Today’s and tomorrow’s challenges are intelligence, social cohesion, innovation, culture - I could have actually used just one word: the city.

Bertrand Delanoë, Former Mayor of Paris

TOMORROW’S WORLD

“Urban Future”

By: Geci Karuri-Sebina, PhD

@ IRES International Panel of Futurists Public Roundtable Bibilothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc
Rabat, Morocco
Overview

- Why Urbanisation
- Implications
- Responses
- Prospects
Almost half (1.3 billion of the 2.4 billion) of the people projected to be added to the world population between 2015 and 2050, will be Africans.
Why the focus on cities is important

In 2014, for the first time in history, more people lived in urban than rural areas. World urban population is projected to grow from 54.5% in 2014 to 66% in 2050.
Why the focus on cities is important

- Four African city-regions are listed among the 50 largest urban areas in the world:
  - #17: Cairo – population nearly 16 million (15 910 000) and density of 9 000 people per km$^2$
  - #24: Lagos – population nearly 13 million (12 830 000) and density of 9 000 people per km$^2$
  - #27: Kinshasa – population over 11 million (11 380 000) and density of 19 500 people per km$^2$
  - #40: Johannesburg – population over 8.5 million (8 655 000) and density of 3 300 people per km$^2$

One quarter (23.9%) of the world population is already concentrated in large urban areas of a million population or more. Densities vary hugely.
EXPOENTIAL URBANISATION

Implications

Persistent issues and emerging urban challenges due to increased urban population.

Urban Growth
Change in Family Patterns
Increased Residency in Slums and Informal Settlements
Challenges in Providing Urban Services
Climate Change
Exclusion and Rising Inequality
Insecurity
Upsurge in International Migration

Source: UN Habitat World Cities Report (2016)
Urbanisation Effects

- Population is closer to job and livelihood opportunities
- People can access services
- Large cities are better able to compete in the global economy.

- Strained urban infrastructure
- Sprawling informal settlements
- Extreme poverty and social conflict

Also can disadvantage rural areas by diverting limited human and financial resources
15 Global Challenges facing humanity

www.stateofthefuture.org
Implications: tensions

- The cities we have
- ... Now
- Future...
- The cities we want
Local challenges, Global considerations

Global systems
Urban resilience
Global networks

Development mandate
Economic competitiveness
Domestic responsiveness
New generation urban ‘master’ plans

“With Africa’s resource boom, growing middle-class and rapid urbanization, this continent is seen as the next frontier for property developers and architectural consultancies running out of work in the global North [and South].

The urban fantasies which are sold to politicians are based on images of Dubai, Shanghai and Singapore, but are still rooted in the work of 1930s French architect Le Corbusier. Politicians who always wanted to ‘catch up with the West’ are now being persuaded to ‘catch up with the East’. Smart-cities and Eco-cities are other terms being used to disguise these profit-seeking initiatives.

These plans will have devastating consequences for African cities. They are environmentally unsustainable and car-oriented, and will lead to massive displacement of the urban poor which make up the majority of these cities. City budgets will be skewed away from basic services towards infrastructure for these visions. The property developers and their consultants will be the beneficiaries. Angola’s ‘ghost cities’, standing empty, are an example of the result.

‘Satellite cities’ is one form being taken to avoid dealing with the messy reality of the existing urban areas – this is ‘splintering urbanism’ on a regional scale.”

Vanessa Watson, University of Cape Town, 2012
Nairobi (Kenya)
Lagos (Nigeria)

Eko Atlantic - "Rising like Aphrodite from the foam of the Atlantic."
Wole Soyinka, Nobel prize winner for literature NEWSWEEK - March 2011
Kinshasa (DRC)
PROSPECTS
Approaches and ideas

• Systemic images:
  – “Tale of 2 Cities” (Charles Dickens)
  – “Fortress World” (James E. Gunn)
  – “Planet of slums” (Mike Davis)
  – “Shadow Cities” (Robert Neuwirth)
  – “Arrival City” (Doug Saunders)
  – “Happy City” (Charles Montgomery), etc.

• Thematic approaches:
  – Smart City; Green City; Knowledge / Innovative City; Collaborative City; etc.
PROSPECTS
“Urban Dividend”

Source: COGTA (2016)
PROSPECTS
Towards alternative responses

- New **built environment** approaches
  - co-production, inclusive planning
- New **systems** that are inclusive and adaptive
  - enabled through innovation
- New **knowledge**
  - spatial development, informal world
- New **actors and relationships**
  - “Q4” Systems (LICS: Learning, Innovation, and Competence Building)
  - Experimentation
PROSPECTS
Disruptions

• Governance – forms, networks, power shifts
• Physical Space – new built forms, reformed tenure systems
• Resource limits – food, energy, water and waste systems
• Technology – new tools, ubiquity
• Infrastructure – transformations (modernisation, resilience), dynamic demand (lifecycle issues, finance)
“Opportunities”

- “Natural resources”
  - Youth – “Demographic Dividend” / Pressure cooker
  - Diversity – Conflict / Resilience
- Backlogs and deficit - unmet and unYet demand
- Creativity, love, joy, compassion, communalism
- Indigenous knowledge systems
- Crisis and collapse
"The real intelligence of cities lies in the almost miraculous, unstable, spontaneous order of city life. The social relationships between people generate the functional intelligence of cities. Imperfect, conflicting, disastrous at times, always open to improvement. Technology only facilitates certain processes, and the logic of collective life will defeat any attempt to implement systems that exceed the required level of sophistication."

Scott Nazarian (The Temporary City)
Thank you

Mérci Beacoup
References

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- Vanessa Watson, University of Cape Town