POSITIONING AFRICAN CITIES FOR GLOBALIZATION: THE CHALLENGE OF SLUM UPGRADING

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ABSTRACT
Although the phenomenon of globalization affects every facet of human life, a disproportionate amount of existing literature on this subject is skewed in favour of the Western world. There are many unanswered questions about how to be a global city. However, the current understanding is that they serve as nodes and hubs of international finance, goods, services, communication, information, politics, culture, etc. The question concerning whether global cities exist in Africa remains contentious. Most scholars, however, tend to agree that Africa stands out as the continent with the fewest number of global cities in the world today. Notwithstanding this unenviable profile, there are prospects that African cities could be positioned to take part in the global city network process. A starting point is to reconcile the contradiction in the global city theory that allows modernized territories to exist in juxtaposition with precarious slums and informal settlements. These two mutually dependent spheres of the city are interlinked with the process of globalization. This paper argues that the growth of slums throughout the world, and its predominance in Africa is a salient feature of globalization. The study postulates that for African cities in the era of globalization, one of the most pressing challenges is how the cities should deal with the proliferation of slums and informal settlements. The paper finally discusses adequate and suitable counter-measures that could prevent the perpetuation of polarized dual-cities of social conflicts.

Key Words: Globalization, Global Cities, African Cities, Slums, Nodes, Infrastructure,.

INTRODUCTION
Although traditional concepts of identifying global cities exhibits a western bias, current global city discourse indicates that no part of the world is immuned from the reality of globalization.

The recognition of the growth of London, New York and Tokyo as prominent global cities around the world is based on Western standards, which emphasize economic variables. Globalization has become a key issue for discussion and concern in economic and urban development circles since the 1990s. Global or World cities are generally conceived as primary centres of the world economic setting (Short & Kim, 1999). They are also described as cities that sit at the apex of a hierarchy of control and connectivity within the emerging global economy (Forest, Grange & Yip 2004).

Initial attempts at understanding the concept of global cities placed a lot of emphasis on lowest production costs, or highest investment incentives. Some scholars have, however, highlighted the importance of recognizing that globalization is neither a zero-sum game

nor a singular process (Hamilton, 2006; Ouattara, 1997). The argument is that the impact of globalization is not expected to be the same in different regions. This view is further supported by other researchers who claim that the world should not be oblivious of other cities which are attempting to develop their own position in the world order (Parsa, et al, 2003; Forrest, Grange & Yip, 2004). This brings to limelight, the way in which the global city concept could be specified and applied within the context of developing economies.

The implication of the current conceptualization of global cities is that it raises many questions about how to rank, compare, and analyze global cities. Hamilton (2006), argues that this situation imposes some limitations on the way in which cities of developing nations are visualized and understood. For example, he considers it inappropriate to place African cities on a pedestal that uses the same criteria and analytical framework extrapolated from the experiences of core Western global cities. He therefore reasoned that the existence of numerous forms of global connectivity should not be ignored but rather utilized to minimize the constraints of distance and to enhance world-wide integration of new knowledge-based economy characterized by global space of flows.

Other authors restricted their analysis of global or globalizing cities to economic factors associated with flows of capital, flows of technology, flows of information, flows of people, as well as flows of image, sound and symbols (Castells, 1996; Short & Kim 1999).

The shortcomings inherent in laying so much emphasis on economic factors as a universal basis for identifying globalizing cities was illustrated in a research by Short (2003). The study's attempt to establish whether Prague and Havana were global or globalizing cities, using economic factors alone was difficult. The author attributed this to the heterogeneity of globalization trends and processes across different locales.

Current debate concerning the emergence of cities of Africa and other developing nations into the global enclave raises the question about what developing countries have to do for inclusiveness.

This paper relates the argument that what constitutes a global city still remains vague, to the African milieu. Using the dual-city theory as a framework, the study examines how African cities could be positioned to take part in the global city network processes. The focus is on key distinguishing features such as nodes, hubs and the proliferation of socially and spatially polarized neighbourhoods.

CONSEQUENCES OF CITY GROWTH AND MANIFESTATIONS OF DUAL-CITY THEORY

London, New York and Tokyo have assumed prominence as key points in the command and control of the world-wide economy. The United Nations report labels them as global cities. On the other hand, cities like Lagos, Paris, Sao Paulo and Jakarta are not key command points in the global economy, even though they stand out among the largest cities in the world. They are merely classified as megacities. While megacities have a population of Ten Million or more inhabitants, global cities could have as low as one million. It has, however, been established that population and demographic considerations

are not necessarily significant elements in the status of global cities (Yip, 2004; Yeung & Lo, 1998; Sassen, 1998).

Urbanization is a common characteristic of both global cities and megacities. Ooi and Phua, (2007) define urbanization in terms of population growth and economic development in cities. The high concentration of economic development in a few cities makes such cities attractive to immigrants who chrift to such locations in search of the most basic elements of life.

New York and Tokyo are both recognized as megacities and global cities. This trend indicates that a significant proportion of the current megacities will transform into global city regions in the next few years. The criteria currently in use for classification of cities into global cities lack general acceptability among researchers. A major issue in the argument is that global city theory is only supported by empirical studies of a few major cities in the developed countries (Wang & Jou, 2007). Hamilton (2006), and Van Vliet, (2002) further contend that the scope of global connections extends far beyond economic considerations into technological, political, legal, social and cultural aspects.

As a result of the lack of consensus within urban studies, two distinct approaches to cities have emerged:

- A global city point of view
- A developmentalist point of view

The global city point of view has been disproportionately highlighted by researchers. Critiques of this approach claim that more often than not, the predominance of economic indices in defining global city status perpetuates a western bias and limits the options available for understanding and interpreting cities in developing countries. The focus on high level of specialized services, investment standards, pricing policy etc is criticized as contributing to the disablement of the cities of developing nations and Africa.

The developmentalist point of view focuses only on aspects that are ascribed to the entire city, for example: poverty, unemployment, disease, crime, pollution etc.

According to Hamilton (2006), the developmentalist framework deals with a plethora of problems that accompany rapid urbanization:

high rates of employment

- urban poverty
- insufficient housing
- inadequate sanitation
- inadequate or contaminated water supply
- serious air pollution
- congested streets
- over loaded public transportation systems
- municipal budget crises

These are challenges which the on-going process of globalization in Africa and other developing nations will encounter.

The process of global city formation in Africa is generally associated with growth in income inequality. Mohan (2008) suggests that care must be taken so as not to create a

situation where the rich try to segregate themselves in urban enclaves. Other researchers have argued that globalization predicated on economic growth skew services in favour of the rich, thereby denying the poor suitable shelter, safe drinking water, acceptable sanitation, basic education and minimum nutrition. (George, 2007; Ooi & Phua, 2007). Dramatic examples abound in many globalizing cities of Africa, Asia and Latin America, where significant wealth is juxtaposed with poverty. It has been established that high inequalities in cities are capable of creating adverse social, economic and political consequences.

This, in turn, reduces incentives for investment and impedes the enjoyment of the benefits of economic growth (Moreno, 2007). Cabigon (2006) explains the dual-city theory in terms of dual-service sectors. According to him, low-status end comprising food workers, janitors, security grands etc and high- status end such as lawyers, accountants, etc all of which constitute the business firms, jointly exist in the global cities. Raiser and Volkmann (2005) refer to the low-status end group as precariously employed workers who provide services that are required for the proper functioning of the financial and business districts. For example:

- maintenance of buildings
- the delivery of goods
- the operation of lunch places
- household assistance
- taxi rides
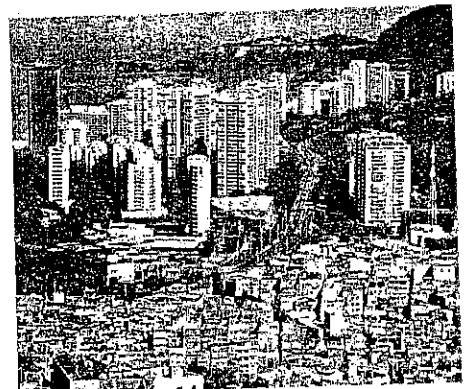
Formal and informal areas in Cairo, Egypt *Informal settlement in Mumbai*
High- and low-income housing
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in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil ©Timur /Shutterstock

The interlink between the precarious informal territories and the modernized territories raises the concern about what kind of global cities will emerge from Africa where it is speculated that the fastest growing cities in the next few decades will probably be the poorest. (Mohan, 2008).

It is not in doubt that there will be many poor people in the growing cities of Africa. The city of Johannesburg alone was said to have harboured 786,000 Shack dwellers by 2002, with 53-63% of the population living in dense inner-city or peri-urban slum communities that lack even the most basic services. Sub-Sahara Africa holds the unenviable record of maintaining the highest prevalence of slums in the world, with 72% of its urban population residing in slums.

The dual-city theory suggests that to derive benefits from flows of capital, people, information, commodities and practices associated with global cities; Africa should adopt a pro-growth strategy that focuses on reduction of urban inequality in globalizing cities. This has been practiced in Malaysia where urban inequality has been in steady decline since the early 1970s through the implementation of pro-poor policies in Kuala Lumpur (Moreno, 2007).

GLOBAL CITIES AND THE DYNAMICS OF GLOBALIZATION PROCESS IN AFRICA

Both emerging and globalizing city theories agree on the imperative of knowing how to be a global city, and the process that a city might adopt. The global city discourse has largely neglected cities of Africa and other developing nations. This can be attributed to a divide among urban studies experts between the global city and developmentalist discusses (Robinson, 2002; Hamilton, 2006).

Up till now, a consensus is yet to be established, to determine the point at which an emerging global city becomes a global city. Castels and Susser (2002) contends that the logic of analysis of global cities is not limited to capital flows. For example Sassen (1991), cited in Hamilton (2006) draws attention to five functional imperatives of a global city:

- as centres of international trade and banking
- as highly concentrated command points in the organization of the world economy.
- as key locations for finance and specialized service firms, the leading economic sectors of the current era
- as sites of production, including the production of motivations, in these leading sectors.
- as markets for the products and innovations produced.

This view tallies with the position of Ali Parsa, et al (2003), which states that a primary characteristics of global cities is their function as command centres for the operation of multinational corporations, as key centres around which advanced services, information processing activities and knowledge-based industries develop.

Only a few cities in the Western world actually meet these criteria because of the intensity of their interactions as hubs of international finance and business, corporate and communication services, as well as carriers of mass information and culture. The accusation of western bias in this classification is justified by some scholars who argue that this is not universally tenable, because of the differences in the function of the state. Central to this line of global city inquiry is the work of Merwe (2004). Focusing on Africa, Merwe compiled a theoretical overview of the indications of global cities that could be applied to the continent. Globalization in Africa can be more meaningful discussed if it is interpreted within specific historical, economic and cultural contexts.

The tilt should however be less on economic growth and more on complementary developmentalist issues. If economic indices of connectivity are assessed then Johannesburg which stands out as Sub-Sahara Africa's best candidate for a global city will be ridiculed because it is ranked at a level less than one-half the strength of London (the world number one global city). Cape Town and Nairobi are rated to be operating at a level of about half that of Johannesburg. Other cities like Lagos, Abidjan, Harare, Accra and Lusaka are rated behind these (Merwe, 2004).
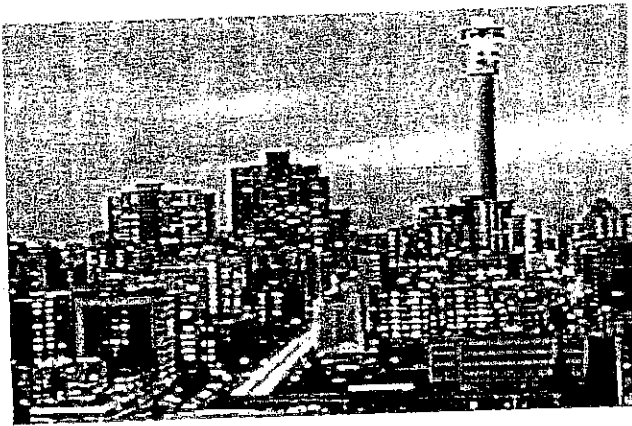
Hillbrow in central Johannesburg
Photo © courtesy South African Tourism
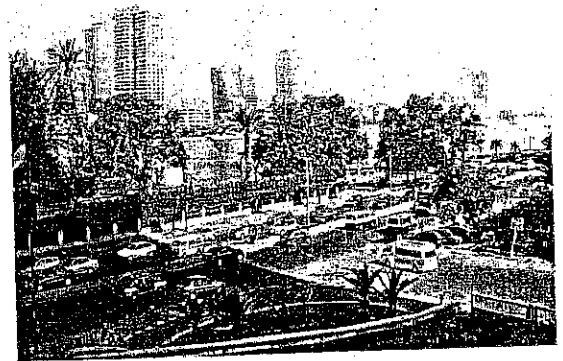
*Cairo © **Madanmohan Rao***

Merwe's revelation that thirteen Sub-Sahara African countries appear quite promising to house global cities is rather optimistic. His recommendations on how to determine the cities may be difficult to validate. For example the following procedure was recommended:
-   First, determine which countries have the best capacity to house global cities.
-       Then, select the largest cities in these countries and analyze them using a specific criteria extracted from the World Bank.

This paper does not support such arbitrary imposition of global city status. Rather the issue is on urban structure changes that can be expected in future, if African cities will join the league of global cities. The full force of change is inevitable in cities of Africa where significant wealth is juxtaposed to slums and squatter settlements. This imbalance is regarded as one of the most visible outcomes of rapid urbanization. Both the developmentalist approach and the dual-city theory recognize that globalization should pay higher attention to the quality of socio-cultural environment and human settlements of the global city. These environments and settlements provide the places of operation and activity for prime actors in global city network. The places of operation are termed nodes and hubs.

INTERPLAY OF NODES, HUBS AND SLUM TERRITORIES IN GLOBALIZING AFRICAN CITIES

Although there is agreement that nodes and hubs are places of operation, the term "place" has received varied interpretation from different authors. Some authors explain

the term at the level of the city (see for example Hamilton, 2006; Cabigon, 2006; Zook, 2001). Thus global cities function as nodes and hubs of finance, manufacturing, trade and specialized services. Others apply the term to well-defined social, cultural, physical and functional activities that are associated with certain locations. This approach extends the use of the term to include cities that are not classified as global cities. For example, Hong Kong is not a global city, yet it is seen as a primary hub of corporate travel and international tourism with top ranking hotels.
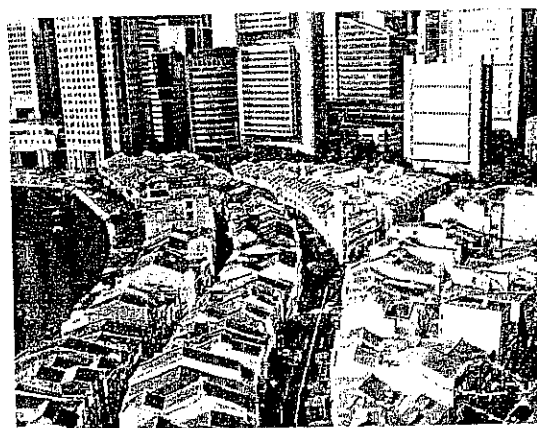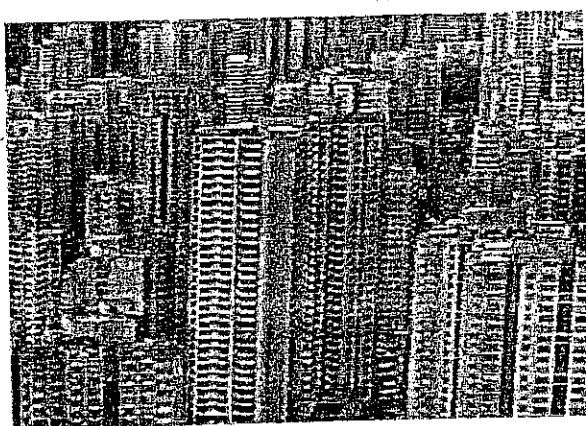
Hong KongPhoto ©: UN-HABITAT/X. Zhang Residential and commercial buildings in Singapore   © Madanmohan Rao

Zook (2001) gave a more vivid illustration that distinguishes between hubs and nodes, using the automobile industry in the United States (US). The automobile industry is centred in Detroit although automobile manufacturing takes place substantially in other southern states of US and Mexico. Detroit is the hub of the automotive industry while the other regions serve as nodes.

Detroit is an example of what Castells and Susser (2002) regard as a hub playing a role of co-ordination for the smooth integration of all the automobile manufacturing outlets into the network. Other southern states of US and Mexico can be regarded as nodes of the network.

For the human settlements of the globalizing African cities, it is important to understand hubs and nodes as strategic territorial concepts that give prominence to the position of intermediate points where activity networks converge. The functions which a particular network desires to fulfil determine the characteristics of places that become their nodes. There are instances in other parts of the world where the most unlikely sites became central nodes because of historical specificity that ends up establishing a particular network around a locality. For example, the establishment of Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minnesota and the Centre for Cancer Treatment at Villejuif, Paris may have been accidents of history. Yet they have become central nodes of a network of advanced medical treatment and health research.

Seoul attracted international attention through hosting the Olympic Games in 1988 and co-hosting FIFA World Cup 2002. The infrastructure that was upgraded while preparing for the games increased Seoul's chances of becoming a second-tier world city.

In its current stage, globalization provides avenues for ease of entry in certain areas, which enhances the opportunities for emerging as primary nodes in an expanding global urban network. This becomes even more feasible if cities of Africa are approached from developmental rather than global city perspectives. Uneven development is especially evident in the informal human settlements that exist beside glittery sky scrapers and luxurious shopping centres in emerging global cities of Africa.

In Asia, cities like Hong-Kong, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur face similar situations. One sure way to enter into the league of global cities is for cities of Africa to be positioned to be able to attract capital investors and tourists. This raises some concerns about the implication of the dual-city theory in the globalization process.

POLICY INCLINATIONS FOR AFRICA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DUAL-CITY THEORY

Every city is regarded as unique especially when considered in terms of shape, spatial structure, culture and economic peculiarities. However, for cities in the era of globalization, no place exists by itself. It is now understood that we no longer live in a bounded space of places but in a globalized open system of flows through a myriad of sites and networked time. It is important to quickly point out that response to globalization process is not a uniform process. It is argued that to be recognized as a global city, the city must "do something" to position itself through the right policies. Ouattara (1997) points out five key areas of focus for African countries that desire to participate in globalization.

- maintaining macro economic stability and accelerating structural reforms
- ensuring economic security
- reforming financial sectors
- achieving good governance
- a partnership with civil society

These prescriptions are linked to the characteristics of first-tier global cities and therefore may make governments in African countries to pursue higher, albeit biased positions. Different approaches have been adopted by many developing nations that have dreamed of positioning their capital cities to attain world city status. In Malaysia, the government launched the Multimedia Super Corridor projects to promote Kuala Lumpur, which has been its capital since 1896. The projects consist of Kuala Lumpur City Centre, the Cyberjaya, the Putrajaya and the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (Yap, 2004).
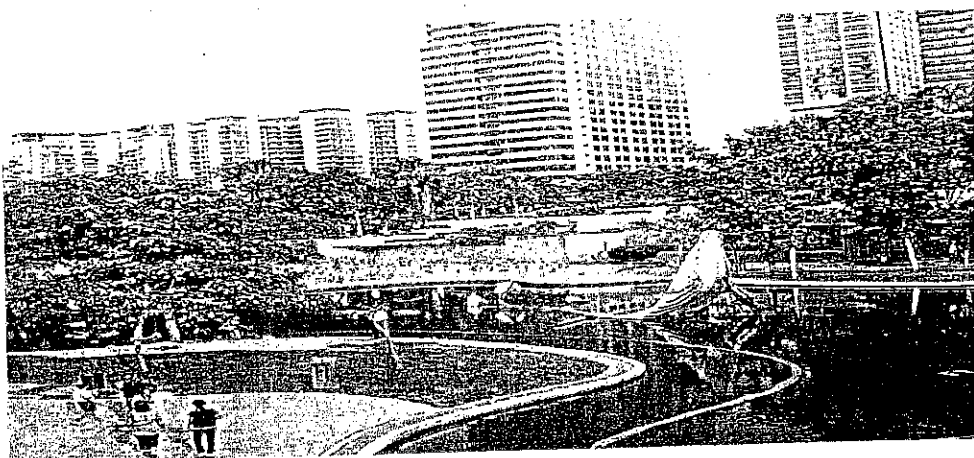
Public park in Kuala Lumpur ©Madanmohan Rao

The government of Taiwan adopted a Commercial Real Estate Strategy to upgrade the city of Taipei by promoting two urban development projects: A new central business district called "Taipei Manhattan", and iconic skyscraper named "Taipei 101". All of these were an attempt to attract foreign investment and to make the city a top global city (Wang & Jou, 2007).

Both Hong Kong and Singapore adopted the Social Services Upgrading Strategy. However, while Hong Kong focused on housing, education and healthcare Singapore chose to make Housing an area of utmost priority.

The experience of Singapore provides absolute basis for understanding how policies can be established to minimize the impact of the dual-city theory in African cities. According to Mohan (2008), 70% of Singapore's households lived in overcrowded conditions when the country attained independence in 1965. Furthermore, 33% of the population squatted in the city's fringes, while 50% of the citizens were illiterates.

Today, Singapore is quoted as a typical example of a city that has considerably reduced the incidence slums. It is home to more than five thousand international companies, rendering diverse services. Being a central object in the country's built environment, public housing was regarded as a key indicator of the issues confronting Singapore as it attempts to position itself for globalization. This is quite understandable, given the record that about 86% of the population are residents of public housing; of whom 90% are owner-occupiers (Goh, 2001).

In the case of Singapore, therefore, it can be argued that the primary role of government was the creation of an enabling environment that encourages foreign and domestic investment. Public housing is seen as a massive machinery that could facilitate a free-market housing system in a global economy. Furthermore it has the potential to reduce the impact of dual-city theory due to the ripple effects on amenities like transport networks, sewerage, parks, etc. All these have direct relationships with the primary infrastructural thrusts of economic urban development. The deliberate policies of

upgrading these amenities and landscape transformations from the 1990s are an attempt to position the city as a competitive global city.

In order to forestall the contradictory trend of rising growth of informal settlement, the globalizing cities of Africa, must not ignore the already established indicators of the first-tier cities. However, the implication of the dual-city theory should be brought to bear in a continent where more than 72% of the urban inhabitants are in informal settlements that are in juxtaposition with affluent neighbourhoods of emerging global cities.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Current thinking is that the way in which London, New York, and Tokyo emerge as global cities not only exhibits a western bias, but also limits the extent to which the concept can be applied to African context. Up till now, no consensus has been established to determine the point at which an emerging city becomes a global city. What constitutes a global city is largely vague and debatable.

However, climbing the global hierarchy suggests that cities should be positioned to attract capital investors and tourists.

The prevalence of precarious informal settlements in the vicinity of globally linked central business districts is seen as a major factor in determining the kind of global cities that can emerge from Africa. Therefore, Africa in the era of globalization may best be analysed from a developmentalist framework. This paper identifies some counter measures against the spread of informal city that have worked in other developing nations bidding to improve their rating in the global urban hierarchy.

Taking a cue from Malaysia, Singapore and Brazil, African countries should adopt pro-growth strategies that focus on reducing urban inequality and other impacts of the dual-city theory. For the human settlement of the globalizing African cities, it is important to understand that housing, education and health can be selected and upgraded to form strategic nodes and hubs. This kind of action has the likelihood of impacting on other amenities like transport networks, parks, etc, thereby giving prominence to localities. All these have direct relationship with the primary infrastructural thrusts of economic urban development
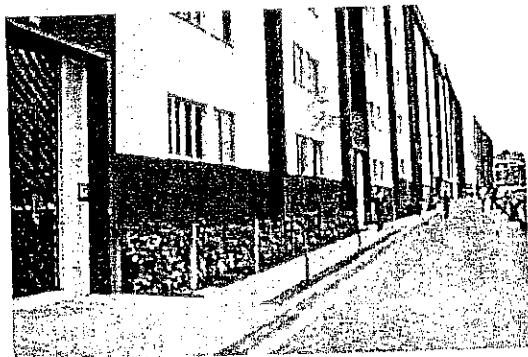
Slum upgrading in São Paulo. Brazil

Breaking new ground for slum upgrading in Paraisópolis in

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