The politics of urban management and planning in African cities

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Half of Africa's population is expected to live in a city by 2035, up from 40% today. This is a testament to the fact that a fourth of world's fastest growing cities are in Africa and 52 African cities already have more than one million inhabitants each. But these cities are only projected to absorb a quarter of the growth in urban populations, meaning that small and medium cities will host the majority of new urban dwellers (UN-Habitat, 2014: 23-25). African cities are the most unequal in the world, posing a major challenge to their future (UN-Habitat, 2010: 2).

The starting point of this chapter is that urban management and planning are political issues. This chapter addresses key issues in urban management and planning that pertain to many African cities, including exploring what is managed and planned, by whom, and for whom. Complicating this task is the great diversity of urban realities that, as Myers argues in this book, are impossible to generalise. The diversity of histories and cultures, during both the pre-colonial and colonial periods, have shaped today's management and planning practice. Different colonial histories brought in a range of different planning and management systems and these intertwined with customary practices. These fusions have generated a variety of post-colonial hybrid models in which the modern state bureaucracy and traditional authorities coexist, particularly in the area of land administration.

The complexity of current arrangements requires specific responses to the distinctiveness of existing management and planning practices. This implies a focus on understanding existing political settlements in cities, which are "the formal and informal processes, agreements, and practices that help consolidate politics, rather than violence, as a means for dealing with disagreements about interests, ideas and the distribution and use of power" (Laws and Leftwich, 2014: 1). New policies and practices may disrupt existing settlement, so identifying management and planning responses requires exercising political sensitivity and negotiating with all of the local actors involved.

Three fundamental and connected issues across African cities are city-level governance, power decentralisation, and municipal finance. The first one looks at governance structures at the city scale. Power decentralisation has to do with how city-level government is selected and the powers that it has, and municipal finance is about the capacity of cities to achieve financial autonomy and generate revenues. These three issues are fundamental for examining the legacy of colonial planning, managing and taxing urban land, the informal city, the process for "planning from below", and urban infrastructure.

City-level and metropolitan governance
Democratic city-level government with sufficient powers and financial autonomy are critical factors for achieving or continuing success in many cities. The devolution of powers to cities

has contributed to the transformation of several Latin America cities, which are considered global examples to learn from. These have become central issues in the New Urban Agenda, and African Mayors at last year's Habitat III[1] were very vocal in advocating for them.

Many African cities, however, do not have administrative and governance structures that align with city boundaries. For instance, in Nigeria, there are three tiers of government: Federal, State, and Local Government Areas (LGAs). As a result, there is no democratically elected city-level government. Small towns may more or less fit within the boundaries of LGAs, but LGAs lack power and autonomy. The only exception is the city-state of Lagos where the city has expanded to cover most of the territory of the state, effectively rendering the Governor of Lagos State an elected mayor of the mega-city.[2] For all other cities, the number of uncoordinated local government bodies makes consistent city-level planning difficult, particularly in cities that are not state capitals. For example, the city of Ibadan is spread out over five LGAs and Kaduna is spread over four (although two also cover some areas outside the city). LGAs often have limited power and report directly to state governors without an intermediary authority at city level. The lack of unified governance can increase divisions in cities. In Kaduna the administrative separation of the city reflects the religious divide, complicating efforts to overcome sectarian conflicts between Christians and Muslims. Different LGAs within one city may also be run by different political parties, inhibiting coordination. Moreover, the areas of jurisdiction of LGAs may also include rural or peri-urban areas, meaning that local government departments must plan rural as well as urban interventions (Rigon et al., 2015). In Kampala and other Ugandan cities, decentralisation reforms divided several districts into smaller administrative units. Creating new units by fragmenting existing districts tilted the balance of power between levels of government further toward the central government because subnational units lack bargaining power and administrative capacity, and are now more dependent on the central government for resources (Lewis, 2014).

Even when there is city-level governance, existing boundaries are often inadequate considering the spatial expansion of the city. Much of the urbanisation in African cities is linked to urban and peri-urban areas beyond city boundaries becoming part of the city. However, the expansion of administrative city boundaries can be politically complex because it challenges existing political arrangements and requires acquiescence from the central government. While potentially difficult, such expansion can increase the tax base of the city, especially through taxes levied on land, and give city authorities the power to plan and deliver infrastructure to what are in fact parts of the city.

Area-wide forms of governance and planning are becoming increasingly important, and can help strengthen a city's relationship with surrounding rural areas. Contrary to the views of many urban managers in the continent, area-wide governance should not aim to increase investment in rural areas as a way to slow city growth by staunching migration. Instead, area-wide governance is important because peri-urban areas are increasingly becoming part of the urban system. Food security is one issue in which understanding these rural-urban linkages is

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[1] Habitat III is the third bi-decennial United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development which took place in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016. The conference produced a New Urban Agenda which sets a new global standard for sustainable urban development, and will guide the efforts around urbanisation for a wide range of actors for the next 20 years.

[2] Another particular case is Nigeria's capital Abuja and its Federal Capital Territory Administration, which does provide some city-level governance, but is effectively a ministry of the federal government rather than a body that democratically represents the capital's residents.

critical (see Chapter X on food security). Moreover, economic activities and other functions of small towns depend on and are integrated with those of the nearby city. Therefore, metropolitan forms of governance may facilitate service and infrastructure planning beyond the city scale. It can also provide a flexible approach to expanding a city when renegotiating borders is difficult and city borders are constantly changing. Emerging urban corridors, where a number of cities are located in the same region, often need linking infrastructure. These corridors may cut across national borders, thus requiring international governance and cooperation.

Devolution of powers and fiscal autonomy
In the previous section, we emphasised the importance of having a form of city-level governance. It is not sufficient to have authorities at city level, however, if they do not have powers or resources to take autonomous management and planning decisions.

Devolution, or the transfer of some powers and functions from higher tiers of government to lower ones, is a major political issue in Africa and of particular relevance for cities. UN-Habitat calls for a "radical decentralisation of powers" in African cities, emphasising the devolution of controls over revenue collection (UN-Habitat, 2014: 7). Effective devolution implies applying the subsidiary principle to divide powers between central governments and cities, decentralising powers and functions that are better delivered by government actors closer to citizens. In particular, key issues for cities are: (1) financial autonomy, largely achieved through fiscal autonomy, i.e. the capacity to generate revenue, (2) planning powers, and (3) control over service provision. The first two are key for the latter.

There is a growing consensus and evidence that devolution processes have been critical to the success of many cities, particularly in Latin America. Here, cities control the provision of key services, can raise their own revenues, and offer competitive salaries to highly skilled professionals.

In the African contexts, these processes are more difficult and have to take into account a number of issues. Historically, African countries inherited highly centralised systems of governance from colonial rule which the new political elite did not challenge (UN-Habitat 2010: 32). This was a way to maintain control but also to prevent the disintegration of many countries whose borders were arbitrarily drawn by colonial rulers and in which various ethnic identities were stronger than national ones.

African cities also produce a significant share of many countries' economic wealth and they are the places with the greatest potential for future growth. As a result, central governments guard their control over them, which often leads to fragmented urban governance. As mentioned above, Kaduna is divided in different administrative areas under the control of state governors. Cities, and especially capital cities, are central sites of African politics— where coups take place and national parliaments and presidential residences are located— making it more politically problematic for central authorities to relinquish power.

Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital, is another example of local governments that are unable to fully govern. The city council has very limited powers, particularly regarding land and taxation, which remain a prerogative of the central government. This means that the central and local governments have to jointly agree upon any urban project. While the Freetown City Council is responsible for improving the welfare of the people, including through promoting

economic development in the city, it does not have the power to register and supervise the use of land. There is a huge potential for the council to generate revenue from taxation on land, especially taxes on property and land value, but it is not permitted to do so. Moreover, because the act establishing local councils is not entrenched in the constitution, the extent to which local councils are allowed to exercise their powers depends greatly on what the central government allows them to do. Local councils in Sierra Leone are under the control of the Ministry of Local Government and subject to the ministry's political and administrative oversight. They also rely upon the central government for two-thirds of their budgets. Indeed, while the Local Government Act (2004) empowers local councils to create area development plans and to manage and coordinate projects for improving their localities, several councils rarely have the capacity and resources to deliver such plans. As a result, the central government has assumed these functions over time.

Democratic processes brought increase pressure for devolution and opened the debate in a number of countries. Over the last 20 years, approved constitutions—e.g. South Africa (1996), Nigeria (1999), and Kenya (2010)—acknowledge the importance of decentralised governance, albeit not always focusing on the city level. In Kenya, the 20-year struggle for constitutional reform has largely focused on devolution (Rigon, 2010). The principle of devolution from Kenya's and Uganda's constitutions appeared in Zimbabwe's 2013 Constitution, which states that while the country remains unitary, government power and functions are devolved through a three-tier cooperative governance system (Moyo and Ncube, 2014).

While not sufficient in itself, since the 1990s several African countries have introduced major legislation promoting decentralisation. These include Tanzania, Malawi, Ethiopia, Uganda, South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria. In Tanzania, the Local Government Reform Programme worked towards changing local government laws and increasing resources available to local government authorities in the late 1990s; and in Malawi, the 1998 Local Government Act created a national decentralisation framework based on democratic principles, accountability, transparency, and public participation in decision-making and development processes. In many cases however, including Algeria and Morocco, the central government substantially restricts the autonomy of local governments despite the existence of legislation supporting decentralisation.

In Uganda, the 1995 Constitution and subsequent legislation allowed the transfer of a number of political, administrative, and fiscal powers to local governments. To fund these functions, local governments can seek revenue from a variety of sources. Nonetheless, transfers from the central government, particularly in terms of donor funds, remain crucial and are conditional on the local governments meeting specific conditions, thereby limiting their autonomy. These funds largely comprised grants from the Poverty Action Fund and can only be spent on activities that the central government deems priorities. The central government further retains responsibility for all national projects.

Overall, while elections of local authorities and citizens' democratic demands at the city level have increased, these authorities often have minimal power and insufficient resources, particularly in terms of their ability to provide more and better services. Despite this, there is little incentive to decentralise and what is there decreases further when national and local governments are run by parties that oppose each other.

A key aspect of decentralisation concerns the financial autonomy of city authorities. A central demand of a number of African mayors at Habitat III was to be able to generate their own revenues autonomously in order to reduce dependency on transfers from central governments which are often unreliable and used to achieve political aims. For example, Nigerian LGAs receive a federal funding allocation that is managed through an account shared with the state government. The state government often uses this arrangement for patronage (NBS, 2012), compromising the financial and political autonomy of LGAs and their capacity to plan and respond to citizen' needs. Civil servants working in LGAs in Kaduna State argued that such governance arrangements and related bureaucratic practices inhibit the capacity of LGAs to implement plans. Political interference, shifting priorities, and governors put pressure on the chairs of LGAs to shift their agendas. Indeed, governors often take over LGA functions to build political support (Rigon, 2015: 14). In Nigeria, militaries in power have used local institutions for patronage. More recently, state governors still exercise enormous power over local government areas by maintaining control over resources flows (Rigon et al., 2015).

Financial autonomy is also important for cities to access markets to fund infrastructure projects. Large municipalities in South Africa increasingly borrow from local commercial banks or bonds, which can help bridge the gap between revenues and the funding needed to invest in infrastructure. Smaller cities, however, still encounter obstacles accessing credit (Brown, Motsoane, and Liu, 2013).

Devolution is important also in light of the changing urban forms of many African countries. While many countries are still characterised by a major dominant city, there is are an increasing number of smaller secondary cities with growing populations. These cities offer opportunities for new management models and for translating residents' democratic claims into practice. Because these cities will experience the bulk of African urban growth in coming years and have less institutional capacity and infrastructure than larger cities to accommodate those changes, they have the greatest need for urban management and institution-building (UN-Habitat, 2014: 23).

In conclusion, decentralisation must involve shifting power and resources towards lower tiers of government rather than creating local institutions under central control, as is often the case. Moreover, decentralisation has to take into consideration the "diversity of traditional practices and the complex local politics of ethnic relations" (UN-Habitat, 2014: 32).

Legacy of colonial planning
Many African cities are still overcoming the legacy of colonial spatial structure and planning regulations (Watson, 2014a). For example, the British colonial state implemented a policy of racial segregation. In Nairobi, this policy was formalised in the 1948 Master Plan, which divided the city into different racial residential areas for Africans, Asians, and Europeans. After independence, in Kenya, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and many others the racial spatial segregation of the colonial state became socio-economic residential segregation (K'Akumu and Olima, 2007; UN-Habitat, 2010: 26). The wave of post-independence urbanisation took place on the basis of, and often exacerbated, pre-existing patterns of exclusion and segregation. The spatial inequality and segregation of African cities is an urban form that hides the poor, who often live on small marginal lands. In Nairobi, 55% of the population resides in less than 5% of the land where they do not have secure tenure (Syagga, 2011: 105). Such spatial inequality and segregation transform cities into archipelagos of intertwined unequal islands where different groups of residents do not meet.

Another major problem is the building codes and regulations inherited from colonial times. For example, Kenyan construction by-laws come from the British, who exported their regulations without adapting them to Kenya's culture, climate, resources, and level of economic development (Tuts, 1996: 608). The inherited building codes therefore obligated social housing projects to conform with middle-class standards and prices rather than being tailored specifically to the low income residents and their ability to pay. Urban planning and regulations should be adapted to the level of development and institutional capacities of a country and that construction standards should be set "more realistically in order to facilitate rather than restrict the creation of housing and livelihoods" (UN-Habitat, 2010: 2).

The planning systems of many African cities, which are often permeated by colonial regulations, are inadequate for the reality and pace of urban transformations. Despite this, some planners are committed to these systems and refuse to see urbanisation as a positive process to be managed differently.

Managing and taxing urban land
The importance of land planning powers for cities cannot be overstated. These powers can decide the future direction of city development and it is here that the potential for taxation and capturing land value reside.

Infrastructure, change of use, or permission to build more or higher enhance the value of land or property. Sometimes, even a planning decision or prospective infrastructure investment can trigger an increase in value such that private owners find the value of their assets exponentially higher without having made any productive contribution. Specific regulatory instruments called land based-financing or land value capture can be employed in these situations to ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth, securing part of the value produced by a public decision for public interests. The money generated from these instruments can help finance the infrastructure that services taxed properties but can also cross-subsidise infrastructure for poorer areas of the city. In many prosperous Latin American cities, various tools have a long history and have provided significant funding to municipalities. This funding may involve one-off development charges, the (sometimes competitive) sale of development rights, betterment levies, or property tax increments.

Palmer and Berrisford (2015) found that, with the exception of Ethiopia and South Africa, there is no comprehensive land-based financing at the city or national levels anywhere in Sub-Saharan Africa. To the contrary, the authors found many situations of reverse value capture in which the cities subsidise internal infrastructure in high-income developments. The study points out how difficult it would be to implement land-based financing in the short term. They identify strong and capable urban governance structures as key enablers of land-based financing, demonstrating the importance of what we discussed above.

Despite its importance, land and property tax are often inadequately implemented. While changes are taking places in a number of African countries, land cadastres are far from being fully functional. They are often used for patronage politics and under the control of the central government, producing significant conflicts between central and local government authorities. Moreover, the implementation of a modern cadastre system often has to adapt and cohabit with the reality of urban land subjected to customary administration practices by traditional authorities. In many cities, there is the development of intertwined formal and

informal land markets. In Tanzania, for example, the ineffectiveness of the formal land system gave rise to a large informal land market.

As discussed, property taxes are underutilised, even in those municipalities where they generate a substantial share of the revenues. Revenues for local government need the implementation of new revenues mechanisms such as property tax. Interestingly, cities with high property rates are also those with strong democratic local government traditions such as Harare and Kariba (Zimbabwe), Cape Town and Durban (South Africa), and Kano and Lagos (Nigeria) (Eyoh and Stren, 2007). This demonstrates a link between fiscal autonomy and democratic governance.

In the Western Area of Sierra Leone, which includes Freetown, the Ministry of Lands, Country Planning, and the Environment shares the responsibility for land management with the Land Registry, which is based in the Ministry of Justice. Local councils also claim power over land registration, a function supposedly devolved to them by the 2004 Local Government Act. As a result, land administration in Freetown is plagued by problems of land encroachment, falsification of documents, multiple sales and registrations, unauthorised developments, and improper land demarcation largely due to the indiscriminate application of land laws, low institutional capacity, and a disorganised land market. A project funded by the Investment Climate Facility for Africa attempted to reduce the time and cost of land registration by reviewing and streamlining the registration procedures, and creating an electronic database of all land registration records. However, the lack of comprehensive legislation defining the respective functions of the Ministry and of the local councils makes it difficult to set up a modern land management system.

The informal city
The concept of informality is used to describe entire areas and a large sector of economic activities in African cities. The areas are often informal settlements that fall into the problematic UN-Habitat definition of slums, which looks at the characteristics of households in the area. Slum household, according to UN-Habitat (2003), lack at least one of the following: improved water, improved sanitation, sufficient living area, durable housing, and secure tenure. In terms of economic activities, the informal sector is usually defined as employment and production that take place in unincorporated, unregistered, or small enterprises, and ILO estimates that this sector accounts for two-thirds of non-agricultural employment in Sub-Saharan Africa and just below half in Northern Africa (2013: 42).

The prevalence of urban slums is a consequence of high inequality in African cities, which UN-Habitat considers to be "one of the major threats to African urban stability and, by extension, to overall political stability" (2010: 2). Slums and their residents are often seen as a source of criminality and moral vice to be eradicated. Existing planning approaches criminalise most urban residents living in informal settlements and too often support policies leading to evictions. These may take the form of forced evictions but may also take more subtle forms of market-led displacements, resulting in human rights' violations of the urban poor. While this type of informality of the poor is criminalised, informality of the rich may be ignored or even incentivised. Some high-income developments are also informal from the point of view of planning regulations in that they are built without permits in areas that are not zoned for residential development, against the Master Plan, and often with infrastructure that does not align with city plans. Despite these infractions however, these developments are not criminalised. This double standard is based on dangerous discourses around the urban poor and linked to the fact that there are profitable informal arrangements between property

developers and state politicised bureaucracy.

In terms of the economy, informality is seen as a separate, self-standing sector that must be formalised in order to extend taxation and regulation or, for those with good intentions, social protection. The way of conceptualising informality through a strict demarcation with the "formal" fails to consider the "pervasiveness of informality within formal ways of doing things" (Myers, 2010: 9). In African cities, informality is the norm with urban value chains and services containing formal and informal elements that are interdependent. Products and services may be delivered through chains with informal and formal stages, for example, and "formal" enterprises have informal practices, including informal employment of unskilled labour. In addition, employees in the formal sector rely on informal services to deliver productive work, such as transport and food stalls. Understanding the hybridity of formality as part of urban practices across all city actors is a necessary step in the construction of an African urbanism that can underpin the development of planning and management strategies that start with valuing and acknowledging existing urban realities.

Planning from below
As we have just discussed, current government formal planning practices are unable to address the challenges of African cities and provide for the growing demand of housing and services. Many civil servants and local authorities still view planning in terms of restoring a social order lost during the rapid growth of cities. This technocratic discourse emphasises that planning is an exclusively technical and neutral process that professionals have to do *for* people, rather than *with* people in the context of a colonial planning legacy (Rigon et al., 2015).

Nonetheless, the reality on the ground in many African cities is characterised by "agency from below" in which urban residents build their houses and provide their own services through various forms of individual and collective action. This self-help approach to housing and services is a major force shaping and making African cities. A significant part of urban management and planning takes place outside the control of city authorities. Under the umbrella of Slum Dwellers Internationals (SDI), national federations of the urban poor organise themselves in saving groups and generate their own censuses and data to negotiate with policy-makers. Residents in informal settlements also initiate their own slum-upgrading processes (Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 2004). These new emerging citizenship practices push demands on city authorities. Local authorities can respond to citizens' demands if they have the power and capacity to generate their own revenues. Success in these areas could lead to a deepening of democratisation in African cities.

The political power of these forms of collective action is still limited compared to forms of urban collective actions in other places such as India or Brazil, but governments, UN institutions, and global fora such as Habitat III, where SDI and their work in African cities had a major presence in high-level dialogues with institutions, are increasingly recognising their importance. In some contexts, these forms of collective actions among the urban poor are slowly changing power relations. This may destabilise existing political settlements, causing conflict. However, it is a risk worth taking because the current situation is also unstable. As UN-Habitat (2010) pointed out, cities that do not work for the majority of urban residents may undermine urban as well as national stability. Under various names (e.g. alliances, coalitions, strategies), a number of city-wide initiatives are moving beyond engaging with citizen participation on project by project basis to build city-wide participatory

governance frameworks. However, their success depends on the capacity to change power relations and address inequalities by allowing a meaningful participation from the urban poor.

The centrality of "agency from below" in planning and managing cities can contribute to the emergence of a hybrid urbanism that can find new models and concepts appropriate for the specific needs of diverse African cities, leaving behind European models. The value of citizen participation in local governance and planning is increasingly recognised in different African countries, opening opportunities. For instance, the 2010 Constitution of Kenya put a strong emphasis on citizen participation and explicitly mentioned their participation in at least 16 articles. It is considered a national value and principle of governance, key to the achievement of an effective devolution. It also explicitly refers to participation in urban areas: "National legislation shall provide for the governance and management of urban areas and cities and shall, in particular […] (c) provide for participation by residents in the governance of urban areas and cities" (Article 184). South Africa's 1996 Constitution states that local authorities should "work with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives" (Department of Constitutional Development, South Africa, 1998).

Urban infrastructure
The presence of infrastructure has historically played a key role in the origin and growth of many major African cities, often developed around the main port or railway. However, today African cities suffer from an urban and national infrastructure gap. Poor transport infrastructure accounts for 40% of logistics costs in coastal countries and 60% in landlocked countries (UN-Habitat, 2014: 20). Public transport is costly and lacking, presenting a major challenge to labour mobility. Traffic congestion affects many residents and decreases productivity, with people spending over four hours commuting in some major cities such as Lagos. Over 30 countries experience regular power shortages (UN-Habitat, 2014: 20), so residents and companies that can afford it have to rely on private diesel generators at a great cost, which is also a health hazard. The infrastructure gap is significantly reducing the competitiveness of the African manufacture sector. It decreases profit margins of smaller businesses and increases consumer prices for goods and services.

Infrastructure is a key challenge for the managers of African cities. For it to be addressed, the issues discussed in this chapter around governance, devolution, and finance are crucial. The way in which infrastructure is provided can also contribute to addressing the other challenges of inequality and poverty. Infrastructure can be pro-poor, prioritising the needs of the urban poor and developing mechanisms for cross-subsidising low-income residents, or it can increase inequality and poverty by serving high-income developments and ignoring informal settlements. The choice will depend on the outcome of the politics of urban management and planning, and the capacity of the poor to voice their collective concerns and expand the participatory mechanisms of urban governance.

Conclusions
Reforms of urban management and planning, involving decentralisation of power and fiscal autonomy, are fundamental to prepare African cities to absorb the urban growth forecasted for the next decades. Such reforms are very sensitive because they involve shifts in power relations which may reopen complex processes over other ethnic divisions and unsettle the political settlements at the national and city levels that have allowed cities to function so far.

For example, residents of informal settlements often have to enter political patronage relations or pay a range of brokers to protect their precarious tenure security and receive services. These brokers may include local politicians, traditional rulers, community leaders, police, and other civil servants (UN-Habitat, 2014: 36). Therefore, many people thrives in an environment of "under-regulation" and poor services and infrastructure, which offer profitable opportunities. Any reforms can threaten the status of some groups and may meet resistance and failure if they do not take into account the complexity of existing political arrangements. Therefore, urban management and planning reforms are not managerial changes to make management and services more effective, but complex and negotiated changes in politics.

This need for a political negotiated process and acknowledgment of the city diversity clash with a reality of technocratic models. A number of cities are overcoming colonial master plans and regulations and preparing new plans. However, this often happens through a process of privatisation of planning in which master plans are contracted out to few multi-national consultancy companies that develop standardised plans that reproduce dominant planning principles often exported from Europe. These are plans prepared with little participation and democratic control through processes that do not recognise the role of people's agency in making the city. These plans are disconnected from the reality of most urban residents, and often contain unrealistic "urban fantasies" based on the model of Dubai, Shanghai, or Singapore (Watson, 2014b).

This process is repeating the colonial approach of enforcing universal models, for example conceiving densification and verticalisation as always necessary while denying the emergence of new urbanisms. Can African cities develop indigenous urban models? The New Urban Agenda adopted by UN nations at Habitat III acknowledges the right to the city, ensuring all inhabitants can participate in the production and use of their cities. We hope city managers will open spaces to the plurality of forms of agency from below that are already shaping the future of African cities. In a context in which the continent will be shaped by the way in which societies think about cities (Pieterse and Parnell, 2014), we have seen the emergence of a strong body of work exploring the specificities of African urbanism grounded in the lived dynamics of everyday life (Pieterse and Simone, 2013). The capacity of this work to influence urban practitioners will be critical for influencing the management and planning of African cities.

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