



Cities to be tamed? Standards and alternatives
in the transformation of the urban South
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Policy Perspective and Practices in the Urban South: Stereotypical Notions versus Realities in Nairobi, Kenya

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Rapid Ongoing deepening globalisation and rapid urbanisation coupled with political and socio-economic insufficiencies are resulting in severe societal problems globally. The situation is exacerbated in the Global South where most of this rapid urbanisation is concentrated and is resulting in the so called 'Urban South's crisis', exemplified by the prominence and persistence of informal settlements. The past six decades have seen the failure of several prescribed solutions attempting to deal with the urban South's crisis, leading to not only paradigm shifts but also to competing approaches. Using the case of Nairobi, this paper examines the linkages between global and local responses to urban problems facing the Global South. As such, the proliferation of actors with competing interests, different perspectives and possibly paradigmatic incompatibilities; could be preventing effective cooperation, thus contributing to the failure of initiatives, and in this way propagating the Urban South's crisis.

Keywords: Urban governance, Informal settlements, Political-policy contexts

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Urban South's crisis and stereotypical notions

Ongoing globalisation and rapid urbanisation trends, coupled with political and socio-economic insufficiencies, are causing severe urban problems globally, calling for more appropriate measures. This is exacerbated in the Global South which bears most of this global rapid urbanisation and suffers more from those insufficiencies, leading to the 'urban South crisis'. The 'urban South' i.e. urban environments in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America; share to various degrees tension concerning the 'path to development', socio-political and economic conflicts on urban space use, but more so the prominence and persistence of informal settlements. Many prescribed solution to the crisis have failed leading to not only paradigm shifts but also competing approaches, with each decade since 1950s seeing a paradigm shift in approaches. Moreover, the situation has been complicated by the proliferation of interested actors, not only with varying resources, scales, power, roles and approaches, but also with different interests, perspectives and paradigmatic positions; contributing to the failure of initiatives and thereby propagating the crisis. Seemingly the prescribed policies and initiatives usually driven by both exogenous and endogenous powerful interest groups are not benefiting the targeted majority urban party poor, but partly due to existing political milieus they only end up benefiting the minority elites (Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006). This also illustrates the persistent fundamental lack of political will to deal with these urban problems in a systematic way. Hence the urban South exhibit stark dualities, juxtaposing informal settlements and gated communities, industrial zones and luxurious resorts, refugee camps and golf courses. Additionally, the urban South is subjected to multiple modes of transformation including firstly the exogenously conceived supranational visions and programmes based on stereotypical notions of development, secondly endogenous politico-historical forces determining implementation, and thirdly the spontaneous actions by the ordinary inhabitants. As such, there is wide variance between the normatively desired and the actual lived realities in many urban South arenas. Accordingly, using the case of Nairobi, Kenya and with reference to Structuration (Giddens 1984) and Bounded Rationality (Simon et al. 2008) theoretical perspectives, this paper reflects upon the foregoing issues. It presents briefly presents the paradigm shifts in responses towards informal settlements since the 1950s, followed by a glimpse into the Kenya's politico-historical context those responses were implemented. Subsequently the actors' frames of reference or paradigmatic positions are reviewed using the said theoretical framework, concluding with a discussion on the role of competing paradigms in the complex political historical context of the urban South crisis.

Paradigm shifts in response to urban South's Crisis

After of World War II there was unprecedented rapid urbanisation leading to proliferation of informal settlements in the Global South, which currently house over a billion people which is a third of the global urban population (UN-Habitat 2010). Since the 1950s, several solutions have been prescribed an attempt to tackle the informal settlements, with each subsequent decade witnessing a paradigm shift in dominant narratives and approaches, see Table 1 and (Kedogo and Hamhaber 2012). In the 1950s, in countries still under colonial rule, informal settlements were controlled through containment involving repressive segregation laws prohibiting the natives entry into urban areas, and also through brutal evictions and demolitions. The aim was to maintain racial and spatial purity and beauty of the urban areas, and also control disease, crime and political dissent (Myers 2003).



Paradigm in discourse & policy	Containment	Modernisation	Basic needs	Neoliberalism	Sustainability	Good Governance
Decade it was dominant	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Geo-political and economic context	Post war era Late colonial Cold war begins Liberation struggle	Decolonization Independence Keynesianism	Oil shocks Stagflation Debt crisis Fordism crisis Global urban crises	Thatcher-Reagan Conservatism Post Fordism & bloody Taylorism	End of Cold war End of Cold war Rio Earth Summit	New Millennium Millennium-summit Globalisation deepens
Global themes: policies, doctrines & declarations	Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Dec. 1948)	UN Development Decades	Basic Needs approach Redistribution with growth (WEC 1976) 1976 Vancouver Decl. (Habitat I)	Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) Free markets. Retreat of the state	Brundtland Report 1996 Istanbul Declaration (Habitat II)	MDGs- 2000 Millennium Declaration
Development orthodoxy	Containment (by law & force)	Modernisation (accelerated growth & trickle down)	Basic needs (dependency theory-redistribution)	Economic-liberalism Enabling approaches, state roll back	Sustainable development	Good governance and MDGs
Prescribed responses to Urban South crises	Containment (by law & force) segregation, restriction & repression Slum clearance eviction and demolitions	Slum demolitions replaced with modern public housing	Global responses Aided self-help Sites-and-services schemes	Enabling approaches Urban management by market forces Slum upgrading	Sustainable urban development Urban management Tenure security regularisation	Cities without slums City-Nationwide policies City alliances
Envisioned role of the government	Controller for maintaining order, class and purity in the cities	Planner for economic take off and development	Provider of basic needs	Enabler of the private sector and civil society	Regulator of the private sector, market and global forces for sustainable development	Partner with all relevant stakeholders to alleviate poverty and other urban challenges -in MDGs
Envisioned mode of governance	Authoritarian & Clientelist	Representative democratic	Managerialist	Corporatist	Pluralist	Inclusive democratic
Kenya national socio-political context	Colonial State of emergency Liberation war	Kenyatta Era Independence Expectation Growth	Kenyatta Era Disappointment Despotism Politico-ethnicity	Nyayo era I Populism Restoration Austerity begins	Nyayo era II Dictatorship Economic downturn Corruption 2 nd liberation struggle	Kibaki era Enthusiasm Economic growth Democracy Disappointment Inequality deepens

Table 1. Paradigm shifts in responses towards informal settlements

Source: (Kedogo and Hamhaber 2012)

In the 1960s, many African countries gained independence. The removal of restrictive laws led to massive rural-urban migration and rapid growth of informal settlements. ‘Modernisation’ became the global development paradigm aiming to transform these countries from ‘traditional’ into ‘modern’ societies. Informal settlements were dealt by blueprint planning, demolitions and replacement by ‘modern public housing’.



However, these proved highly inadequate to contain the explosive growth of informal settlements. The 1970s ushered in the ‘redistribution with growth’ and ‘Basic needs’ development strategy, in which housing needs were addressed through ‘aided self-help’ and ‘site and services schemes’ which again failed to improve the housing situation of the urban poor (R. Obudho and Aduwo 1989; Weru and Bodewes 2001). The 1980s brought *Neoliberalism* and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) prescribing the withdrawal of the state from service provision, and instead create an ‘enabling environment’ for the private sector and other non-state actors, to deal with housing problems.

However these actors did not take up the role despite many incentives, leading to severe proliferation of informal settlements with increasing poverty, inequalities and marginalisation in that decade (UN-Habitat 2006). The 1990s brought ‘Sustainability’, hence ‘sustainable and integrated urban practices’, aiming to produce liveable and inclusive cities with social harmony, economic and environmental sustainability; leading to participatory slum upgrading projects. However this projects only reached a tiny fraction of the existing informal settlements (Sietchiping 2008). The 2000s brought ‘Good Governance’ to prominence calling for partnership between the governments, private sector, civil society and supra national entities among others. This led to city-wide and nation-wide city strategies and as espoused for example by the ‘Cities Without Slums’ initiatives, based on the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets. These actions are however still highly insignificant, compared to the existing urban challenges (UN-Habitat 2010). Consequently, this study identifies these six dominant paradigms that prevailed over the different decades depending on prevailing geo-political and economic forces. Nonetheless, these paradigms did not revolutionarily replacing each other but evolved to the next ones, and as shall be discussed later, they all continue to co-exist and are actually competing in the Global South’s urban arena. These approaches were driven by exogenous actors in their formulation, but powerful endogenous actors greatly influenced their implantation. Thus while policy and programme documents reflect closely those paradigm shifts, there were variances between what was written and what was actually practiced with the politico-historical context playing a significant role.

Politico-historical context of informal settlements arena in Nairobi

Since 1950, in terms of national governance Nairobi has seen four distinct eras: the late colonial period ending at independence in 1963, Jomo Kenyatta’s presidency from 1963 to 1978, Daniel arap Moi’s from 1978 to 2002 and finally Mwai Kibaki’s from 2002 to date. Each era had a profound impact upon the informal settlements arena. The colonial era starting from 1888, set the stage for the current unevenness in Nairobi and also played a significant role in the formation informal settlements and their subsequent persistence to date (R. A. Obudho 1997; Syagga et al. 2001; UN-Habitat 2003). The deliberate destitution of indigenous people and appropriation of their lands to facilitate the colonial settler plantation system’s high demand for labourers, generated a vast destitute and landless population that fuelled rural-urban migration and the growth of informal settlements in the subsequent decades (Bennett 1996; Okoth 2006). During colonial times, this population was confined in the ‘native reserves’ and prevented entry into the urban areas by segregation laws, thus through containment laws and practices Nairobi’s population was kept low. The Vagrancy Act of 1922 authorised the demolition of any undesirable native housing, and Nairobi planned based on racial segregationist laws as elaborated by the master plans of 1905, 1927 and 1948. These unequal spatial divisions still persist today albeit based on economic classes, with the poorer populations, comprising more than half of Nairobi’s population, confined in less than five percent of Nairobi’s total land area, in informal settlements (Amis 1984; Hake 1977; Hope 2012; K’Akumu and Olima 2007).



The 'divide and rule' policy also instituted , ethnic segregation amongst native communities in settlement patterns, socio-economic and political space and in other material and discursive practices that persist to date; negatively impacting many housing initiatives(Hake 1977; Makachia 2011; Godwin Rapando Murunga 2012; Syagga et al. 2001). Furthermore, to facilitate the administration of the colony, a local elite was created and accorded many privileges, wealth and power, and in return to help subjugate their fellow indigenous people. At 'independence' the colonial government handed over the governance of the country to this elite, who maintained colonial practises and a status quo that befitted themselves; but they showed no political will to deal significantly with issues affecting the majority poor citizens people (Furedi 1973; B. A. Ogot 1995; Wrong 2010).

Independence in 1963 ushered in Kenyatta's presidency, with great expectations for prosperity and emancipation for majority of the citizens. However, the oppressive colonial state structures were inherited intact and without any radical transformation to accommodate the needs of the majority, leading to disappointment and dissent (B.A. Ogot and Ochieng 1996). To counter this dissent, the regime concentrated dictatorial powers person of the president and furthered politicisation of ethnicity and ethnicisation of government, establish patron-clientelistic relationships, heavily rewarding loyalty with the illegal allocation of state land and other benefits (Godwin R Murunga 2004). Moreover appointments to the civil service and provincial administration favoured more the members of the president's ethnicity. This patronage and clientelistic relations coupled with the politicisation of ethnicity also seemed to play a role when it came to allocating state contracts, public housing, site and service schemes and also in the selective demolition of informal settlements during the modernisation and basic needs periods (Amis 1984; Shihembetsa 1989). Moreover, when the government realised public housing and site -service schemes could not meet the growing housing need nor replace informal settlements, the provincial administration began issuing quasi-legal land permits for building informal settlements, following political patronage and ethnic consideration, to consolidated clients, pay back favours and reward fellow tribesmen; thereby creating the current ethnic based ownership structure. Hence landlord-tenant conflicts quickly become politico-ethnic clashes. This also affects slum upgrading polices and initiatives, for example as witnessed in the Mathare 4A programme and the current Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) in Kibera (Bodewes 2005; Gatabaki-Kamau and Karirah-Gitau 2004; Government of Kenya 2002, 2004; Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006; Otiso 2003).

Moi's presidency also called the Nyayo era began in 1978. Inheriting a very powerful presidential position, but ascending to power from a weak position with intense opposition from Kenyatta's politico-ethnic elites, he pursued a populist approach. This ostentatiously was to end the excesses of Kenyatta's regime and to reach out to the other communities that felt marginalised. Nevertheless this regime became extremely dictatorial and corrupt, relying on ethnic calculations and other Machiavellian tactics. There was gross mismanagement of the economy, public malfeasance and widespread plunder of state resources and public land for clientelistic and patronage purposes. These land grabbing and illegal land allocations led to widespread evictions and demolitions of informal settlements (COHRE 2006). Slum upgrading projects such as the 'Kibera Nyayo Highrise Estate' were transformed into middle class houses allocated based on political patronage to wealthy individuals (M. Huchzermeyer 2008). Additionally, the Nyayo era coincided with the 1980s global economic crises, leading to neoliberal policies including the World Bank driven Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). These SAPs emphasised market-driven economic policies, privatisation, austerity measures, down-sizing of the public sector's employment and withdrawal of the state from the provision of public services such as health, education, housing, water and sanitation.

These greatly impoverished the ordinary citizens by reducing access to essential services, economic regression and massive unemployment; thereby greatly contributing to the explosive growth of informal settlements in the 1980s and 1990s (Lando and Bujra 2009; Godwin R Murunga 2004; Syagga et al. 2001). Conversely, for the politically connected the withdrawal of the state presented immense opportunities for enrichment and corruption, exacerbating inequalities (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999). In addition, citing corruption and Moi's reluctance to reform, donors withdrew their funding for government projects and instead channelled it through Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), leading to proliferation of NGOs in Nairobi's informal housing arena in the 1990s. This increased duplication, lack of coordination and wasteful competition in the arena (Syagga et al. 2001). Thus while the activities of the non-state actors increased in the informal settlements arena, the government's greatly diminished during the Nyayo era.

While there were many commissions, reports and reconditions by the government in conjunction with bilateral or multilateral partners based on the 1980s neoliberal's enablement paradigm and 1990s sustainability's integrated urban development paradigm, many Nyayo era of the interventions towards informal settlements resulted from 'roadside policies'(Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006). These were populist, spontaneous and political presidential declarations without reference to legal frameworks such as, the 2001 declaration for the rents in informal settlements to be reduced by half, which led to violent clashes between tenants and slumlords (Shilaho 2008). As such, apart from the populist approaches and policy failures, there was also the great lack of political will to address the issue of informal settlements in an effective manner. Consequently, due to both internal and external causes during the Nyayo era, while the politically connected individuals became enormously wealthy building luxurious homes, the welfare of the ordinary citizens deteriorated tremendously and informal settlements grew exponentially (Médard 2010; Shultz 2010).

After a protracted struggle for democracy, the year 2002 ushered Kibaki's presidency with the promise, great expectations and hope to drastically improve the socio-economic situation of ordinary citizens, and to end corruption, authoritarianism, politicisation of ethnicity, public malfeasance and impunity, but to also drastically improve the socio-economic situation of ordinary citizens. This promise led to the resumption of aid and foreign investments.

The national economic performance and democratic space improved. However, this enthusiasm was quickly replaced by disappointment and despair when it became apparent that corruption, impunity and politicisation of ethnicity had not ended but had only become more polished and sophisticated. Furthermore, despite economic gains the socio-economic situation of many citizens was not improving, as the gains seemed to benefit only some regions and politically connected individuals (Godwin R. Murunga and Nasong'o 2006; Okombo et al. 2012; Syagga et al. 2001; Wrong 2010).

Following the disputed elections in 2007, the perceived deliberate unfairness and inequality in the distribution of national resources culminated in violent politico-ethnic clashes, that nearly plunged the country into civil war, with the informal settlements bearing the brunt of the violence (Mueller 2008; Njogu et al. 2010). Those clashes have had a profound effect on the ongoing 'slum upgrading' activities by both the government and non-state actors. Moreover, these clashes only ended after a power sharing agreement and the formation of a coalition government with rival factions sharing out government ministries and departments, contributing to the government having within itself divergent programmes, approaches and responses to informal settlements due to conflicting interests, visions, philosophies and paradigmatic stands. (Ajulu 2003; Mueller 2008; State and Non-state actors Nairobi, Personal Communication 2011).

During Kibaki's regime there has been a more apparent government action towards informal settlements including the creation of a ministry dedicated to housing, the continuation of the UN-Habitat supported Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) and the World Bank funded Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP) initiated following the 'good governance' paradigmatic approach but constituent actors having divergent paradigmatic approaches. However, these slum upgrading actions by both state and non-state actors have remained highly insignificant and fragmented in the face of the magnitude of informal settlements in Nairobi; with many residents seeing these actions as merely political gestures. The Kibaki's regime has also seen a tremendous widening of the gap between the rich and the poor; a dramatic increase in luxuries gated communities, while the growth of informal settlements continues unabated.

In conclusion, these politico-historical contexts have played a significant role in rendering housing initiatives ineffective in transforming the living situations of the urban poor, but instead turned the initiatives to serve the interests of the ruling elites, such as political control and wealth. Many actors purported to act according to the prevailing paradigm but actually acted according to paradigmatic positions that best served their interests.

Additionally, Nairobi exhibits vastly unevenness with global processes and local struggles dissolving into a variety of conflicts in the expressions, use and organisation of spaces. Apparently, unevenness and divisions in Kenya were deliberately produced and continue to be reproduced by powerful actors. These divisions condition the actions and interactions of actors in Nairobi's informal settlements arena. As discussed above, certain actors have routinely constructed and maintained power relations by use of facility, that is allocative and authoritative resources, to gain control and establish their preferred mode of domination, exercising power and realising their own intentions, and finally reproducing relations of autonomy and dependence in Nairobi (Giddens 1979, 1984). Apparently, policies and initiatives in Nairobi exhibit an elite bias, aimed at serving the interest of the elite, while the needs of the poor are only met with mere rhetoric or populist gestures (Hendriks 2010; Kedogo et al. 2010; UN-Habitat 2009a). Could this also explain why in Nairobi and other Global South cities, policies and incentives aimed at the needs of the poor ordinary citizens are not effective? There is a need to appreciate and deal with the unevenness and divisions in an appropriate manner, in such a way that would lead to the improvement of the welfare of majority of citizens in Nairobi and Kenya and many Global South countries.

Theoretical perspectives: Structuration Theory and Bounded Rationality

According to 'Structuration Theory' (Giddens 1984) there is 'duality of structures' i.e. social structures make social action possible and at the same time social action creates those very structures. By defining *structures* as being 'recursively organized rules and resources' that both constrain and facilitate or enable social actions and structures existing as 'memory traces' (Giddens 1984 pp. 377); this theory provides a way of situating actors in Nairobi's informal housing arena according to their paradigmatic positions (Kedogo and Hamhaber 2012). Hence through having control over *signification* and *normative* exogenous actors label new paradigms and what it 'ought to be' and prescribe it since they also control *allocative resources* such as donor funding. Conversely powerful endogenous actors by their *authoritative resource* to control people and *allocative resource* such as land, eventually determine how the initiatives are eventually implemented on the ground, reproducing "*relations of autonomy and dependence*" (Giddens 1979 pp. 93); following their vested interests, routine social relations, practices and institutional designs, all structured by deeper values and conceptions such as paradigmatic positions (Healey 1997).

Moreover, 'Bounded Rationality' (Simon 1957; Simon et al. 2008) illustrates how when making decisions, actors have rationalities limited by circumstances and time and other contextual constraints, thus explaining issues like politico-ethnic considerations the Nairobi's settlement arena housing or the transferability of concepts developed in the Global North to the urban South contexts.

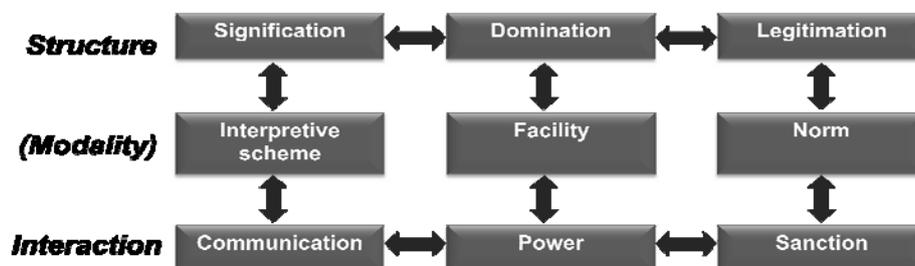


Figure 1. Dimensions of the duality of structure (Giddens 1984: 29)

Paradigmatic positions in Nairobi's informal settlements arena

Nairobi's informal settlements arena involves exogenous actors, powerful endogenous actors and finally the urban poor themselves. While in theory, policy and programme documents have closely followed the paradigm shifts shown in table 1, in practice the actors according to different paradigms; exhibit a wide variance between the desired and actual action (GoK, 2005; M. Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006; Pugh 2001a; UN-Habitat 2003, 2009b, 2009a). Indeed, this was observed during the field-study in Nairobi; firstly, based on what the actors said about themselves, their modus operandi, policy and programme documents; secondly, through analysing what other actors said about the particular actor; thirdly based on scholarly evidence; and finally all these analysed through a 'structuration-housing' analytical framework (Kedogo and Hamhaber 2012). The analysis revealed the co-existence of multiple paradigmatic stands. Multilateral organisations played a major role, and actually introduced and defined the dominant paradigms although with divergent meanings and approaches. For example, while the UN-Habitat and UNDP emphasised human development aspects and community participation themes in line with the sustainability paradigm, World Bank focused more on enabling the market and private sector, an approach deemed neoliberal (Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006; Pugh 2001b; UN-Habitat 2010; World Bank 2008). Bilateral agencies mainly reflected values and priorities of their mother countries, but mainly followed a basic needs paradigmatic approach. Many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), seemed to follow the stances of their funders, with the pragmatic NGOs following a basic needs need approach, and rights-based ones following a good governance approach (Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006). Endogenous actors including the government actors had highly varying paradigmatic approaches depending on the party affiliations, visions, vested interests, and motives - both positive and negative. Some insisting on evictions and demolitions following the containment paradigm, whereas others favouring welfare based subsidised public housing akin to the modernisation paradigm (GoK 2011). Moreover some politicians engaged in clientistic activities with the 'slumlords' supported neoliberal laissez faire approaches that did not interfere with the status quo in the informal settlements (M. Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006; Mitullah 2008).

This laissez faire approach was also preferred by several private sector actors, ranging from giant multinational corporations to small informal enterprises, who were benefiting from the persistence of informal settlements which enable payment of low wages and maintenance of a pool of casual labourers. In sum, the good governance paradigm aims at ensuring the views of the weakest in society are taken into account in decision-making, to produce more responsive actions towards the needs of the urban poor. However, the voice of the majority of the urban poor in Nairobi's informal settlements is rarely heard. Several NGOs set out to represent the voice of the urban poor, but only ended up representing the views of their funders. Attempts to increase urban poor's participation in government-led projects have often been hijacked by powerful interest groups and gate keepers. Hence several residents feared any slum-upgrading activity, which from their experiences only led to further displacement and worsening of their welfare (M. Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006; Syagga et al. 2001). Accordingly, many residents wished for a more supportive government that listened and protected them, engaging them not with political gestures, but in a more genuine manner, leading to actions that could genuinely improve their living conditions.

Conclusions

This paper, while focusing on Nairobi informal settlements arena, has discussed the urban South crisis with its constituent material and discursive practices in complex policy and politico-historical contexts, with a myriad of heterogeneous actors with differing interests, resources, approaches and frames of references. The actor/stakeholder analysis reveals highly unequal power relations. Powerful actors by virtue of their allocative and authoritative resources produce and determine which paradigm will be dominant, how they will be defined normatively and eventually how they will be implemented. These resources could be financial, coercive force, knowledge, framing ability, proximity, relations or links among others. Conversely, the urban poor, lacking those resources have little say in determining what is prescribed for them. While the current 'good governance' paradigm designates them 'the primary stakeholders' their participation remains nominal or manipulation (Charton-Bigot and Rodriguez-Torres 2010; W. Huchzermeyer 2009; Mitullah 2008). Moreover, whereas most actors referred to 'good governance', empirical findings suggest that different actors defined it differently according to their interests and paradigmatic stands; indeed programme documents were similar, but their practices widely divergent (COHRE 2006; M. Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006). As such, seemingly changes in dominant paradigms in the larger arena resulted only in changing of names and labels at ground, and the preferred underlying paradigmatic approaches of many actors remained unchanged. In fact those different paradigmatic stands could be preventing effective cooperation, mutual understanding and attainment of a common ground, necessary for the working of good governance approaches such as multi-level/actor systems, public-private-partnerships and participatory slum upgrading. Apart from conflicting interests, conflict paradigmatic stands could also be blamed for the persisted failure of many initiatives aimed at informal settlements. In sum, could all this explain why many actions aimed at or purporting to improve the lives of the urban poor have in fact end up worsening the situation further, deepening more the multiple layers of the exploitation of the urban poor? There is need to need to interact appropriately with the opportunities afforded by increased awareness and the demand for democratised decision-making processes and socio-economic rights by ordinary people; in a way that ensures the needs, voices, interests and views of the majority urban poor are adequately accommodated policies and initiatives that affect their lives.



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