pasgr.org
PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICAN SOCIAL
& GOVERNANCE RESEARCH

Research Project Framework Paper

URBAN GOVERNANCE & TURNING AFRICAN CITIES AROUND

August, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The last decade has been marked by a profound turn-around in the perceptions of Africa, both at home and internationally. This has been driven primarily by the exceptional economic growth in many parts of the Continent, despite a slow-down and financial crisis in 2008-9. On the back of this sustained trend, a new trope has emerged within which Africa is seen as the new Asia, signalling the prosperous fortunes of Asian economies during the last three decades. This shift in perception and outlook has instilled a renewed confidence among many African states and also reflects in bullish pan-African debates as manifested in the Africa 2063 Agenda spearheaded by the African Union. It is worth citing an extract from this policy:

> We aspire that by 2063, Africa shall be a prosperous continent, with the means and resources to drive its own development, and where: African people have a high standard of living, and quality of life, sound health and well-being; Well educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge society; *Cities and other settlements are hubs of cultural and economic activities, with modernized infrastructure, and people have access to all the basic necessities of life including shelter, water, sanitation, energy, public transport and ICT*; Economies are structurally transformed to create shared growth, decent jobs and economic opportunities for all... (Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want, emphasis added)

It is telling and important that transformed African cities forms part of this vision because until very recently, pan-African development agendas remained fixated on agricultural transformation with little appreciation for the centrality of sustainable and inclusive cities.[1] It is against this backdrop that our study seeks to open up a fresh exploration of emergent governance practices in three prominent African cities – Lagos, Luanda and Johannesburg – that are profoundly implicated by the renewed vision for a prosperous Africa. For the purpose of this investigation, we invoke the popular trope: "turn-around cities" as an entry point to make sense of a new optimism about the direction some of Africa's largest cities are taking. In this sense, "turn-around cities" are the leading economic hubs of the larger trope: "afro-optimism". (Later on a more precise working definition of turn-around cities are provided.) This notion incorporated the assumption that with urbanisation you have the potential of an increasingly educated population, upward mobility and the expansion of consumption power, which in turn can fuel Africa's growth potential almost indefinitely. This narrative is being reinforced by

various business think tanks, pan-African developments agencies and of course investors and countries that could potentially benefit from sustained economic growth.[2]Cities are increasingly emerging as central to this discourse because the infrastructural capacities and movement efficiencies of urban nodes is critical to the larger growth story.[3]

Thus, at the core of the agenda of turn-around cities, is the question of infrastructural readiness of key urban nodes, coupled withan aggressive push for urban governments to ensure a favourable operating environment for (international) capital. If business magazines and commercial conferences are to be believed, international investors are standing ready and increasing their offerings to attend to Africa's massive infrastructure deficit. Rafts of projects are being pursued: bus-rapid transit systems; fibre optic cabling; road construction; real estate projects for the middle- and upper-class; water treatment systems; energy grids; and so on. Some national and urban governments are seemingly able to capitalise on this leading to a significant increase in inward investment. A prescient example of this is a promotional video on YouTube that shows the endorsement of President Bill Clinton of a new mega development in Lagos.[4]Another example is the "New Centralities Programme" of the Angolan government focussed on Luanda and linked to the Angolan government's sponsoring of the Second Infrastructural Conference in Luanda on the 29-20 April 2015.In terms of this vision, Luanda is being projected as a premium destination for international investment, linked with a holistic planning agenda to deal with the city's manifold challenges.[5]

However, because of the massive urban inequalities in these cities and the coexistence of swathes of destitute (in the slum areas) and islands of wealth and increasing opulence, urban governments are confronted with tough questions about how they are steering and regulating all these new investments. Are they simply reinforcing pre-existing urban divisions in the interest of economic modernisation? Is it inevitable that inequality will initially rise as investment takes-off and catalytic projects are pursued, and the real question is how to ensure better distributional outcomes over the medium- to long-term? Is it possible to create a favourable climate for inward investment and insist on a more inclusive growth model? Apart from the equity considerations, there are also broader environmental impact issues. It is not uncommon for environmental standards to be ignored or put aside in order to secure inward investments. Again, is this acceptable in order to at least get some capital into the urban system or should future problems be avoided through more stringent regulations in the short-term?

Since the bulk of academic research on urban governance and management takes either a "policy-fix" or radical "political economy" approach,[6] it is very difficult to get a grounded, dispassionate and insightful account of what is actually unfolding in African cities. This study is an attempt to address this lacuna by taking official discourses at face value, in the first instance, and exploring the nature of policy reforms to systematically and quickly reverse the fortunes of the cities under consideration. It is assumed that during the last decade, due to a confluence of various international, national and local factors, influential urban actors have coalesced to pursue ambitious urban reforms. The level of ambition is reflected in internationally focused imagination of the reforms and the quantum of resources mobilised to effect material change. This is the difference with previous initiatives; the current generation of urban boosterism linked to neoliberal managerialism seem to be backed-up with significant investment capital and seeks to project a particular image for global consumption.

It is difficult to overstate the importance and relevance of these processes in the larger African urban development context. Due to their economic and political importance, these cities by design or default set the agenda for home-grown urban governance reforms. It is therefore crucial to track the nature and significance of the urban investments that constitute the turn-around efforts unfolding. In order to orient the research, it is important map out what is at stake for African and other cities in developing their medium- and long-term investment strategies. This is the focus of the section after the next one and sets up the formulation of research questions that drives this inquiry. The final sections of the paper consider methodological issues, time-frames for the research, the policy engagement approach and envisaged publications. But first, it is important to address what is meant by turn-around cities in the context of this programme.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TURN-AROUND CITIES

The criteria for what we mean by turn-around are largely contextual and pragmatic. It seeks to capture the spirit and associated governance practices of confident African governments who are determined to achieve sustained economic growth and world-class urban infrastructure that can serve as the platforms for continuous growth. Turn-around cities manifest the following characteristics:

i.   There is a marked improvement in the economic performance of the city over the past 5-10 years, with prospects for sustained growth, defined narrowly in GDP

terms. The qualitative dimensions of the economic growth, for example, how labour-intensive or ecologically resilient the growth might be, are not an immediate consideration.

ii.   There is an expanding public investment agenda, with a clear focus on economic infrastructure, especially investments that can enhance productivity and inclusivity, e.g. public transport, road and rail infrastructure, social development investments and housing. Due to earlier periods of civil conflict and conservative fiscal policies associated with structural adjustment programmes, many African governments have been under-investing in various categories of infrastructure which reinforce a negative spiral of urban dysfunction.[7] In recent times there has been a renewed focus on raising public investments and this is particularly acute in urban areas deemed to be at the core of the country's larger economic system and fortunes.

iii.   There is evidence of fast-tracked projects over and above the routine operations of the city, that enjoy dedicated resources, implementation mechanisms and high level political backing, manifest in "world-class" and/or "turn-around" discourses. Most countries and cities that want to use public policy instruments to advance their economic positioning embrace the idea that they need to invest in rebranding the country and its main spatial landing pad—the economic hub found in major cities. Consequently, investments are poured into high profile, flagship initiatives that send a signal to the investor community that the country is prioritising and advancing world-class infrastructure that offers a landing pad for international investors and a rich cultural milieu for creative and service workers. This typically takes the form of high-end mixed-use precincts or new towns, downtown renewal efforts and an investment in attracting various international events.

iv.   A policy and institutional commitment to effective urban management is visible in one form or another. Urban management reforms tend to coincide with the priorities identified before. Most importantly, a lot of political capital is invested to create business-friendly planning and administrative processes which in turn leads to institutional reforms to create extraordinary public institutions to delivery specific projects or one-stop transaction centres or a combination of these kinds of interventions. In more mature settings, these institutional reforms feed into

more broad-based efforts to professionalise the public sector, strengthen leadership and create more transparent forms of governance.

v. There is an expressed desire for international recognition and reputation building as being, for example, world-class and/or globally competitive. As intimated before, cities that aim to dramatically change their fortunes tend to identify the international investor community is a key target audience to be persuaded about the modernisation zeal and potential of the city. Thus, extraordinary efforts are made to brand, market and hype the city, with the flagship projects used as primary evidence in the messaging.

This project uses these criteria as a reference point in researching and demonstrating the "turn-around" status of each case study. However, knowing what we mean by turn-around city is only one part of the task; the other is to assess the implications of a turn-around approach on broader urban development processes and trajectories. It is on this note that

URBAN DEVELOPMENT & GOVERNANCE POLICY LENS[8]

The world economy has been transformed over the last 25 years. Computing, communications, biotechnology, materials science and other fields are in the midst of technological revolutions, greatly expanding humanity's productive capacity. World output has more than doubled since 1990, accompanied by rising international flows of knowledge, trade and capital, as well as by enormous structural changes. Developing economies have grown in importance, their share of global GDP rising from just over a quarter to more than two-fifths over this period. The number of people living in urban areas surged by two-thirds, to more than half the world's population.[9]

At the same time as all these momentous transformations have occurred, we have also seen an unprecedented growth in the consumption of non-renewable resources and harmful greenhouse gases, raising the spectre of absolute limits to growth.[10] However, there is a very complicated international politics at play. The primary drivers behind these changes are emerging economies like Angola, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and South Korea and especially the Asian and African countries are hoping for a lot more growth and expansion as their populations and urban areas continue to expand over the next two generations. The question they pose is: Why must our prosperity be

halted or moderated in the interest of environmental constraints if we are not the ones who caused the bulk of the damage? This indignation is difficult to address and resolve because most of the global governance institutions are outmoded and too unrepresentative to mediate such complexities.[11] In the wake of stalled institutional reform of the global governance systems, a political and policy stalemate mark most policy domains, ranging from international trade to the conference of parties dealing with climate change.

Recasting Development Horizons

Against this backdrop of international policy inertia, the recently published draft Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will be tabled and adopted in some form at the United Nations in September 2015 are instructive.[12] There are seventeen goals and each is further broken down into sub-goals and targets to be achieved by 2030. The goals are qualitatively different to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000. The MDG agenda was essentially a basic needs, ameliorative programme that would at best drive poverty alleviation and reduction. The broader questions about the fundamental nature of the economy, inequality, cities, climate change and asymmetrical power relations were not in the frame then. Now they are.

In terms of the SDGs a sustainable economy is inclusive, resource efficient, characterised by full and productive employment and results in the reduction of inequality; it also addresses both the supply and demand sides of economic reform by insisting on sustainable consumption and production patterns. For the purpose of this paper, goal eleven argues to: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" and this is best read with the sub-goals associated with goal nine related to resilient infrastructure and inclusive industrialisation. These are particularly pertinent to the development trajectories that African cities should explore and pursue. The emphasis of the SDGs reinforce a trend that has become more and more significant over the past five years, i.e. foreground the role of cities as strategic sites for innovation and overcoming the inertia of the global inter-state system.

Indeed, many policy-makers and political leaders have turned to urban governments and mayors to charter a way forward.[13] This stems from the continued urbanisation transition in Africa and Asia, the ever greater concentration of economic activity in urban regions, and the scope of city governments to make much greater progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions through various infrastructural and spatial reforms.[14] The

implications for urban governance are daunting but from a normative standpoint, promising. In reviewing the literature that have been engaged with the potential role of cities as the catalyst for a more sustainable, inclusive, just and resilient future, a number of simultaneous policy reforms can be distilled:

1. All infrastructure and other investments undertaken during the next decade must strive to contribute to an efficient resource metabolism, especially in cities where the bulk of economic activity takes place.[15] This policy imperative address the fact that infrastructure establishes a certain path dependency in how cities function and evolve. The sooner one can redirect that directionality in as far as it shaped by how infrastructure systems conduct resources, channel the flows of people and goods, and shapes the spatial form, the better.

2. All infrastructure investments must find the optimum balance between achieving universal coverage of basic services to satisfy socio-economic rights (i.e. eradicate poverty), whilst transitioning the underling technologies onto a resource efficiency footing, and remaining affordable within the overall fiscal envelop of a given country and city.[16] (The complexity of this imperative becomes apparent if ones contrasts the relative wealth (GDP/capita), scale of poverty and infrastructure backlogs across the three case study cities.)

3. All urban investments must be subjected to explicit spatial and design criteria that can ensure optimal densities or intensification of land-use in relation to broader goals of environmental sustainability, social integration and economic efficiency.[17] This is particularly imperative in young fast growing African cities and towns that are already displaying vast landscapes of urban sprawl placing a crushing financial burden on households and businesses to access essential urban opportunities. Transport costs in particular, alongside energy and rentals consume almost all income of the poorest households.

4. New planning, public administration, legal, fiscal, land-use and environmental systems will be required to achieve imperatives 1-3. These will have to be *co-produced* among all sectors of society under the leadership of a democratic local state, committed to transparency, accountability and innovation.[18] This policy implication or aspiration is particularly challenging in the African context due to the limited extent of decentralisation and limited fiscal capacity and powers at the

urban scale of government. Furthermore, political cultures at the local level are often marked by culturally specific forms of clientalism and degrees of rent-seeking, which militate against co-production and civil society empowerment and oversight.

5. In pursuing this agenda, it is important to acknowledge that benign partnerships will not be adequate. Urban governance processes will have to become robust enough to hold profound conflicts of interest and power because deeply embedded vested interested will have to be exposed and upended. And since the local state is often implicated in the status quo, it means that political parties and local authorities will see intensifying contestation before a new democratic culture emerges that is fitting for a resource constraint and over-extended planet.

This policy agenda is a tall order for any city in any world region and particularly so for most African ones for reasons briefly intimated but elaborated elsewhere.[19]It certainly cannot be expected that the case study cities will demonstrate all of these traits. However, what is of interest is whether the processes that are unfolding in relation to modernising urban governance to pursue new priorities are potentially compatible with this new discourse taking shape or not. This line of enquiry invariably takes one to the central question of power relations.

Governance

Governance denotes the full range of institutions enrolled in a variety of processes to manage the affairs of a given a territory. Governance is distinct from government in that it pertains to the relationality between elected and administrative governmental entities and organisations within civil society and the private sector. Patricia McCarney and colleagues provides a useful touchstone:

> Governance, as distinct from government, refers to the relationship between civil society and the state, between rulers and the ruled, the government and the governed. Central to this relationship is the idea of credibility, of both politicians and governing institutions. The paths to improvement in credibility and legitimation of government lead through accountability, transparency, responsiveness, real participation, empowerment of groups in civil society and public consultation.[20]

In hybrid societies that reflect the intense coexistence of pre-modern, modern and post-modern institutional forms and norms, the relationality is particularly hard to discern because of the overlap between public, private and personal domains.[21] All African cities fall into this category to lesser or greater degrees, which is an essential cautionary note for the analytical work but it also points to the importance of thinking very carefully about the nature of governance and power in the mobilisation of scarce resources to pursue flagship initiatives to lead the city into a different future.

Governance and Power

A lot of the policy literature on urban governance tends to uncritically embrace the assumption that if governments institute participatory mechanisms and create dedicated forums for deliberating public policy priorities and plans, it will ipso facto lead to better outcomes. There is a lot of merit in broadening the base of deliberation and decision-making that informs the strategic analysis and outlook of the leaders of a city, especially when the local authority leaders invite other stakeholders into a carefully crafted process that will foster partnerships.[22] However, these institutional mechanisms is a classic example of governance arrangements that assumes a neat typology of state-society-corporate politics in which clear bounded organisations with clear identities and constituencies can engage around the table.[23] This conception can best be typified as neo-corporatist forums or talk shops that exclude at least as much as it includes. Civil society organisations that do not define themselves in relation to official politics, or prefer to stand aside from formal deliberative processes for fear of contamination or co-option are obviously not represented. Many civil society organisations that are too localised or poorly networked are simply not visible or powerful enough to be counted among the stakeholders that matter to be included in partnership-based deliberative processes. There is of course a question of practicality. High-level, and often rapid City Development Strategy processes by definition seek out the visible and well-organised interest groups across society in order to construct a shared narrative about the challenges and where to go next.[24] It is not logistically feasible to involve all the potential actors that have an interest in the process.[25]

It is important for this study to side-step conceptual approaches that assumes an easy connection between deliberative urban governance processes and inclusionary outcomes based on consensus. Instead, this study will draw on perspectives that foreground the nature, role and dynamics of power in urban governance and politics. Pettit provides a useful distinction between three kinds of power: visible, invisible and hidden.[26] *Visible*

power is the manifest capacity of actors in formal decision making bodies and public spaces to present and advance their interests, (ideological) perspective and priorities. In democratic institutions these power contests are regulated by legally enshrined principles and tends to fix the public attention because it embodies what is deemed 'proper' politics worthy of media attention.

Narrow conceptions of democratic governance are typically fixated on how citizens and organised interest groups (e.g. business associations or individual corporations, civil society organisations or trade unions) can access and influence these formal spaces. The bulk of the proliferating participatory governance tools are designed to underpin and inform these formal forums and political arenas, serving to both enrich and legitimize it. However, if one considers other forms of power, it becomes apparent why it is necessary to expand our conceptual and institutional canvass.

Hidden power shines light on the ways in which the formal political and policy deliberative processes and forums are not an equal playing field; the ways in which numerous voices and interests are systematically excluded from the debate. Hidden power is indebted to critical scholars and actors who demonstrate how official political and policy arenas are constructed and hemmed by specific discourses.[27] These discourses incorporate assumptions about how to frame an issue, what is sayable and what is taboo.[28] In highly hierarchical societies, e.g. India or Saudi Arabia, lower castes or foreigners are rendered invisible because the elites form the competing sides of a (staged) debate. In many Africa countries these lines of differentiation take on ethnic and regional dimensions. In that process, it does not occur to the media or public opinion that the way in which the public policy issue is constructed in the first place, is problematic.

Hidden power operates through deep cultural systems of differentiation and hierarchy, which in turn has often meant that the oppressed groups are also denied education and resources that will enable them to contest the rules of the game. Elite interests that straddle the political and corporate domains are expert at using hidden forms of power to reinforce their interests by equating their sectarian interest with the general good. In conflict-ridden and postcolonial settings that is a common phenomenon. The current era of media-obsessed politics of the spectacle and sound-bite, make it is easier than ever for elites to exercise hidden power unless there are well organised and persistent counter-points.

Invisible power stems from subjectivity, i.e. how a person understands and enacts a sense of self as an expression of self-esteem, confidence, self-worth, dignity and corporeality— one's relationship with your own body in terms of reproductive health and sexuality.In highly stratified, patriarchal and unequal societies, those at the bottom of the pile are systematically devalued and considered inferior, in part due to their material and educational deficits and in other senses due to their membership of 'inferior' classes. Thus, invisible power "involves the ways in which awareness of one's rights and interests are hidden through the adoption of dominating ideologies, values and forms of behaviour by relatively powerless groups themselves. Sometimes this is also referred to as the 'internalisation of powerlessness' in a way that affects the awareness and consciousness of potential issues and conflicts, even by those directly affected."[29]

In undemocratic and authoritarian societies, political elites and dominant groups actively reproduce these cultural systems of devaluation and social exclusion because it reinforces their hold on power and resources. It is also for this reason that traditional structures of authority and regulation are not only tolerated but even encouraged to operate in tandem with official systems of rule. This is a good moment to move onto another major blind spot in our current conceptualisations of urban governance and enablement.

The Unseen Role of Political Parties

The policy prescripts of mainstream development agencies such as UN-Habitat are surprisingly silent about the role of political parties in urban governance despite the dramatic proliferation of multi-party democratic systems across large parts of the developing world. Political parties all over the world, in very different constitutional and cultural settings face a credibility and legitimacy crisis.[30] In countries where voting is not mandatory this is often manifest in relative low voter turn-out numbers, especially at the local level. One reason cited for this tendency is related to the fact that modern political parties are obsessed with public opinion, which in turn is shaped by media houses. In an era of globalised news on a twenty-four/seven basis, the "sound-bite" rules. Politicians are profoundly aware that one slip of the tongue or unguarded moment can cause a political storm and potential disaster for their careers.

It all starts with elections that are increasingly focussed on selling competing images or brands to the electorate. The most extreme and surrealmanifestation of this is of course

the superficiality of the American elections, which sadly is increasingly observable in more and more countries. With the rise of social media and the 'miniaturisation' of the news through platforms such as twitter, this tendency is reinforced. Professional politicians are surrounded by spin-doctors who are more interested to be 'on message' than genuinely engaged with the complexities of the day. This is sensed by the voters and further erodes credibility and trust in public institutions. Political alienation is particularly acute among the youth.

These dynamics also set the tone for intra-party politics and democracy. Thus, most political parties seek out the charismatic leader that will look good on television and project persuasively in the press. Given the cost of running modern political campaigns, money becomes a key driver in party influence and power. It is therefore no coincidence that many countries still do not have laws that compel political parties to reveal who their donors are. Many political parties across the ideological spectrum fight this call for transparency with impressive zeal. Secrecy, deal-making, factionalism, endless intra-party squabbles mark most modern political parties. The overall effect is the shrinking of internal democratic systems and values, which in turn feeds an upwards (as opposed to downward) accountability culture: party activists and members are all keen to serve the party leadership to advance upward mobility as opposed to the constituents.[31]

This culture thrives on hidden power and spills over into how modern polities are run. Everything is curated, stage-managed, manicured and filtered trough a tightly controlled approval system. These relatively longstanding dynamics of mature democracies in Europe, America and Japan are in clear evidence across the developing world, no least the large emerging powers such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa. A particularly worrying trend in contexts like India and South Africa is the tendency of ruling parties to use their branch level structures, anchored in local communities, as bridgeheads to 'colonise' public and community life at the local level. The party machinery insinuates itself into service delivery decisions, local contracting agreements, allocation of scarce resources and invited deliberative spaces where local priorities are discussed. Given the relative power and influence of the dominant political party, it can stifle democratic pluralism and the growth of effective independent civil society organisations along with undermining the functioning of the judicial system. This is a serious problem because effective governance in a resource constrained era demands dynamic civic action across all levels of society.These dynamics play out in highly specific ways across Angola, Nigeria and South Africa but they are undoubtedly present.

The Necessity of Democratic Pluralism & Dissent

All of the formal policy frameworks promoted by development agencies rests on a consensual model of modern democratic politics. This approach operates on the assumption that it is possible to differentiate societal institutions along distinct categories: public (state), private (business) and community (civil society organisations). These institutions are marked by distinct interests that need to be brought into harmony for the larger societal good. This conceptual and political model has grown out of the venn-diagram archetype of sustainable development whereby social, economic and environmental imperatives need to be 'coordinated' and 'balanced'.[32] The idea is that if one can create a legally determined level playing field for the three spheres of political life, through effective deliberation premised on access to the best possible information, the optimum political solution will be arrived at. In other words, fair deliberative consensus produces the most democratic and effective outcomes.

There is now an established and convincing critique of this model of planning and politics.[33] Firstly, it operates on the basis of visible and designated organisations in the formal political landscape that ostensibly play by the rules of the official game. It ignores the fact that large swathes of civil society and small businesses are by definition excluded from these forums and their views are not incorporated into the dialogues in formal settings. Secondly, the terms of public debate and what is considered legitimate political matters of concern are established within the worldview and priorities of the parties at the formal table, not those whose voices are excluded or ignored. Thirdly, given the importance and nature of hidden and invisible power, a different kind of politics is called for; one that is not only about formal deliberation through various participatory mechanisms but rather a 'scream' from the gut of those who are routinely exploited, ignored and stepped over.[34]This scream can take on many forms but ironically is usually in the form of 'quiet encroachment' or subtle subversion and circumvention of the rules. It typically requires civil society organisationsthat prefer to take on a more oppositional stance (see Figure 1)to translate these experiences into formats that mainstream politics can hear and respond to.

Figure 1: Civil society actions spectrum in relation to government
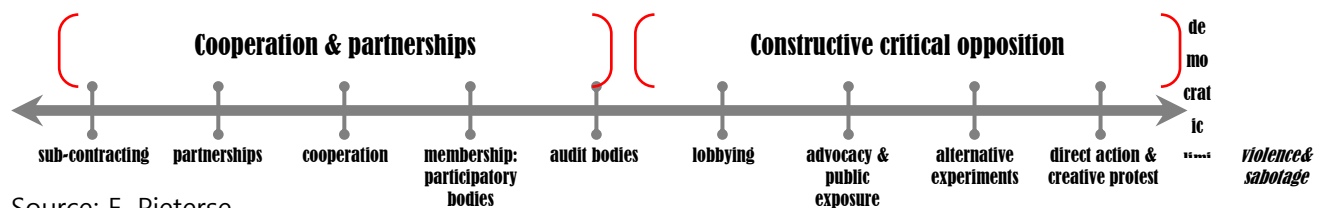
Source: E. Pieterse

Democratic local governance would not be able to function effectively without formal deliberative institutions that provide an opportunity for well organised interests to debate the challenges facing their territory and how best to respond. Such spaces are essential to shape the content and nature of formal decision-making by local authorities at the levels of the council and the executive. The literatures on network and reflexive governance and 'strategic intermediaries' or 'interlocutors' provide useful insights into how issue-driven networks can be fostered that cuts across the formal institutional divides between the government, business and civil society organisations. In fact, in the context of city-wide strategic planning processes aimed at addressing major systemic problems, it is essential that such networks emerge to work in both formal and informal registers. These formal spaces that civil society and business groups get invited into need the destabilisation and pressure from autonomous activities that step from invented spaces where social groups formulate criticisms or experiment with their own alternative ways of doing.[35]For example, there can be little doubt that the massive public protests across all major Brazilian cities in 2013 fundamentally altered the agenda and priorities of formal governance spaces such as parliament, local councils and other corporatist settings.

Mature and visionary local government leaders are typically able to embrace such dissent and diversity because it enhances the overall legitimacy and quality of the polity. However, to make this argument more concrete it is important to be more precise about the ways in which local authorities can foster a deeply democratic culture with multiple opportunities for citizen engagement, empowerment and co-production. Effective governance that produce more inclusionary outcomes and innovation need to be systemic, i.e. function across many mutually reinforcing domains.

Institutional Building Blocks of Democratic Urban Governance
In the first instance it is essential that the core of democratic local authorities are in place and vibrant, i.e. elected councils are in place to legally mediate competing social interest and demands and hold the executive authority to account. Second, strong local government leadership is in evidence either in the form of executive Mayors (that may or

15

may not be directly elected), working closely with the council and representative bodies of civil society and the private sector. In an era where every urban management decision can have far-reaching long-term consequences, it is essential that political leaders can offer vision and direction on how the tough and often impossible trade-offs and imperatives will be addressed during her/his term of office. Institutionally, this ought to translate into the adoption of various techniques (that have unique cultural inflections in different regions, countries and cities) identified in Table 1.

Third, there should be an institutional commitment to subject as many aspects of urban management and service delivery to democratic engagement and oversight. In an era of ubiquitous technology and mobile connectivity, even among poor classes, a vast portfolio of participatory techniques and applications are available for adoption to suit local contexts.[36] These are especially important when service delivery models can be differentiated to satisfy diverse income groups' demands and to accommodate the possibility of community co-production where the residents might not be in a position to pay for user charges. At the time of Habitat II in 1996, participatory budgeting was emerging as a powerful instrument to facilitate participation, democratise prioritisation and improve service delivery efficiency. Today, these measures are complemented by social auditing techniques that allow citizens to scrutinize and monitor the contracts between municipalities and service providers. And in contexts where social auditing is not allowed, citizens can use various mobile applications that can empower them to lodge complaints, take photographs of poor service delivery and expose bureaucratic neglect.It is particularly young people who are drawn to these forms of citizenship.

Fourth, it is vital that local authorities and city leaders (mayors and leaders from other sectors) commit to fostering atmospheres of vibrant democratic engagement, social learning and innovation. Local authorities need to be confident in their own identities, premised on clear legal mandates, but also invest in the establishment of strategic deliberative forums to debate long-term imperatives of sustainable urban development alongside participatory techniques to continuously improve service delivery. Furthermore, local authorities need to actively encourage constructive critical opposition (see Figure 1) by civil society formations that choose to stand apart from formal processes and project their own perspectives and visions into the public domain. Such tolerance enhances political capital and it creates sufficient political diversity for true innovation to emerge.

The scope and complexity of the demographic, economic, environmental and cultural challenges that impinge on cities demands step-change innovation. This can be induced through intentional research and development laboratories that bring together diverse expertise and interests to produce novel insights and applications. With the recent appreciation of the power and importance of design thinking, many cities across the world are experimenting with these formats. This is an important addition to the practice of creative urban governance. However, design thinking, especially 'spatial literacy' has enormous potential to revolutionise the ways in which poor and informal neighbourhoods are routinely planning, upgraded, managed and transformed into fully urban spaces.[37] It is beyond the scope of this paper to delve into this, but suffice to underscore that it is potentially the linchpin that can connect bottom-up innovations with top-down renovations of urban management and service delivery.

Table1: Co-governance instruments at the local level

Building blocks	Potential co-governance mechanisms
1. Strategy and planning:	• Macro long-term strategic plans, e.g. CDS, Growth Management Strategy, Climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy • Spatial development frameworks • Medium-term income and expenditure frameworks • Local and neighbourhood levels plans, including prescient level plans to promote sustainable human settlements
2. Service delivery innovations:	• Participatory service delivery planning, budgeting, management and monitoring • Joint delivery systems at the local level • Public auditing mechanisms to ensure contract compliance and recourse for dissatisfied citizens • Digital crowd-sourcing of service delivery problems and bottlenecks to improve responsiveness and effectiveness • Digital feedback mechanisms (e.g. sensors) to improve the overall coordination and management of the service • Dedicated financial and training resources to boost the capacity of community organisations to fulfil these roles
3. Advocacy and agitation	• Ensure that formal invited spaces for public consultation and engagement are open for a wide range of civic and private organisations and voices. • Ensure legal protection for civic actors to establish their own political and practice spaces that may be critical or oppositional to official deliberative spaces.

	• Ensure legal and moral fealty to the principle of the right to information, a free press and freedom of expression.
4. Social learning mechanisms for innovation	• Establish and support regional innovation systems that connect green businesses, universities, think-tanks, social movements, public policy entrepreneurs and state-owned enterprises. • Promote a culture of innovation labs focussed on critical systemic questions that present obstacles to the medium- and long-term sustainability of the city or town. • Promote a culture of public debate through exhibitions and learning fairs that draw in all age groups and foster a shared dialogue about good practice and lifelong learning. • Related, but distinct, promote festivals of democratic achievement driven by non-government actors, to promote and celebrate key milestones on the urban transformation journey. These events can build onto established culturally significant rituals and festivals.

To reiterate an earlier point, this agenda for reformed urban governance is ambitious. However, the point of the last inter-related sections is to explicate what the normative horizon is that we need to evaluate emergent governance systems and processes against. The emblematic flagship projects in the three case study cities provide a portal through which this study travel to create a snapshot of the political economy of rule in the contemporary period. The research must be spatially-historically grounded in order to appreciate the power dynamics between various actors across the governance system. The research must also appreciate that effective and inclusionary governance is inherently an evolutionary and contested set of processes with no guarantees. Even if progressive reforms and measures are introduced, there is no certainty it will lead to intended outcomes. It is therefore essential to remain empirically grounded, open and curious. The exploration of various flagship initiatives in each site allows the programme to consistently move between the intended and the emergent real, always rooted in a long view about how the political economy of decision-making has evolved over time. This is a good point to move on to the research questions and method.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The previous section provides considerable background to the orientation this study adopts in understanding the political economy of urban governance dynamics that underpin urban development efforts to turn-around the fortunes of three African cities.

The programme has settled on the cities that represent the economic hubs of the three largest Sub-Saharan African economies and because each of these sites embody explicit policy efforts by the state to be more focused and judicious to bring these cities on par with other "world-class" cities. (It is envisaged that this investigation will be able to move on to other African cities after the first cycle of investigation and publishing, so the criteria for selection was informed by the conception of turn-around cities and pragmatism.) Given the stakes, relative state capacity and the volume of resources that have been invested in the recent past, Lagos, Luanda and Johannesburg make for ideal candidates to explore the nature and dynamics of public policy efforts to turn-around the directionality, functioning and image of these cities.

In broad terms, each research team and the project as a whole will endeavour to answer the following questions:

1. What is the evidence that the research reflects the criteria of turn-around cities?
2. What are the primary elements of the urban development agenda?
3. What is the discursive rationale and strategy of the urban development agenda and priority programmes that are invested with political capital?
4. Do the flagship projects potentially contribute to more adaptive and inclusive patterns of urban development, considering various dimensions of urban power and exclusion, including gender?
5. What is the genesis of the flagship initiative? Where do they originate from as an idea/imaginary and programmatic artifact?
6. To what extent were the priority programmes or flagship initiatives developed in a top-down technocratic fashion, and/or in a consultative manner?
7. What are the prospects of achieving the stated goals of the flagship initiatives?
8. What are the prospects of the flagship initiative to establish a pathway towards greater adaptiveness and inclusivity?

These questions will be addressed by gathering and analysing the following categories of data.

Political economy context of urban development dynamics
Each research team will map out, even if in very schematic terms, the drivers of the political economy of urban development. Some of the issues that could be explored in such an elucidation are:

- the compositional nature of the regional economy—sectors, relative size of each in terms of contribution to regional general value add/economic output and labour market, formal-informal dynamics, and so forth;[38]
- labour market dynamics, especially in terms of formal and informal sectors but also in terms of age cohorts and how that links with the larger demographic structure of the city-region;
- informal economy—size, shape and dynamics;
- social mobility, with an eye on what is happening to the middle-class—speed at which it is growing, consumption preferences as it pertains to housing demand and mobility;
- inward invest trends over a 10-15 period to help understand where the investors come from and what the compositional shifts might be as the city has started to turn-around;
- civil society dynamics: organisational thickness, media and freedom of expression, the voice of women and other disadvantaged sectors, election dynamics and political parties, and the profile and role of public intellectuals who might be the only legitimate source of opinion to contest the "turn-around" narrative.

Governance context and system

In order to think across the three contexts, it will be useful to have some common background information about the governance systems. In this regard each case study will provide insight on:

- the relevant powers and functions in the control of the (local) authority that is driving the overall urban development processes and the flagships in particular;
- some sense of the political and institutional precedents (colonial, postcolonial) and continuities for how the system works at present;
- the nature of the multi-level government system and how interactions between tiers/levels of government are organised;
- the division of revenue and expenditure across the levels of government with specific reference to the financing mechanisms of the flagship projects and the broader domains that they impact on;
- the basic statistics on levels of access to basic services and other urban functions (use official statistics and customer satisfaction surveys where these might exist);
- a catalogue of the proclaimed urban development priorities over the past decade; and
- similarly, a catalogue of the proclaimed priority initiatives.

Overview of the Flagship Initiatives

Each case study will provide an overview of the suite of flagship initiatives so that the choice for the two that will be explored in greater depth is clearly established. In the overview discussion, a short summary of each should be provided with a reflection on the "discursive frame" that cohere these projects, or not, as the case might be. This will create a legible context for the in-depth discussions that will follow.

In-depth account of 2 flagship initiatives

Without being too prescriptive, it would be ideal if the discussions on the flagship initiatives cover the following ground:

- the relevance of the flagship initiatives in relation to the broader development challenges facing the city with an eye on making an interpretative judgment about the appropriateness of these priorities;
- likelihood of consistent implementation and achievement of the formal goals of the initiatives by reflecting on the institutional architecture and efficacy of the delivery aspects;
- a risk profile of the initiatives in terms of economic, political, cultural and social impacts;
- the institutional and political capacity to anticipate and manage risk and opposition to the initiatives;
- a rounded account of civil society and private sector responses and motivations without treating these as homogenous categories and ensuring a gendered analysis of the findings;
- prospects of the interventions to establish and/or consolidate new path dependencies for the city-region over the medium- and long-term in the direction of the normative concern of the study: inclusive and adaptive urban development pathways.

In turning the data into a research narrative, it will be essential to keep an eye on the analytical frame of the project established in the previous sections. At the Inception Workshop of the research the following elements we identified as critical for the analysis:

Table 2: Analytical categories for case studies[39]

Analytical Category	Dimensions[*]
1. Capacity	- Human - Financial - Institutional systems to plan and act/implement
2. Inclusiveness	- Public satisfaction - Nature of decision-making processes
3. Accountability	- Multi-level system: powers and functions division - Democratic mechanisms to mediate decision-making within (local) state and with external actors, especially around contested issues
4. Contestation	- Type of political regime - Relationships between political parties and within

Policy Implications

The policy implications can pertain to the specific flagships, but for the project as a whole it makes sense to return to the four analytical categories in Table 2, which in turn will be embedded in the broader conceptual frame set out earlier. Policy implications will be extrapolated for each case study and comparable cities in Africa. This will be addressed in the conclusion of the book.

RESEARCH OUTPUTS

The research reports will feed into an edited book volume. It broad terms the volume could contain the following elements:

1. Introduction
2. Conceptual overview on urban governance and turn-around cities
3. Overview of the institutional and investment drivers of urban development in Africa (to provide a broader political economy context for the case studies)[40]
4. Lagos
5. Luanda
6. Johannesburg
7. Cross-cutting findings and broader implications
8. Conclusion and research agenda.

---

[*]All of these dimensions should be considered with a gendered lens to ensure that the various lines of intersectionality are carefully woven into the research process and findings.

In addition, the research will be enhanced through the output of a commissionedvideographer/photographer in each of the case study cities to enrich the book and to establish a visual narrative of the markers of turn-around processes. Ideally, the videographer will be able to document the flagship projects along with the shadows that inevitable stalk these kinds of initiative. Each case study will be translated by the researchers into a series of Policy Briefs to ensure that practitioners and decision-makers can benefit from the insights derived from the research.

The project will draw heavily on an expert review panel that will participate in the Inception Workshop (18-19 May 2015) and a Research Findings Workshop (November 2015). This group will also provide peer review comments on all of the chapters for the book. Finally, the research will be tabled at various academic conferences that will be identified by members of the research team in consultation with the PI.

[1]Parnell, S. and Simon, D. (2014) National urbanisation and urban strategies: necessary but absent policy instruments in Africa. In: Parnell, S. and Pieterse, E. (eds) *Africa's Urban Revolution*. London: Zed Books.

[2] For example, see: McKinsey Global Institute (2010) *Lions on the move: The progress and potential of African economies*. Washington DC: McKinsey & Company; Hatch, G., Becker, P. and van Zyl, M. (2011) *The Dynamic African Consumer Market: Exploring Growth Opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Dublin: Accenture

[3] PWC (2015) *Into Africa: The Continent's Cities of Opportunity*. London: PWC.

[4]"Lagos, Africa's Big Apple", promotional documentary on You Tube, published in June 2013.

[5]See: African Cities Special Issue No 1, Supplement to *African Business*, March 2015. London: IC Publications.

[6]This is further explored in: Pieterse, E. (2010) Cityness and African Urban Development, *Urban Forum*, 21(3): 205-219.

[7]These shortfalls are documented in: AfDB [African Development Bank](2013)*An Integrated Approach to Infrastructure Provision in Africa*. Tunis: AfDB; Banerjee, S., Wodon, Q., Diallo, A., Pushak, T., Uddin, H., Tsimpo, C. and Foster, V. (2009) Access, Affordability, and Alternatives: Modern Infrastructure Services in Africa. Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic Background Paper 2. Washington DC: World Bank.

[8]This section draws heavily on: Pieterse, E. (2015) Urban Governance and Legislation. Draft background report prepared for the World Cities Report 2015. Cape Town: African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town.

[9] The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate (2014) *Better Growth. Better Climate. The New Climate Economy Report*. Washington DC: New Climate Economy, p. 24.

[10]United Nations Environment Programme (2014) UNEP (2014) *Decoupling 2: technologies, opportunities and policy options*. Nairobi: UNEP.

[11]Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations (2013) *Now for the long term*. Oxford: University of Oxford; Runciman, D. (2014) *Politics*. London: Profile books.

[12]United Nations (2015) Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. [Finalised text for adoption, 01 August 2015] New York: United Nations.

[13]See: Atkins, DFID and UCL (2013) *Future Proofing Cities. Risks and opportunities for inclusive growth in developing countries*. London: DFID; Hoornweg, D. Freire, M. Baker-Gallegos, J. and Saldivar-Sali, A. (eds) (2013) *Building sustainability in an urbanizing world*. Urban development

knowledge series papers, No. 17. Washington DC: World Bank; Pennell, N; Ahmed, S and Henningsson, S. (2010) Reinventing the City to Combat Climate Change. *Strategy+Business Magazine*, 60: 1-10; World Bank (2010) *Cities and climate change: An urgent agenda.* Washington DC: World Bank; WWF [World Wildlife Fund] (2010) *Reinventing the city. Three prerequisites for green urban infrastructures*. Gland: Switzerland.

[14]The policy and economic rationale for this thinking is cogently set out in: McKinsey Global Institute (2011) *Resource Revolution: Meeting the world's energy, materials, food, and water needs*. Washington DC: McKinsey & Company.

[15] The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate (2014) *Better Growth. Better Climate. The New Climate Economy Report*. Washington DC: New Climate Economy; United Nations Environment Programme (2014) UNEP (2014) *Decoupling 2: technologies, opportunities and policy options*. Nairobi: UNEP.

[16]Moffat, S., Suzuki, H. and Iizuka, R. (2012) *Eco2 Cities Guide: Ecological Cities as Economic Cities*. Implementation Guide. Washington: The World Bank.

[17]UN-Habitat (2013) *Streets as Public Spaces and Drivers of Urban Prosperity*. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

[18]UN-Habitat (2011) *Cities and Climate Change: Global Report on Human Settlements 2011*. Abridged Version. London: Earthscan.

[19]Berrisford, S. (2014) The challenge of urban planning law reform in Africa. in: Parnell, S. and Pieterse, E. (eds) *Africa's Urban Revolution*. London: Zed Books; Myers, G. (2011) *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice*. London: Zed Books; UN-Habitat (2014). *State of African Cities Report*. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.

[20]McCarney, P., Halfani, M. & Rodriguez, A. (1996) Towards an Understanding of Governance. In: Stren, R. and Bell, J.K. (eds) *Perspectives on the City*. Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, p. 95-6.

[21]De Boeck, P.and Plissart, M. (2004) *Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City.* Brussels: Ludion; Rakodi, C. (2014) Dimensions of Religion in African Cities: Personal, Political And Social, in Parnell, S. and Pieterse, E. (eds) *Africa's Urban Revolution: Policy Pressures*. London: Zed Books.

[22] For insights from different world regions on how these processes are taking root, see: United Cities and Local Government (2010) *Policy paper on urban strategic planning: Local leaders preparing for the future of our cities*. Barcelona: UCLG.

[23]For an elaboration on how this perspective on governance differs from networked and reflexive governance, see: Leach, M., Bloom, G., Ely, A., Nightingale, P., Scoones, I., Shah, E. andSmith, A. (2007) Understanding Governance: pathways to sustainability, STEPS WorkingPaper 2, Brighton: STEPS Centre.

[24]Cities Alliance, (2006) *Guide to City Development Strategies: Improving Urban Performance*. Washington DC: Cities Alliance. Available at www.citiesalliance.org/doc/resources/cds/cds-guidelines.

[25]However, CDS type processes do tend to invoke a discourse that creates an impression of sufficient inclusivity to have the legitimacy to conjure visions and strategy for the city as a whole. This is patently promlematic.

[26]Pettit, J. (2013) *Power analysis. A practical guide*. Stockholm: SIDA.

[27]Some of the most systematic analysis of this is found in the expansive work of Bent Flyvbjerg. For example, see: Flyvbjerg, Bent. (2001)*Making social science matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[28]Healey, P. (2004) Creativity and Urban Governance. *Policy Studies*, 25(2):87-102.

[29]Gaventa, J. (2013) Understanding the power cube and related concepts. in *Power Pack. Understanding Power for Social Change*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. Url: http://www.powercube.net. Accessed on: 09 March 2015.

[30]Resnick, D. (2012) Opposition Parties and the Urban Poor in African Democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 45(11): 1351-1378.

[31]I am obviously painting these tendencies in very stark terms for effect. The real world reality in different countries will of course be more nuanced. Effective democratic politicians will be able to manage these vicissitudes and find ways of being responsive to their constituencies and build strategic alliances with various actors that can advance progressive change. It is the general tendency that I wish to draw attention to at this point.

[32]Pieterse, E. (2011) Recasting urban sustainability in the South, *Development*, 54(3): 309-316.

[33] Appadurai, A. (2004) The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition, in *Culture and Public Action*, edited byV. Raoand M. Walton, Stanford: Stanford University Press; Mouffe, C. (2009) The importance of engaging the state, in Pugh, J. (ed) *What is Radical Politics Today?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; Pieterse, E. (2005) Transgressing the Limits of Possibility: Working Notes on a Relational Model of Urban Politics, in Simone, A. and Abouhani, A. (eds.) *Urban Processes and Change in Africa*, London: Zed Books.

[34]Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2012) *Declaration*. New York: Argo-Navis.

[35]This argument is more developed in: Pieterse, E. (2005) Transgressing the Limits of Possibility: Working Notes on a Relational Model of Urban Politics, in Simone, A. and Abouhani, A. (eds.) *Urban Processes and Change in Africa*, London: Zed Books.

[36]For example: Friedmann, J. (2002) *The Prospect of Cities*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press;Narayan, D. and S. Kapoor. (2008) Beyond Sectoral Traps: Creating Wealth for the Poor, in Moser, C and Dani, A (eds)*Assets, Livelihoods and Social Policy*. Washington DC: World

Bank, pp. 299-321; Mitlin, D. (2008) With and beyond the state: co-production as the route to political influence, power and transformation for grassroots organizations, *Environment and Urbanisation*, 20: 339-60.

[37] For example, see: Sinha S. (2012)*Architecture for Rapid Change and Scarce Resources*. London and New York: Routledge; Werthmann, C. 2011. Dirty Work: Landscape and infrastructure in nonformal cities. In Smith, C. (ed) *Design with the other 90%. Cities*. New York: Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum.

[38]A good example of such data for Nigeria can be obtained from: McKinsey Global Institute (2014) *Nigeria's renewal: Delivering inclusive growth in Africa's largest economy*. Washington DC: McKinsey & Company.

[39]This is based on the review comments of Danielle Resnick.

[40]This element might end up being three distinct chapters. The PI is in discussion with two other DFID funded research initiatives on African urban development that could help in fleshing out the context within which infrastructure-led boosterism is taking place across sub-Saharan Africa.