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Learning and power in international development partnerships: a case study of Iowa Farmers in Uganda

Francis Y. Owusu
Iowa State University, fowusu@iastate.edu

Stephen Lauer

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Abstract

Mutual learning in international development partnerships, especially learning by the developed country, helping partners, is not well understood, despite convincing arguments supporting the possibility and desirability of such learning. This research explores the process of learning and its relationship to power in the 'Bridging the Gap' project, an international agricultural development partnership in which Iowan farmers were the helping partners and Ugandan farmers were the benefi y partners. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews of twenty-eight Ugandan farmers, seven Iowan farmers, and four programme staff and were analysed using a grounded-theory based approach. The results showed that both Ugandan and Iowan farmers learned through the project. Learning by members of both groups included ordinary learning, which helped them achieve their pre-existing goals, and transformational learning, which shifted their frames of reference and the goals and power relations embedded therein. The greater power of the Iowan farmers however presented some cognitive barriers to their learning from the Ugandan farmers. These power differences reduced slightly over time as both groups of farmers learned from each other, particularly when both groups recognized that the Iowan farmers could and did learn from the Ugandan farmers. The experiences of farmers involved in this project are consistent with the arguments that power presents barriers to learning and that learning by the helping partner can reduce power differences in international development partnerships.

Neoliberalism, Urbanization and Change in Africa: the Political Economy of Heterotopias

Pádraig Carmody • Francis Owusu

Abstract

In the much of the popular media, the discourse around Africa has changed. Whereas stories of the "coming anarchy" or the "hopeless continent" abounded a little over a decade ago, it was, until the recent collapse in commodity prices, increasingly seen as the final global investment frontier, with rapid uptake of cellular technology and economic growth. Although much of this growth has been propelled by natural resources, the current conjuncture offers opportunities as well as challenges for African urban areas and raises questions about the role of cities in the continent's future development as they continue to become more deeply informalised. The response of many city authorities to the deepening informalisation of their economies has been to try to connect to the global economy in new ways, through the creation of new financial service, high-tech and elite residential areas. In this paper we explore these developments through the Foucaudian lens of heterotopia. These new developments attempt to erase their associations with the cities from which they originate in favour of new connections outwards. However the creation of these new enclaves is filled with socio-spatial contradictions, which make them unlikely to achieve their ostensible objectives.

1. Introduction

One of the defining features of the neoliberal regime of accumulation is inequality. This presents challenges for political regime maintenance in Africa and elsewhere, which increasingly find expression in cities. Cities are centers of capital accumulation globally,

Pádraig Carmody
Department of Geography, Trinity College and Department of Geography, Environmental Management and Energy Studies, University of Johannesburg

Francis Owusu
Community and Regional Planning Department , Iowa State University

but they also are places where the majority of humanity lives. As such, they are the primary crucibles or arenas where the contradictions between use and exchange value play out. Cities are also increasingly interlinked, globally, allowing for greater flows of value and the spatial displacement of contradictions through the urban grid or network, in particular through the rapid growth of the informal sector. Thus inter-and intra-urban relations, and those between cities and their hinterlands largely determine the evolution of these spaces.

To date the "urban crisis" has been manifest primarily in the cities of the Global South. Whilst neoliberalism was posited as the solution to global development problems, the neoliberalisation of urban spaces in Africa does not seem to be capable of meeting the challenges of poverty, security and climate change and is contributory to them. However there has recently been a new approach to mitigating the urban contradictions generated by neoliberalisation – the creation of "world city" developments in Africa or heterotopias (attempts to enact utopias). This paper explores how these neoliberal urban developments in Africa are attempting to incorporate global urban forms and the roles this is playing in the continent's (under)development. We argue that addressing urban challenges require more creative solutions than those offered by the ideationally, if not practically, defunct ideology of neoliberalism and call for restructuring the accumulation processes in ways that can unleash the growth potential of African cities to benefit the mass of residents of these cities, rather than just their elites.

2. Urbanization and Development – Is Africa different?

According to the *2014 World Urbanization Prospects* (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2014) 54 per cent of the world's population now reside in urban areas and this number is projected to increase to 66 per cent by 2050. The urban population of the world has grown rapidly from 746 million in 1950 to 3.9 billion in 2014. Continuing population growth and urbanization are projected to add 2.5 billion people to the world's urban population by 2050. Africa and Asia, which currently house nearly 90 per cent of the world's rural population, are expected to contribute massively to this global urban population growth by 2050. Indeed, Africa is experiencing phenomenal urban growth and urbanization. Over the past three decades, the region's urbanization rate has steadily increased faster than anywhere else in the world. According to the UN-Habitat (2010), in 2009 Africa's total population for the first time exceeded one billion, of which 395 million (or almost 40 per cent) lived in urban areas. The percentage of the population which is urban in Africa is projected to increase to 56% by 2050. Consequently Africa is currently urbanizing faster than it did in the late 1990s and is expected to become the fastest urbanizing region from 2020 to 2050 (UN, 2014).

Although urbanization is often presented as a challenge to the development aspirations of African countries, the process itself is not necessarily a bad thing for a country or continent. Indeed, most analysts agree that urbanization can —and often does— contribute to or precipitate economic and social development. For example, urbanization allows for economies of scale in the provision of water, health, education, electricity and other services. Industries can benefit from concentration of suppliers and consumers and cities may allow for savings in communications and transport costs. Cities serve as commercial, administrative, and growth centers and are places for production and consumption of goods and services. Cities also provide big, differentiated labor markets and often help to generate new ideas and accelerate the pace of development of technological innovation and dissemination. Indeed, most of the highly urbanized countries are those with the best economic performance and shared prosperity (Henderson 2003, 2010).

However, the connection between urbanization and growth has been challenged in the African context in several studies (Freire, Lall, and Leipziger, 2014; Ravallion *et al.* 2007). The argument is that urban economies in sub-Saharan Africa are have not historically been well integrated into the global economy, and depend on the export of natural resources and agricultural products in order to import manufactured goods. Poor public services, infrastructure, and often poor city management all obstruct economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa's cities. In addition, Africa's rapid urbanization is occurring in a context of slums and poverty. For instance, according to the UN-Habitat (2008), over 43 percent of Africa's urban populations live below the poverty line, with many countries recording over 50 percent poverty rates. Africa's urban slum populations also continue to grow - slum and informal settlements proliferation accounts for almost all of the current urban spatial growth in some of the fast-growing African cities. For instance, Nairobi's slums account for about a quarter of the total population of the metro area, estimated to be around 4.3 million (UN-Habitat 2013). Poverty, deprivation, crime, violence and general human insecurity have become more widespread in many African cities, especially in the slums. In sum, one of the greatest challenges facing Africa today relates to how to unleash the potential benefits of the region's rapid urbanization, especially in the context of the dominance of neoliberal policies and the spread of globalization.

3. Neoliberalism & Globalization in Africa Cities

Globalization and the spread of neoliberalism have drastically shaped the way cities are developing across the globe. Neoliberalism in the African context was initiated through the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) from the early 1980s; which essentially transformed the state's role into a gatekeeper of the neoliberal project and market; attempting to ensure a stable investment climate and keeping in check those marginalized by neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell 2002; Afena 2010). Globalization also refers to worldwide processes of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations that have intensified since the late 1980s, driven in part by international trade and investment and aided by information technology that make the world more integrated and therefore interdependent (Murphy and Carmody 2015). As globalization is a much broader and more multi-dimensional process than the transnational economic transactions that undergrid neoliberalism, the connections between globalization and neoliberalism are not straight-forward (Litonjua, 2008; Heron, 2008).

The world economy is largely organized around and through cities, and so-called "world cities," are playing increasingly important roles in the globalization process. Indeed, cities are no longer mere points of production and exchange of goods and services; they have become places where people and products are linked to the wider world (Robinson 2006). As a result, today's global urban system is dominated by a small number of centers that are the command and control points for global capitalism. Such world cities are distinguished not by their size or their status as capital cities of large countries but by the range and extent of their economic power. They are locations for the key individual institutions and organizations, which manage, manipulate, dictate and determine the formation and distribution of capitalism across the world, and therefore occupy dominant positions in the global urban hierarchy.

Although most world cities are located in the developed countries (Robinson 2006), other cities are increasingly playing significant roles in the globalization process. Some geographers have taken this argument further by showing that even poorer cities also serve productive functions (Grant and Nijman 2002). For instance, cities of the Global South are increasingly becoming central to capital accumulation globally, both as centers of production (Shanghai),

ownership (in the platinum industry, for example in the case of Johannesburg – see Surborg 2011) and as new markets for Northern and other transnationals through so-called "Bottom of the Pyramid" strategies, which seek to consumerise the poor through selling small packets of washing powder for example, as the poor cannot afford the outlay for larger boxes of it. Some African cities consequently serve ownership functions and serve as centers for the receipt of surplus capital from Northern and Eastern countries and as new markets for transnationals, such as beverage or mobile phone companies. Coca-Cola recently relocated its African headquarters from England to Johannesburg in South Africa; indicative of this imaginative and empirical shift (Grant 2015).

According to some urban theorists, cities in the Global South also serve as "holding centers" for populations that are surplus to the requirements of global capital accumulation (Davis 2006). This point is germane in the African context where a large percentage of the urban population continues to derive their livelihoods from the informal sector, which is related to the broader structure of political economy. Much has been written about the so-called resource curse in Africa, which often manifests itself in the form of corruption, slow economic growth, Dutch disease, economic narrowing and conflict (Owusu *et al.* 2014). While we do not have the space in this paper to engage extensively with this concept, we do note that the resource dependence of many African economies creates problems, not only at the level of the polity or macro-economy, but at the urban scale, where formal sector livelihoods are often in short supply. This has resulted in the majority of urban populations working in the informal economy (Owusu 2007; Grant 2015).

Writing in the 1970s, Milton Santos (1979) argued that rather than being a temporary aberration, the informal sector was functionally articulated and reproduced through its interaction with the formal economy, for example through the provision of cheap wage goods. Thus rather than the informal economy's being reflective of exclusion, the so-called dual economy was functional to the broader demands, and structural nature of (under-developed) capitalist accumulation (Portes and Walton 1981; Castells and Portes 1989). Most of the population of African cities are then both included and excluded along different dimensions. They may be simultaneously excluded from public services and included in the consumption and production dynamics of the informal economy and global capitalism. This urban structure of inclusionary exclusion is itself then reflective of the broader politico-economic dynamics of resource dependence, which in turn is a reflection of the way in which Africa has historically been subordinately incorporated into the global economy.

Recently, within geography, there has been a debate about the ontological status of cities. Neil Brenner (2014:15) has questioned "established understandings of the urban as a bounded, nodal and relatively self-enclosed sociospatial condition in favour of more territorially differentiated, morphologically variable, multiscalar and processual conceptualizations". Malaquais (2007:32) argues that "it would be significantly more productive to discuss cities more generally, with given African cities as starting points, prototypes for an emerging, global form of urbanity", whereas Simone (2004) writes of the "transterritorial city". We accept the unbounded view of urban areas in Africa and seek to build on these insights through an examination of the role that utopian urban developments are, and as seems likely will increasingly, play in the continent.

4. Neoliberal planning – contradiction in terms?

Since planning as a profession derives its relevance from the state, neoliberalism and a focus on reducing the role of the state, has had significant implications for urban planning. From a

neoliberal perspective, much of urban planning is seen as distorting land markets and increasing transaction costs through bureaucratisation of the urban economy (Wright 2013), although others with critical perspectives see planning as largely serving the needs of capital (Rankin 2009). According to Gleeson and Low (2000:135) neoliberalism undercuts the very basis of planning as a tool for correcting and avoiding market failure and privileges a "minimalist form of spatial regulation whose chief purpose is to facilitate development." As Tasan and Baeten (2012) argue, planning is a prerequisite for neoliberal urban development precisely because a system based on market-oriented dynamics can only function if land-use decisions are regulated by planning institutions. Neoliberalism however presents many challenges to planners, including the effects of "down-sizing of local government, a simplification of public planning processes, and an emphasis on production and economic efficiency rather than redistribution and fairness" (Sager 2011:180).

According to Afenah (2009:3) the practical effects of neoliberalism on urban policy can be seen at various scales: in the neighbourhood, city and metropolitan region; and "through the reorientation from redistribution to competition, institutional rescaling (giving greater powers to sub- and supranational levels) and through the revitalization of the urban economy through privatization, liberalization, decentralization, de-regulation and increased fiscal discipline". These neoliberal challenges to core planning ideas have led some to question the concept of "neoliberal planning," stressing the contradictory relationship between neoliberalism and planning. For instance, Tasan-Kok and Baeten (2012) argue that as urban planning becomes increasingly neoliberal and "entrepreneurial", serious contradictions arise in the governance of cities. Baeten (2012) also discusses the planner's impossible task of serving private profit seeking interests while actually seeking the public betterment of cities. He argues that neoliberalism seems to have reduced urban planning "to a mere facilitator of 'market forces' in the city"; and the urban dwellers cannot simply "lay claims on the city government to guarantee their well-being" and as a result, "[t]he city as right, as entitlement, is slowly being replaced with the city as possibility and opportunity" (Baeten 2012:206-207).

Neoliberalism has significantly curtailed the role of the state in Africa, and along some dimensions, incapacitated and weakened the planner's toolkit for dealing with the problems of African cities. In addition, the focus of urban planners across Africa seems to have shifted from making the city a decent place to live for its residents to a place of elite consumption and production, the benefits of which are meant to trickle down. As a result and also a consequence of resource constraints, Africa planners have only tinkered at the margins of the enormous urban problems in the region. As will be shown in the next two sections, the result has been the inability to respond to unprecedented urban growth, with 6,000 people a day migrating to Lagos (Grant 2015) for example, the pervasive lack of urban amenities and widespread poverty and the resultant slumification of African cities. The limited success of the neoliberal-inspired narrow economic focus of much of the planning efforts in the region is a testimony to the bankruptcy of this mode of planning.

5. Neoliberalism Planning, Globalization & African cities

"Good urban governance" has been presented as the key to the resolution of the challenges of poverty, poor and patchy service delivery and other urban ailments. The relationship between urban governance and neoliberalism has been explored elsewhere (see Obeng-Odoom 2013). Here, we explore whether or not the new worlding practices associated with the current round of urban globalization have the capacity or potential to substantively alter the dynamic of the political economy of urbanism in Africa. As a strategy for overcoming the current ailments

and contradictions of the dominant, at least in terms of employment, informal urban mode of capital accumulation, many cities are seeking to become "world cities". They are doing this in order to ground mobile transnational capital and other flows deemed as developmentally positive. However these plans confront the reality of large-scale informality in African cities, with which these developments are articulated.

One of the ways in which African political and planning elites are seeking to overcome this legacy of urban underdevelopment, reflected in the prevalence of informality in Africa cities, is through the creation of new types of urban development. These efforts have taken a variety of forms ranging from special economic zones (SEZs) to financial services centers. SEZs, for instance are essentially hybrids that bring the conditions of labor of the informal sector into the formal sector (Cross 2010). The other new types of developments, such as Eko-Atlantic in Nigeria, discussed in more detail below, adds spatial and functional dimensions to this inclusionary exclusion process. In other words, whilst such developments are exclusionary in terms of their spatiality, they are also inclusionary in the ways that they serve to globalize functional dualism. This new type of functional dualism requires that African cities not only serve labor reserve functions, but through the provision of wage goods and services, the informal sector also services globalized financial and other activities. Furthermore, the informal sector is itself subject to worlding practices, through slum tourism for example. Mega urban developments and attempts to formalize the informal sector then represent two neoliberal approaches to the urban crisis in Africa.

6. Globalization and the heterotopian imperative in Africa

The new international division of labor characterized by export processing manufacturing has bypassed most of the Africa because the region is perceived as lacking infrastructure, a sufficiently skilled human resource base and capacity for effective state intervention. In contrast state-led development in China has dramatically reduced the costs of manufactured exports, with which Africa cannot compete (Lee 2014). As a result of these and other issues there are often higher real product wages in Africa than in other competitor regions. Indicators of Africa's economic marginalization, until the recent growth turnaround, included a decline in Africa's share of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from 1.8% of global FDI inflows in 1986-90 to 0.8% in 1999-2000, with about half of all FDI in the extractive sectors (e.g. oil and gas, mining, timber, etc.) that have little value added (Dupasquier and Osakwe 2005); a decrease in manufacturing value added; and stock markets that often attract only local stocks. While the continent has recently seen a substantial increase in foreign investment, this is still heavily concentrated in the resource sector. This generates imperatives to look for new sources of connection to the global economy.

Air transportation is a major driver of globalization and can therefore indicate the status of African cities in globalization (Bassens *et al.* 2012). Here too, a study by Otiso *et al.* (2011) concluded that although some African cities, notably Johannesburg, Cairo, Cape Town, Nairobi, Casablanca, Durban, and Tunis have become important hubs in Africa's air transport network, the continent is still not as well integrated into the global economy from an airline connectivity standpoint. Moreover, the continent's cities do not rank highly on the global urban network despite significant increases in their globality in the current round of restructuring associated with financialization and informationalization. In fact, most of the cities identified above largely handle non-African passenger flows, with about 80% of passengers also carried by non-African carriers. The context described above has provided an imperative for African planners to look for new sources of connection to the global economy.

Given the limitations on planning practice posed by the operation of a "free" market economy, cities around the world, including major African cities, are adopting other strategies to enhance their competitive advantages in attracting capital, tourists, knowledge workers and other flows judged beneficial to economic development. In Cape Town and Johannesburg, for example, there is a heavy emphasis on making them "world cities" (Beavon 2004). Richard Florida's (2002) work on the importance of the creative class and fostering urban amenities, services and environments conducive to attracting them has been particularly important. Some cities in both the Global North and South now market themselves as homonormative, although this has its own exclusions and contradictions (see Kanai 2014). Examples of worlding practices being adopted in Africa include the development of new financial services/utopian centers and new technology cities and hubs. These new developments seek to overcome previous problems or urbanization through the development of new forms of connection to the global economy, as will be detailed below.

7. Neoliberal heterotopias – Case study examples

The most high profile urban developments of recent years have not been about restructuring the accumulation processes within extant cities but center on new types of additive urban development which ostensibly attempt to: 1) work from a *tabula rasa*, and 2) on that basis forge new connections with the international economy. According to Foulcault (1984: 3) heterotopias are "a kind of effectively enacted utopia". There are a variety of examples of heterotopic developments under constructions across the continent, including Modderfontein (South Africa), Eko Atlantic (Nigeria) and Konza Techno City (Kenya).

1. Modderfontein (Johannesburg), South Africa

The "Heartland" development at Modderfontein near Johannesburg in South Africa is being built by the Hong Kong-listed property developer, Zendai. The Modderfontein development markets itself as becoming the "New York of Africa" or "the future capital for the whole of Africa" (Dai Zhikang quoted in Times Live 2015) when it is completed. Its development is facilitated by the existence of a large parcel of undeveloped land between Johannesburg's international airport and the city. Some have questioned whether other property development capital from overseas will flow in in substantial amounts in the future to the region given Modderfontein's exceptional geography.

This new "mega city" is meant to serve as a financial services hub and capitalize on South Africa's role as a gateway to the rest of the continent for other investors. Johannesburg still dominates South Africa's urban hierarchy, with 74% of the country's corporate headquarters located there (Rogerson and Rogerson 2014). In terms of its micro-spatiality, the city has experienced substantial restructuring since the end of the apartheid, as corporate offices have left the downtown in favor of suburban and securitized locations such as Sandton, in the North of the City (Beavon 2004). However in the case of the Modderfontein development it represents not just suburbanization, but ex-urbanization, where a new city is meant to be created *de novo*, without the extant problems of congestion and crime, which that have bedeviled Johannesburg. It therefore represents an attempted erasure of the socio-historical conditions which have produced Johannesburg as a particular type of space.

Modeled on urban developments in China, Modderfontein represents a "dream world" of neoliberalism (Davis and Monk 2007), where socio-economic contradictions and tensions are spatially excluded from the purview of the city. According to the promotional literature for

the development "Zendai's plan is to create a city which provides the ultimate solution in terms of convenience, sustainability, integrated development and prosperity. Live, work, play and learn are key focus areas of the development" (Zendai nd). Through this erasure then the groundwork is laid for a new more productive engagement with the global economy. As such this represents a particular type of "space of exception"; not just in the sense that it will apply for special economic status from the South African government, but also for the Chinese government's "overseas economic trade and cooperative park" status (Zendai nd).

Whilst being in line with the neoliberal principles of attracting foreign investment, the Modderfontein development will be highly planned and designed to attract and cater to very particular types of people. There is to be a "Silver industry and retirement community" and an "international residential community" who will be able to avail of the "themed entertainment centre, international conference and exhibition centre". There will also be education and sports centers and a light industry and business, trade and logistics park. The development then is meant to be self-contained for its residents, while reaching outwards into the global economy in a classic enclave form. Whether there is a need for this new office development can be questioned given an inner city vacancy rate of 16.6% in Johannesburg and almost 10% in "decentralized office nodes" (SAPOA 2014).

2. Eko Atlantic (Lagos), Nigeria

Eko-Atlantic, currently under construction on reclaimed land off the coast of Lagos and inaugurated by former US President Bill Clinton, has a similar utopian/dystopian or heterotopian vision. Lagos, a mega-city with an estimated population of over 15 million, experienced spectacular population growth and spatial expansion in the past four decades. Even though growth rates have slowed down since the late 1980s, the city is facing many severe urban problems. Its burgeoning population is marked by high rates of poverty and income inequality (UN-Habitat 2010). The city is also known for urban decay as reflected in overcrowded housing, congested traffic, inadequate sanitation and social services, and a high unemployment rate, despite what is often touted as more effective city management in recent years. In addition, many residents are crowded into limited space threatened by sea-level rise, ocean surges, and extreme weather events. Despite these problems, this primate city remains the economic pulse of the largest economy in Africa, with the economy of Lagos, by itself, is now bigger than the economy of Kenya, East Africa's largest economy. This has put pressure on urban infrastructure, in addition to resulting in substantial rises in property prices in Lagos Island in particular, where many of the urban elite live (Global Property Guide 2014).

Eko-Atlantic is an attempt to rearticulate this mega-city's relations with the global political economy so that it becomes a world, or perhaps even, in time, a global city (Sassen 1991). Funded jointly by the Lagos state government, South EnergyX Nigeria Limited (a subsidiary of the Chagoury Group) and other African and international banks, Eko-Atlantic is being promoted nationally and internationally as a model of private-public partnership. The project, which is being implemented by experienced international architectural design and engineering firms, is the highest profile example of the so-called eco-cities that are currently in vogue across Africa. Drawing from the language of eco-cities, this ambitious project is presented as a green development which will protect Lagos storm flooding and rising sea levels, even though some critics have pointed out the many ways in which the project has failed to follow the eco-cities principles (Grant, 2015). Eko-Atlantic and the Great Wall of Lagos sea revetment are expected to help to reverse coastal erosion and relieve some of the pressure on land and resources in Lagos. Like Modderfontein, Eko-Atlantic is marketed with a pro-business message: a world class-city that will "become the new financial epicentre of West Africa by

the year 2020". (http://www.ekoatlantic.com/). This model city will be privately administered and supplied with electricity, water, mass transit, sewage and security and will help "update and transform Lagos's notoriously bad international reputation as a poster-child of crime and urban dysfunction" (Grant 2015:321). When completed, Eko-Atlantic will include 3,000 new buildings, zoned in 10 separate districts over 10 square kilometers on reclaimed land, complete with waterfront areas, tree-lined streets, efficient transport systems and mixed-use plots that combine residential areas with leisure facilities, offices and shops. It is projected to house many businesses, 250,000 residents, serve as the workplace for 150,000 people, and support an additional 190,000 commuters.

That the project is targeting the international market can be seen from such comparisons "This will support a new urban development the size of the Manhattan district of New York City" (http://www.ekoatlantic.com/). However as Grant (2015) notes, the risk of abandoning traditional African cities, such as Lagos, through the promotion of such detached new cities explicitly geared towards serving elites and international capital is very real. More importantly, Eko-Atlantic does not address the multifold problems of Lagos discussed above, and may indeed exacerbate them. For instance, it is doubtful that many jobs will be created beyond those that will be available during the construction. Other critics, such as Martin Lukacs (2014) argue that Nigeria's super-rich are using projects such as Eko-Atlantic to exploit the crisis of climate change to increase inequality and seal themselves off from its impacts.

3. Konza Techno City (Nairobi), Kenya

In Kenya there is also an initiative to build a new high-tech city/center outside of Nairobi called Konza Techno City, which is being promoted by Kenya's ICT Board. In the media and academic literature there has been substantial interest, and some might argue, these have hyped the creation of a "silicon savannah" in the country. In part, this enthusiasm is built on initiatives such as the i-Hub, which have attracted much media attention. While the i-Hub has several thousand members, its primary function is the creation of mobile phone applications, which are notoriously difficult to make money off, even if some are spectacularly successful. Mobile phones and laptops are distributed or inverse infrastructures, with low sunk costs. Laptops can also serve as means of production for symbolic analysts (Reich 1991) to develop applications and other computer programs. This tendency towards the democratization of the ownership of some limited means of production, is, however, offset by the imperative to be able to computer program in order to take advantages of it. In addition, the distributed nature of the infrastructure undermines the generation of rents, vital for economic development (Kaplinsky 2005) associated with these new technologies. Therefore the potential for tech-driven economic transformation should not be over-sold or over-estimated in Eastern Africa, even as there are some important new developments such as IBM establishing its first African lab in Nairobi. Nairobi or Konza are nowhere near establishing the conditions to become a technopolis.

8. Conclusion: Beyond neoliberal planning: the search for creative solutions

In sum, these planned urban developments can be characterized as utopian dystopias or heterotopias not only because they are unlikely to generate substantial economic benefits in the form of job creation, linkage, multiplier and accelerator effects. But also because through their representations, micro-spatialities and external foci they discursively erase the deepening contradictions of the urban agglomerations with which they are associated. As such they can be seen as yet other examples of the unequalisation of space and class associated with global

neoliberalism, even as they attempt to reverse marginalization through greater integration into the global economy. The new exclusions that they generate may further deepen the structural violence experienced by the majority of the population. As such while the gaze of their planners/developers is utopian, the impacts may be partially dystopian.

Africa is undergoing a profound urban transformation and is charting its own distinctive path to modernity (Chabal 2009). Current trends indicate deepening income inequality, with profound social, economic and political ramifications. Johannesburg is the city in Africa with the highest Gini coefficient at 0.7, and consequently it is not coincidental that it also has an extremely high crime rate. While the extent of crime should not be sensationalized or over-played, structural violence begets direct economic violence, which is resulting in securitization and deeper entrenchment of anomie and exclusion reflected in the urban morphology of the city – urban splintering (Graham and Marvin 2001). This urban splintering does not any longer, it appears, just take the form of gated communities, but of whole new cities being planned to discursively and spatially erase, bypass or circumvent the often predominantly informal mode of reproduction and capital accumulation of the cities to which they are to be attached or articulated. They are to be "spaces of exception" linked to the global economy in ways distinctive from their "host" cities. As these new spaces develop, the mode of urban governance which they deploy will be interesting and vitally important. Will these new spaces be securitized, like other urban enclaves such as Sandton in Johannesburg, to try to enable the partial detachment from host society dynamics in order to better and deeper integrate into transnationalized circuits of capital accumulation? Will urban splintering (spatial disarticulation) result in new transnational linkages between urban enclaves and result in the global splintering of space? Will the Southization of the Global North (Camoroff and Camoroff 2012) articulate with its analogue in the South to deepen the neoliberal global social formation currently crystalizing.

Campbell (2013:141) writes that "similar to the way in which indigenous Kenyans were simultaneously needed and rejected by the colonial city council in Nairobi, refugees and other African migrants now fill this ambiguous position." Utopias can never be achieved in practice and their attempted construction results in new exclusions, as evinced by current spatial forms under construction. However exclusion or detachment from the reality of the host society can never be achieved, given heterotopic dependence on labor power for their construction and operation. Furthermore in a dialectical interplay, revenge may be meted out to the neo-revanchist cities under construction through violent crime within and beyond their boundaries for their inhabitants. The class war, expressed by neoliberalism (Harvey 2005), then experiences socio-spatial contradictions and instability despite this attempted socio-spatial fix.

While some of the new heterotopias either in the process of planning, or under construction, in Africa have their inspiration and finance from the "Global East," the question still remains whether they represent a form of neo-developmentalism or neoliberalism? Although Africa is often written about, mistakenly, as marginal to the dynamics of global capital accumulation, cities in Africa then are set to become, even more than before, some of the primary centers where the social and economic contradictions of neoliberalizing capitalism play out. The urbanization of neoliberalism, in turn produces new opportunities for development, in addition to contradictions. As such African cities, or many of them, represent the neoliberal frontier. Beal and Fox (2011) argue that development thinking is preoccupied with two themes: progress and differentiation. This neoliberal frontier may evince both, along different dimensions.

Rather than housing, poor sanitation, poverty, crime or other symptoms being the main problems in African cities, it is their, and the global, mode of accumulation and livelihoods which is the structural root of these symptoms. In the current round of urbanization in Africa, different forms compete, and to some extent, come into conflict. Under national developmentalism the two circuits of the urban economy (formal and informal) were highly articulated and interdependent. Under the current round of neoliberal "glurbanization", there is

an attempt being made through worlding practices to restructure (some) space outwards, and, in the process, disarticulate further the urban economy. These patterns of spatial restructuring however will be incapable of overcoming the urban crisis on the continent, manifest in high levels of unemployment, poor housing and poverty because of their limited nature, lack of productive focus and the new exclusions which they produce.

An alternative strategy of urban governance must start from a focus on the underlying structural issues and the necessity and potential for their resolution. A productivist focus would strategically identify those economic sectors in which competitive advantage, internal market deepening and opportunities for import substitution could be developed. Thus, urban governance must be reconceptualized as being part of a broader program of structural transformation. According to Turok (2013: 66) "possible examples of technologically realistic products [that African cities could produce) include fertilizers, chemicals, plastics and other petroleum products, construction materials, plant and equipment, pipes, electrical cables, pylons, buses and railway rolling stock". New spatial instruments such as SEZs, eco-industrial parks and others may play a part in this but the strategic vision must be broader, involving the beneficiation of resources, for example, and the development of linkage and multiplier effects which may be achieved through these (Kaplinsky and Morris 2013). Fundamentally then this comes down to nature and matters of state.

Much research on the development of African cities has adopted a scalar focus on the local state. Yet, actor-network theory has encouraged us to examine the imbrications and impacts of actors and artifacts into assemblages. However, while a useful heuristic device, the ontological boundaries of assemblages is open to debate, as local states are also imbricated with national ones, which in turn articulate with transnational actors such as corporations. The global neoliberalizing assemblage then consists of a multiplicity of actors whose interests overlap and conflict depending on the precise issue area. Whereas the strategic impetus of corporations is profit, states have a more complex mix of motives, including, often, the preservation and deepening of the conditions for capital accumulation, the desire to achieve legitimacy or hegemony and to perpetuate regime maintenance. This configuration then creates both constraints and points of action for social movements, developmentally-oriented bureaucrats and other potentially progressive social forces. The development of cities then is, fundamentally, a project imbued with class (Obeng-Odoom 2013). As the Chief Operating Officer of Zendai South Africa noted in relation to Modderfontein "the project will be market driven, and depending on what our clients or developers want, the sky is the limit" (for some) (quoted in Times Live, 2015). Grounding urban development so that it produces sustainable livelihoods for the majority of the city's inhabitants, rather than new forms of exclusion, must be the primary goal of those struggling for a different, better and more inclusive future.

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