Inclusive Role of Actors and Stakeholders in Sustainable Urban Governance of African Cities

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Abstract: African Cities are facing enormous challenges such as the growth of informal settlements and increased inequality due to rapid urbanisation. Challenges to secondary cities are much more severe than to primary cities in terms of smaller economies and local governments with less capacity. Within this arrangement of urban governance, issues are fragmented in decision-making from varied stakeholders and conflicting interests. Therefore, to implement urban governance strategies effectively, key stakeholders need to be brought together to develop collaborative and inclusive processes to meet a broader range of interests and needs. This research aims to understand the urban governance processes in decision-making with interactions of diverse actors and stakeholders. In the review of literature, out of several parameters of urban governance, such as land use management, basic utility services, urban transport system, and food safety, the research discusses the provision of basic services at length. In addition, the role of urban governance actors such as levels of government, political parties, traditional leaders, private sector organisations and informal business organisations (such as traders’ organisations), international agencies and civil society organisations are identified in the decision-making. With the help of qualitative research methodology and inductive reasoning, policies for inclusive urban governance in Africa are generalised by studying the secondary city of Kisumu in Kenya. The research findings identify the role of diverse actors in urban governance and the challenges they face and the opportunities to develop skills and resources through collaboration that is holistic and inclusive.

Index Terms - African cities, Rapid urbanisation, Secondary Cities, Urban Governance, Basic Services

I. INTRODUCTION

African countries had colonial rule for more than a half-century in the past. Currently, it has been viewed in the international community that the onus now lies with African countries to take the policies for urban governance forward from hereon. However, it is debatable whether decisions taken by African politicians are only responsible for the current situation in African countries. To understand this, it is important to understand how decisions for the policies are taken in the political arena. In this view, there are two components for policy decisions. One is the political component and the other is how the policy decisions are taken? or in other words, what is the framework for decision-making? Generally, in African countries due to colonial influence, the entire academic or intellectual construct for a policy is assembled outside of a country, and it is unfair to blame the minister who signs it. Thus, it is important to bring change to this system which will be much more open to intellectual space for African ideas and solutions (Abbott, 2012).

These local ideas and solutions are important in Africa because they are unique in nature, as the reason for the growth in the urban population is not the result of formal employment. Therefore, there is an increase in urban poverty and vulnerability in local communities unlike it is in other parts of the world (Bryceson and Potts, 2006; Fox, 2012, as cited in Smit, 2018). This resulted in a poor governance capacity and weak management of urban growth in Africa (Myers, 2011, as cited in Smit, 2018). Also, due to such rapid urbanisation, there is an inadequate capacity for planning, and managing urban growth and inequality giving rise to prevalent informality and risks associated with health. This made life in urban Africa unsustainable with 56% of the total population living in informal settlements as per data in 2014. There was a steady growth in the number of households living in informal settlements from an estimated 111 million in 1995 to 201 million in 2015 (UN-Habitat, 2016, as cited in Smit, 2018).

These numbers are growing particularly in secondary cities of Africa, facing severe challenges. As the name suggests the secondary cities are socio-economically and politically less dominant than primary cities with a population of 100,000 in small cities to millions in national secondary cities (Rondinelli, 1983, as cited in Smit, 2018). In Africa, these cities play a key role in urbanisation processes (Roberts, 2014, as cited in Smit, 2018) and have weak institutional and financial bases. However, the rate of demographic growth in secondary cities is high compared to primary cities (UN-Habitat, 2016, 172–173, as cited in Smit, 2018). Kisumu city in Kenya is a city which was founded by the British as a railway terminus port in 1901 (Anyumba, 1995, as cited in Smit, 2018). Kisumu is the third largest city in Kenya with a population of 500,000 people with Nairobi as the primary city having a population of more than 3 million people (AFD, 2013, as cited in Smit, 2018). Kisumu city is one of the poorest cities in Kenya with over half of its population living below the poverty line (UN-Habitat 2005, as cited in Simiyu, Swilling and Cairncross 2017) and 60% of its population living in informal settlements (Syrjänen 2008, as cited in Simiyu, Swilling and Cairncross 2017). Due to diverse ethnic backgrounds and societies, there are political challenges in Kisumu city (Smith, 2018). This political instability and many other reasons lead to poor water and sanitation services in Kisumu city and Kenya in general (K’Akumu, & Appida, 2006).
II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

In the development of secondary cities in Africa, current assumptions for the barriers in the development such as lack of political will, lack of skills, and shortage of finance are not the core issues. The real blockage is the insufficient access to indigenous knowledge and intellectual creativity, particularly in planning and infrastructure development. During the colonial era, some two hundred years ago, the United Kingdom and the United States both created their model of urban development which was highly centralised. This conceptual framework was completely devoid of local demand. Thus, in the focus of such secondary cities, the balance between devolution and decentralisation becomes crucial and its impact on different tiers of government (Abbott, 2012).

Thus, currently in this regard in most African cities, the provision of basic services such as water, sanitation and waste management are a function of local government. However, only a few populations are serviced by the state and around 56% population lives in unserved areas (UN-Habitat, 2016, as cited in Smit, 2018). This gap in unserved areas is filled by community groups and NGOs (Smit, 2018). In the year 2010, the Constitution of Kenya emphasized government based on principles of human rights, social justice, good governance and sustainable development providing a framework for socio-economic and cultural policies. Furthermore, the constitution of Kenya gives the right to adequate housing, reasonable standards of sanitation, adequate food, and clean and safe water in adequate quantities (Fuo, 2015). These are some of the provisions of the Kenyan constitution. However, the question is how rigorously it is followed? and what is the actual picture on the ground?

Common problems in service provision in African cities can be seen with the secondary city of Kisumu in Kenya as an illustration. In this city for water and sanitation, a private company called ‘The Kisumu water and sewerage company (KIWASCO)’ was set up in 2003. This company came as a replacement for the former water and sewage department of the Kisumu municipal council (Smit, 2018). At the county level, this Council is responsible for key planning institutions for urban development and is faced with several challenges. However, at the community level, there was more acceptance of public-private partnerships such as council and SANA international, AFRICANOW, and world vision in providing Borehole water and onsite sanitation. Thus, at the micro-level, it provides a useful foundation for upscaling options (UN-Habitat, n.d.).

According to the MSc Social Development Practice Student Report (2016), in Kisumu city, most of the solid waste is dumped or burned as the waste collection service is not free and there are adverse effects on health and the environment. However, waste collection and sanitation both have created jobs in the informal sector (UN-Habitat, n.d.) for the youth of the city in terms of collecting trash (MSc Social Development Practice Student Report, 2016). The ‘Chachok’ dumpsite in Kisumu is incapable of serving the entire community and is responsible for only 20% to 35% of the total waste being disposed of, leaving behind 65% to 80% of waste being undisposed (Munala and Moirongo, 2011; Sibanda et al., 2017, as cited it UN-Habitat, n.d.). Several NGOs are providing help to the issues of water, sanitation and waste disposal in Kisumu but they all are in small capacity (UN-Habitat, n.d.).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

In this descriptive type of research, qualitative methodology with inductive reasoning was used. The research material from various sources including available literature from books and academic journals was used in this research. The research discussed how local governance in African countries evolved for the planning of basic services in urban areas. The literature review gathered evidence from history about the influence of colonial roots in policy making in African countries and the challenges it faced. The research discussed some of the key challenges facing African cities, followed by defining urban governance as a complex process of engaging groups and individuals in making decisions in practice. Furthermore, by considering an illustrative example of Kisumu city in Kenya, key governance actors were discussed. Out of four particular arenas of urban governance which include land use management, the provision of basic services, transport and food safety, the provision of basic services was examined in detail. Finally, the research concluded with how urban challenges of urban Africa can be resolved through developing collaborative governance processes by bringing together stakeholders at a different level to develop inclusive strategies (Smit, 2018). Furthermore, this investigation goes on to show how African cities are managed by a multitude of actors, including public actors, Technical and Financial Partners, private sector actors and populations (Zoma, & Sawadogo, 2022).

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS:

To answer the research question how policies in African cities are governed by engagement with different actors and stakeholders in collaboration with a multidimensional policy framework? Let us consider the role of different stakeholders such as government, traditional leaders, the private sector, international agencies and civil society and how they influence the decision-making.

4.1 Government:

In African cities, the local urban government is responsible for the decisions and plays a role in urban governance. The typical complexities of the urban governance of African cities are observed in Kisumu city of Kenya. As a result of 2010, the constitution of Kenya, the municipal council of Kisumu which was relatively autonomous, now has become the main sub-national level of government. The functioning of Kisumu city is a product of Kisumu city officials who are employed by Kisumu County. In addition to these other agencies such as Kisumu water and sewerage company (KIWASCO) operate in the city to provide basic services in the city. Other than this, many national ministries such as the National Ministry of Land and Housing allocate land within the city (Smit, 2018).

4.2 Traditional Leaders:

As part of urban governance in African cities in regards to land allocation in peri-urban areas, traditional leaders play a significant role. Although they are unresponsive, corrupt and sticking to power, they are more accessible to the citizens than elected political representatives and are accountable to higher levels of government (Smit, 2018). In Kisumu city traditional leaders have an officially recognisable role in governance who are headed as chiefs, assistant chiefs by one or two elders and are responsible for government functions such as government health promotion campaigns (Omedo et al., 2014).

4.3 Private Sector:

In private sector investment, big property development companies are investing in Kisumu city for urban transformation at a larger scale with projects such as shopping malls. These large companies are aspiring to develop Kisumu into another Dubai, for the East Africa region (Matete, 2016). The chamber of commerce plays an important role in relocating street vendors away from main shopping streets. Also, organisations like informal trade organisations manage informal markets places by clearing them from their locations (Smit, 2018).

4.4 International Agencies:

Amongst international donor agencies such as multilateral agencies, development banks play a vital role in the development of African cities. These agencies have an agenda of good governance promoting decentralisation and democratisation (Dietrich and Wright, 2015). For instance, in Kisumu city, the world bank and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) invest in large-scale infrastructure such
as the new motorways that encircles the city. Furthermore, these agencies (AFD) fund an integrated strategic urban development plan (ISUD-Plan), worth a budget of 40 million euros. This plan includes expansion of Kisumu city, upgrading programmes in informal settlements, the building of new market places and refurbishment of the old ones, and improving capital investment in the city (AFD, 2013, as cited in Smit, 2018).

4.5 Civil Society

There are several local and international civil society organisations in Kisumu city which belong to a federation called the civil society organisation network (Prince, 2013). They are active in local causes such as the prevention of HIV/AIDS (Camlin et al., 2013).

V. CONCLUSION:

As it was observed in the literature, the government is incapable of solving the issues related to services such as water and sanitation. At the same time privatisation of these services by way of decentralisation of economic activities has also failed in achieving its goals and is unable to meet the intended objectives of solving water and sanitation problems in urban areas (K’Akumu, & Appida, 2006). Therefore, a system of Public-Private partnership must be in place for the provision of basic services. Considering this case study in Kisumu, Kenya, for Africa in general, the newly evolved system of devolved service private partners can play a key role in connecting people living in informal settlements to active engagement in decision-making in the planning process. To have this newly evolved system impactful there has to be a balance between the material and relational well-being of citizens. Furthermore, this system needs to have a mechanism that ensures public-private partnerships are sustainable and inclusive. This can be possible by supporting collective strategies to manage public spaces, and neighbourhoods and the goal of impact through deliberate influence, networking, training and policy reform (MSc Social Development Practice Student Report, 2013).

REFERENCES


