. Whereas during the apartheid period political killings took place in a diversity of circumstances, they now tend to be targeted “assassinations”, though some also occur in other circumstances. Available information suggests that less than 10% of these killings have resulted in convictions. There is a need for in-depth research and a better understanding, both of the obstacles to a more effective criminal justice response, as well as why the problem continues.

[Author’s summary]

Method

Review of literature

Keyword

Political killing

The Politics of Everyday Crime in Africa: Insecurity, Victimization and Non-state Security Providers

Danielle C. Kushner (2019)

Palgrave Pivot, New York

Available at: www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783319980942#aboutBook

This book offers distinct insights into the sources of state legitimacy in Africa by incorporating an analysis of non-state actors’ role in service delivery. The author examines how citizens’ reliance on non-governmental security actors, such as street committees, neighbourhood watches and community police forums, shapes their attitudes toward the state and their political participation. Broadly, this project contributes to our understanding of citizens’ everyday experiences of crime and violence at the local level, and why they matter, politically.

[Publisher’s summary]

Method

Fieldwork

Keywords

State legitimacy

Non-state security

Political participation

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- > Lagos, Nigeria
- > Lilongwe, Malawi
- > Maiduguri, Nigeria
- > Mogadishu, Somalia
- > Nairobi, Kenya



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