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Urban Development Transitions and their Implications for Poverty Reduction and Policy Planning in Uganda

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Abstract

Urbanization is one of the critical global trends shaping the future of humanity. At the same time, it has been argued that full development requires an urbanized environment. This paper attempts to examine and characterize the major phases of urbanization in Uganda and what this means for urban policy planning and poverty reduction in the country. Although the history of urbanization in Uganda is relatively young compared to other East African countries, the rate of urban development is reported to be one of the highest in the world. However, little effort is being made to seize the opportunities and maximize the potential benefits of urban development, as well as reduce its potentially negative consequences. The urban development path of Uganda can be classified into five phases, referred to in this paper as transitions, and these are

…/.

Keywords: transitions, urbanization, planning, poverty, Uganda

JEL classification: R0, O10

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characterized with planning systems that are partly malfunctioning, partly wobbly and incomplete, and partly non-existent. Pertinent socioeconomic, environmental and political problems that are insurmountable for urban planning and management are a feature of the urban areas in the country. Most importantly, welfare and poverty indicators have not shown marked improvements (in absolute terms) for the urban population over the last 50 years. This paper argues for a strong urban planning policy that takes into account the rate of urbanization being experienced in Uganda today, the failure of which will lead to increasing marginalization of city residents.

Acronyms

IHDP	International Human Dimensions Programme
MFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MLHUB	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UN	United Nations

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1 Introduction

We are just passing one of the great milestones in human history which future historians, doubtless, will call the 'urban revolution', and which to the International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP) represents one of the most powerful, irreversible and visible anthropogenic forces on earth (IHDP 2005). Despite four millennia as centres of civilization and economic activity, cities never attracted more that a few per cent of the global population until the last century. Now, for the first time in history, a majority of the world's six billion people are living in cities. Between 2000 and 2025, the world's urban population will double to reach five billion; city dwellers will rise from 47 per cent to over 61 per cent of the world's population. Most of this explosive growth will occur in the cities of the developing world. There will be a doubling of the urban population in the coming quarter-century in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Asia and in Africa together. Even by 2015, the United Nations (UN) predicts that there will be 358 'million cities', with one million or more people; no fewer than 153 will be in Asia. And there will be 27 'mega-cities', with 10 million or more, 18 of them in Asia. It is here, in the exploding cities of some of the poorest countries of the world, that the central challenge lies (UN 2002). The current urbanization process in developing countries is indicative of a phenomenon that needs considerable attention not only as a basis for transformation of societies in the developing countries, but also for sustainable development.

This paper is structured in five sections. The next section describes the state of urban development in Uganda. The third and fourth sections explore the characteristics associated with the urban development transitions and what these mean for planning and poverty reduction, before conclusions are offered in the last section of the paper.

2 The state of urban development in Uganda

Uganda is one of the least urbanized (13 per cent) countries in Africa, yet with more that 50 per cent of national output is produced in urban areas (Hicks 1998). Today this urban population is predominantly centralized and located around what Isolo (2004) refers to as 'the urban corridor', running along the dilapidated Uganda railway network and major road transport routes in the country. The largest urban population is, however, concentrated in the central region, which had 25 per cent of its people residing in urban centres in 2002. But the level of urbanization also rose substantially in the northern region, where 9 per cent of people lived in towns in 2002, up from 5 per cent in 1991. Table 1 shows the general character and direction of change in urbanization in Uganda. What emerges from the table is that by 2002, Kampala City, the capital, showed characteristics of primacy, accounting for 41 per cent of the total urban population in the country; and 77 per cent of the urban population was found in the 20 biggest urban centres in the country. It is expected that by 2025 Uganda's urban population will have tripled.

Table 1 shows the urban growth rates in the country since 1959, while Figure 1 shows the distribution of the rural and urban population in the country by district. The table shows that urban growth rates have been variable since 1959. Between 1991 and 2002, Mukono town was the fastest growing town in the country (see Isolo 2004; Sengendo forthcoming) but a further review of literature and of available data reveals that

Kyenjojo, Kamwenge, Wakiso, Adjumani, Ibanda, Koboko, Bugiri, Koboko and Mukono are now the fastest growing towns in the country with rates of population growth of over 15 per cent, well beyond the national average of 5.47 per cent (Figure 2). Over the last half-century, Kampala City has assumed its dominance as the largest urban centre in the country, manifesting typical characteristics of primacy (Figure 3). Other towns showing significant population increases within the same period included Ntungamo, Gulu, Lira, Kasese, Kitgum, Wobulenzi, Sironko and Nebbi, with growth rates in excess of 10 per cent per annum. The high rates of growth, especially in Gulu, Lira, Kitgum and Kasese, are attributed to conditions of insecurity that force the population to move to towns which are relatively secure (Sengendo forthcoming). Soroti showed the lowest rates of growth; and Kumi and Soroti showed negative rates of growth.

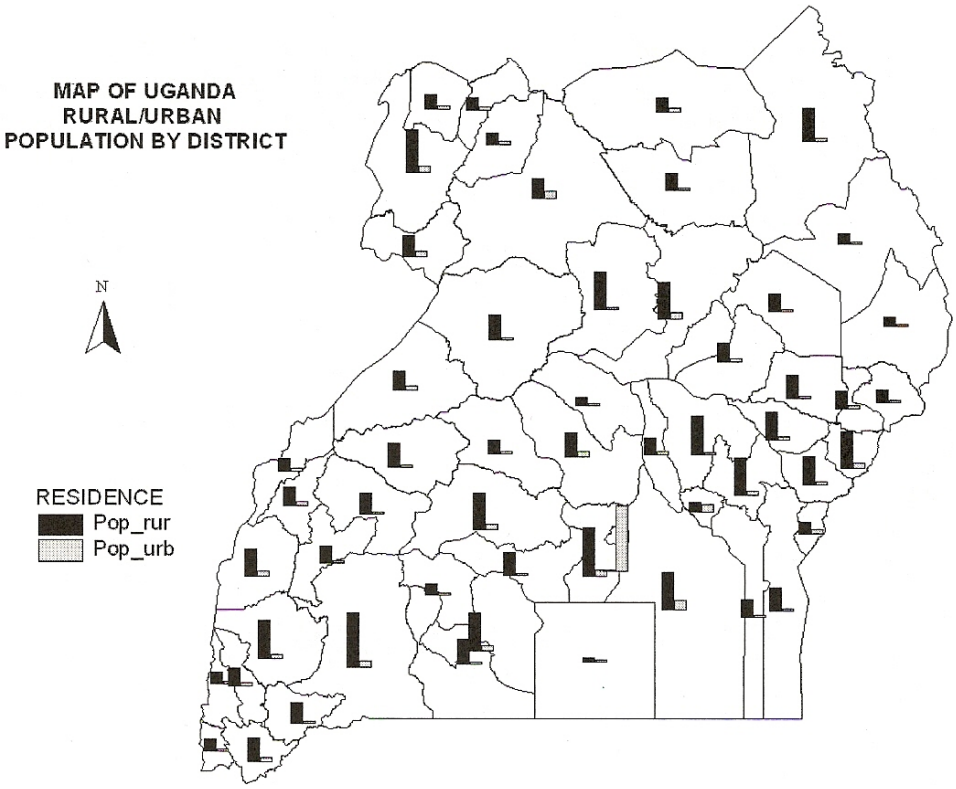
Table 1
Urbanization in Uganda, 1959–2002

Index	1959	1969	1979 (est.)	1980	1991	2002	2006	2010	2015
Number of towns	n/a	58	n/a	96	150	74	105	**	**
Urban population (estimated '000s)	325	635	1,114	939	1,890	2,922	5,000	7,500	9,800
Proportion urban, %	5.0	6.6	10.4	7.4	11.3	12.2	16.0	18.2	20.7
Urban growth rate, %	7.61	13.73	3.98	2.56	10.13	5.46	17.8	12.5	6.1
% in capital city	n/a	53.9	n/a	47.9	41.0	40.7	29.6		
% in 20 largest towns	n/a	87.4	n/a	80.4	74.4	76.6	n/a		

Note: n/a = not available

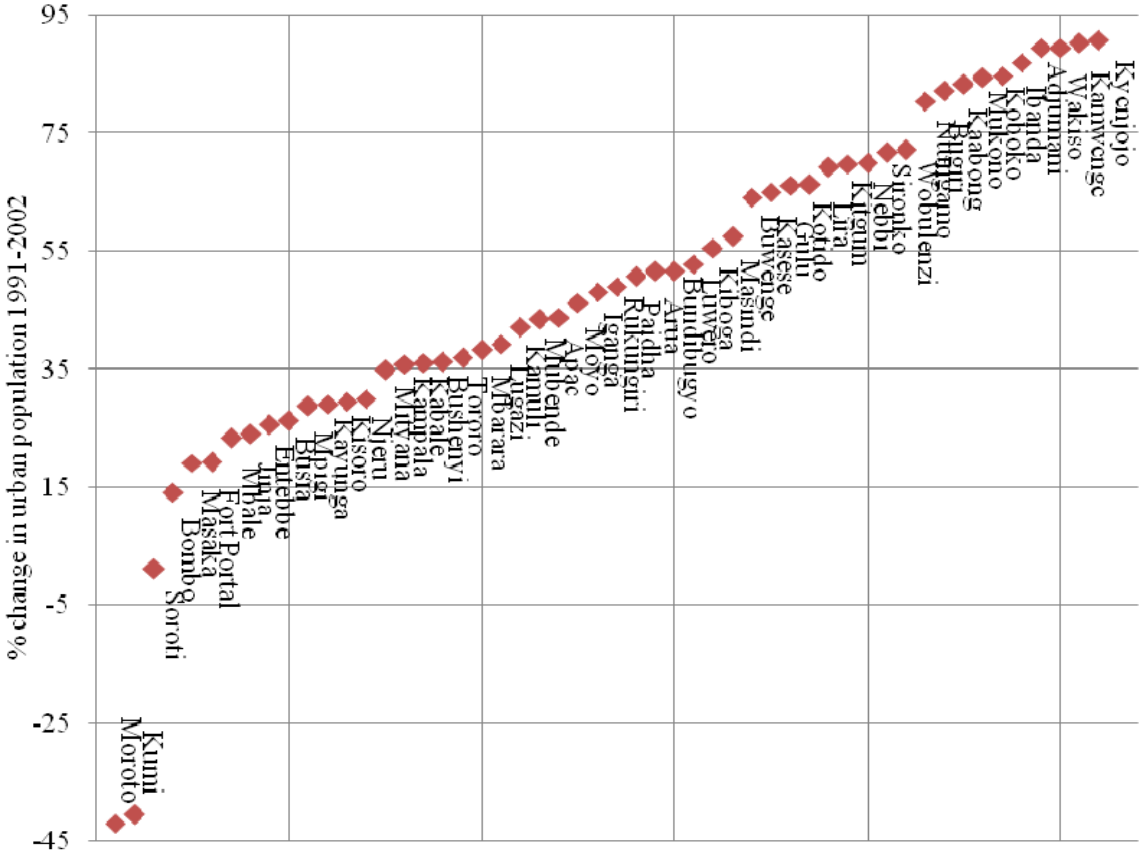
Source: Scaff (1965); UBOS (2002).

Figure 1
Rural-urban population by district



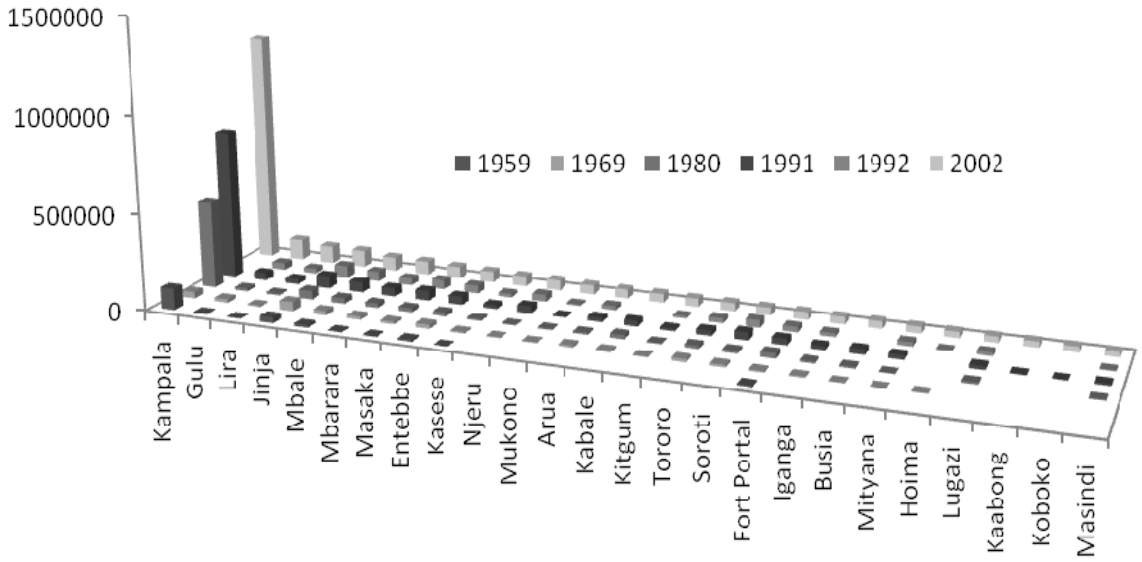
Source: Sengendo (forthcoming).

Figure 2
Percentage change in urban population 1991–2002



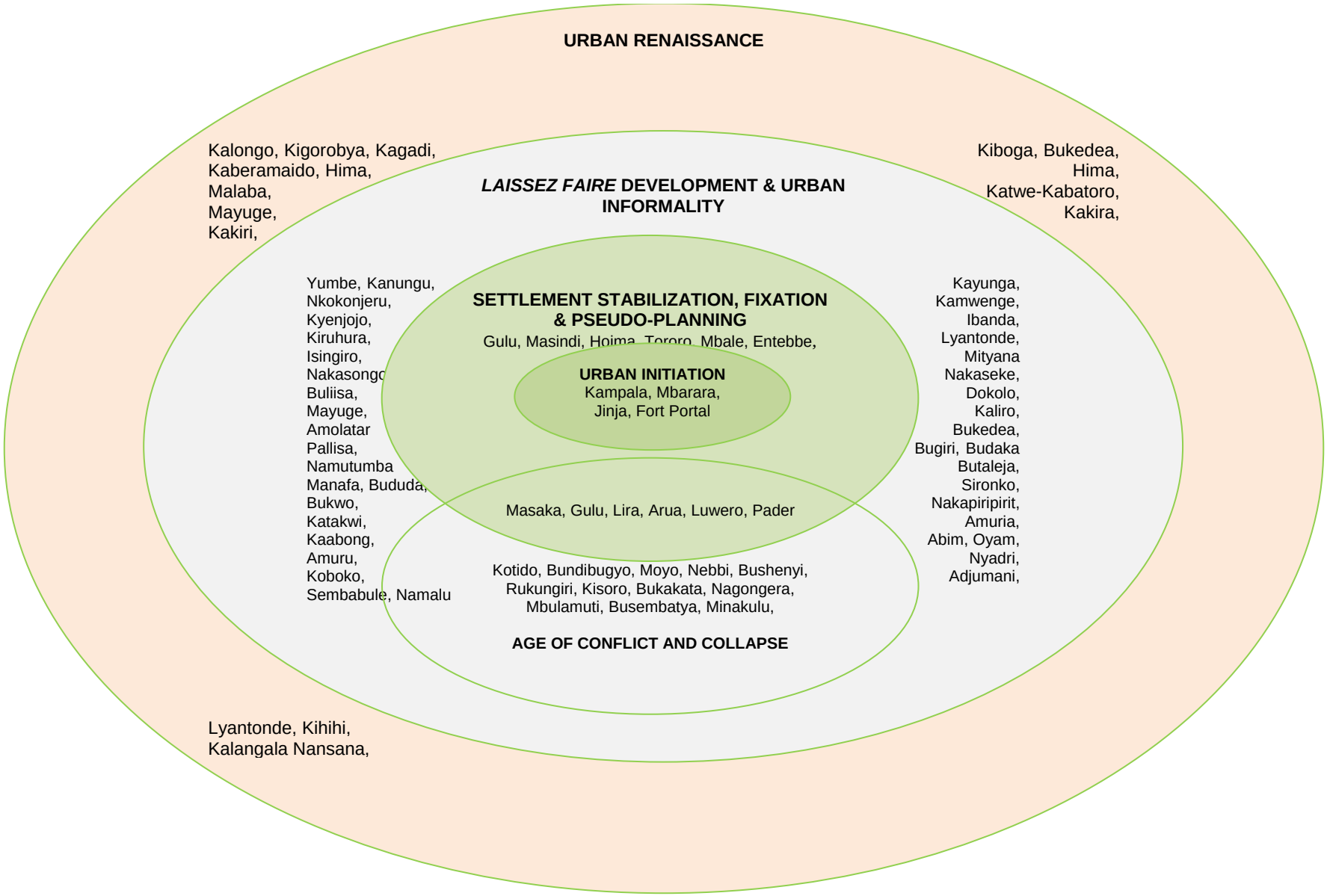
Source: UBOS (2002).

Figure 3
Population changes in the 24 largest urban centres in Uganda, 1959–2002



Sources: Brinkhoff (2009); Scaff (1965); UBOS (2002).

Figure 4
Transitions and urban clusters in Uganda



2 Transitions and shifting drivers of urban change in Uganda

While there is increasing consensus that the urban development pattern in Uganda has been significantly transformed, and that it represents a new experience, thinking about the urban development paths of the country cannot be derived from a single pathway model. This paper argues that the paths of development and subsequently the planning of urban centres in Uganda have not been structured as a linear process; rather, they can be divided up into five discrete periods of transition (Figure 4).

2.1 Age of urban initiation (before 1900)

In precolonial times societies in Uganda were organized around tribal kingdoms and it is from these that early urban centres in the country were initiated. It can be said that urbanization is an alien concept in Uganda, and most of its urban centres have had colonial origins. The East African Royal Commission report of 1953–55 indicates that:

> … except on the coast there were few towns in East Africa prior to the establishment of European administration… Away from the coast, there were a number of organized concentrations of huts which surrounded the headquarters of hereditary chiefs north and west of Lake Victoria, but these were temporary growths, which bore resemblance to the permanent urban centres as we know them today… As new areas were brought under European administration, headquarters were set up which were the origin of many of the larger towns of East Africa today… The traditional social organization and economic activities of the inhabitants of East Africa didn't lead to the growth of towns, which have grown up mainly as a result of non-Africa enterprise (Dow 1955, quoted in Safier and Langlands 1974: 135-6).

> In the 1890s, Uganda experienced the first significant contact with colonial settlers and administration. The British Crown took over the administration of Uganda from the private International British East Africa Company. It seems reasonable therefore to consider the royal capitals of the Kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole, Toro and Busoga as having some elements of an urban character. Even if they were mobile in site until the end of the 19th century, they may claim a stability of function. Others may wish to deny the claim that these places were urban areas on the grounds that they did not contain people with specialized occupations. This would seem to disregard the nature of administration and public service functions as occupational specializations, which would seem an odd view of a country whose colonial urban functions were excessively administrative (Safier and Langlands 1974). This historical tradition of a centralized administrative hierarchy existing in a non-colonial setting has had an important effect upon the morphology of Kampala—Mengo, Fort Portal—Kabarole, Mbarara—Kamukuzi and Bugembe—Jinja. One might even postulate that some of the duality between traditional focus and a central government on this urban timeline lies at the root of much of the present complexity of the urban scene, and with it many of the current planning and governance problems in the country and, most importantly, in Kampala City (Twaddle 1966).

Scaff (1965: 118) adds that:

> ... town life in Uganda is new, being introduced with the coming of the British in the later years of the nineteenth century and the establishment of Kampala following Lugard's military adventures in 1890. The major structure of the towns bears the stamp of the British rule during the period of its protectorate. The larger towns were gazetted for European and Asian occupancy, meaning that they could lease land and engage in enterprise in these centres; while the smaller places were limited to African ownership and trade. The larger towns, such as Kampala and Jinja, are therefore largely non-African creations and still occupied disproportionately by non-African residents; while the African population is concentrated around the fringe outside of the centre where land use is more highly controlled and restricted.

2.2 Age of settlement stabilization, fixation and pseudo-planning (1900-62)

This age was associated with the British colonial footprint in Uganda; it was a period that defined Uganda's urban spatial and development pattern. This period of colonial rule was associated with the building of the Uganda Railway. The railway line accelerated growth of urban centres such as Tororo, Kasese and Gulu. To ensure that the railroad paid, the colonialists encouraged settlement fixation and stabilization so that urban areas could serve as (i) centres of commerce and collection centres for rural agricultural commodities; (ii) administrative centres in various parts of the country to stabilize most settlements; and (iii) trading centres, which later attracted a large Asian population, a remnant of the Indian coolies involved in the building of the Uganda Railway.

There was a sequence of town plans for the country given in Kendall (1955) and Temple (1969, 1963). Specific planning attention was given to Kampala, as the largest and geographically most complex of the country's urban centres. Similar planning efforts spread to Jinja, Entebbe and a few district towns of Arua, Tororo, Mbale, Masaka, Fort Portal, Gulu, Mubende, Mukono, Mpigi, Mityana, Kitgum and Bombo. The first urban planning regulations in Uganda were enforced in the Township Ordinance of 1903 (*Uganda Gazette*—East African Protectorate and Uganda—1903, Act No. 10 of 1963). This permitted legislation to be passed easily on such matters as street cleaning, keeping of cattle in towns, digging of holes in towns, size of buildings, operation of the market, and so forth. In designating a township, thereafter, it was the practice to specify which rules were to apply, and with rare exceptions the rules concerning sanitation were the only ones enforced (Langlands 1974).

The 1903 Township Ordinance and related rules were substantially expanded in 1914 when building regulations, the size of plots (commonly accepted at the size recommended by Simpson of 100 x 50 feet),[1] the maximum coverage of plots permitted (50 per cent), the requirement for cemented foundations, and so forth were all legislated

[1] Professor Simpson (Professor of Hygiene and Urban Planning at the University of London) was tasked by the British colonial government in Uganda with recommending appropriate planning principles and preparing a new plan for Kampala City. His health report gave new impetus to the move for commercial and residential segregation/ethnic zoning, with intervening greenbelts which neither the colonialists nor the local people were permitted to encroach on. He cited malaria prevention as the main reason for ethnic segregation (Adule 2001).

for (Langlands 1974), and they have to some extent conditioned the appearance of the shops and residences in urban areas up to today. After minor modifications in 1916, the next major revision was in 1924. However, the main legislation was the Town and Country Planning Ordinance of 1948 and its various modifications (especially that of 1951) under which the outlined schemes of the 1950s and later have been implemented. The primary concern was to maintain a high standard of urban health and sanitation, which required each township to have a formally established sanitation board.

Residential social stratification by financial means, whereby the rich live at the top of hills and the poor at the bottom, in what Langlands (1974) refers to as 'altitudinal stratification', still prevails in Kampala, Mbale, Mubende, Masaka, Kabale and no doubt most administrative towns. Where there may be no hill to utilize for this purpose, the same type of high-grade, low-density area remote from the commercial and industrial areas can be distinguished, often, as in Fort Portal and Tororo, protected from the rest of the community by a golf course.

During this era, the British virtually ignored the pre-existence of well established and sophisticated land settlement and local governance systems like the 'Kibuga' in Kampala, which had in many cases been in existence long before their arrival (MLWE 2002). In all these cases, a heavy reliance on zoning was used to effectively 'stratify' urban planning, ranging from the high-income business, government and residential areas down through one or more 'intermediate' stages to the marginal or unauthorized settlements or slum areas which were growing at an increasing rate.

Pre-existing indigenous settlements and subsequent collections of local immigrant settlements were therefore long treated outside the main framework of plan designs, or put into special categories for planning treatment. Where a deliberate planning effort is evident, it was usually institutional in nature; for example, where living quarters were laid out in regimental lines or 'landies' to produce a totally artificial social community isolated from the surrounding population and usually housing people from a remote part of the country or even foreigners (Safier and Langlands 1974). Some provision was made for housing Africans in towns in an improved version of institutional housing that was slightly less regimental in nature, as in Nakawa, Bugolobi and Bukoto housing estates in Kampala, Kitoro in Entebbe, Walukuba in Jinja and Malukhu (Namakwekwe) in Mbale. In such circumstances, the development of land outside townships was left to the owners of the land. This has had adverse effects on the planning of all urban areas in the country.

Possibly one could argue that this is one reason for the growth of informal settlements in Ugandan towns, because the colonial administrator was preoccupied with providing for the urban needs of his own class, and subsequent planning systems have failed to find solutions to the problems they presented. Although these informal settlements have been portrayed as 'flying toilet zones' (Nuwagaba 1996) or 'septic fringes' (Langlands 1974), they still provide an indigenous element to the urban scene which seems to hold a special place in the planning and governance process of urban areas today. Their total area seems to be thinning out, largely as a result of private sector interests and land market forces.

In general, the types of urban plans produced during this period were very limited in their application to the total needs of the urban populations. They were usually the result of 'through-the-windscreen' surveys, and were not based on any prior attempt to

quantify problems. The basic fabric of a planning department, however, was kept in existence and the hope of planning was retained, during a period when these early efforts towards urban planning might so easily have disintegrated completely (Safier and Langlands 1974).

2.3 Age of conflict and collapse (1962–86)

The preceding section has shown that Ugandan towns as they exist today are alien concepts, even with modifications under local circumstances. The morphology of the towns has been the product of European and Asian needs, and the character of parts of the towns reflects their cultures; those parts which have been regarded as African reflect nobody's culture. However, the civil strife and subsequent economic collapse that were predominant in the 1970s and 1980s precipitated urban collapse and degeneration. The political turmoil meant a total collapse of the whole Ugandan economy. Subsequently the industrial sector collapsed, and major property owners in the country were expelled which led to a decline in the institutional capacity of urban authorities. By 1979 the economy was completely in the doldrums, with income per capita of US$120, as compared to the income per capita of over US$450 in 1970 (MFED 1987).

This period saw significant changes taking place in the government's attitude towards urban planning and towards master planning for major towns in Uganda. According to Safier and Langlands (1974), several recommendations were made for urban areas in the country, including:

i) Kampala to base its plans for expansion upon commercial, institutional and residential use of the land and *not* upon major industrial expansion;

ii) having limited and small-scale industry in Kampala and Mengo while Nakawa should pursue a policy of attracting light industry, but not heavy industry in competition with Jinja;

iii) promoting development of towns, by government capital expenditure, with the boundaries of district centres, thereby establishing a pattern for urbanization that would avoid excessive flooding of the national capital;

iv) preparing of long-range master planning for both water and sewerage for all towns;

v) considering the development of the lagoon system of sewage treatment, as a means of effecting very significant reduction in both capital expenditure and recurrent charges for essential urban services.

However, some of these activities did not receive formal consideration, as a national urban planning system for the country was not possible, and most of the recommendations were not considered and further pursued. Regardless of future developments, it seems beyond dispute that Uganda was already over-urbanized, and burdened with festering urban centres which lacked the capacity to support the needs of growing populations. The government of Uganda adopted the 'Enabling Policy', as highlighted in the National Shelter Strategy (MLHUB 1992), in the 1980s as a framework for addressing the challenge of housing provision. This was a policy aimed at:

i) increasing the housing stock through rehabilitating the housing industry and renovating factories producing building materials;

ii) improving housing conditions generally through improved access to infrastructure and services;

iii) fostering a healthy housing finance environment and facilities, in which government would use public funds to generate and support policy measures that would encourage private sector participation and community initiatives in housing finance development.

The unexpected result was that the prices for private sector housing units have been too high, beyond what the urban poor can afford. This has meant that government housing units have degenerated into uninhabitable places for the urban poor in several urban areas in the country.

2.4 The age of *laissez faire* development and urban informality (1986–2004)

Several drivers during this period have altered the functioning, planning and management of urban areas in Uganda. These include restructuring of the national economy, rapid population shifts, a movement towards decentralization and an increasing role of the private sector in the running of urban affairs (Isolo 2004). Since 1986, there has been the adoption of more liberal economic policies by the central government as a necessary element in the pursuit of economic growth after two decades of political turmoil and economic collapse. The impact of these economic reforms has been felt in areas such as changing urban land uses, environmental decline and growth of the urban informal sector, as well as growing urban poverty. It should be noted that most of the settlements in Ugandan towns continue to spring up without proper urban planning and without meeting development control requirements. Consequently, the settlements are not recognized by urban authorities and have been described as 'illegal', and not conforming to urban authorities' health and population holding capacity regulations. Due to their status, urban authorities have also tended to ignore them in the provision of the necessary services such as water, refuse collection, electricity and sewerage disposal.

The Local Government Act (1997) redefined urban areas in Uganda and empowers the Minister for Government to declare any area to be a town council, municipality or city if the following criteria are met: (i) population level (town council at 25 000 people, municipality at 100 000 people and city at above 500 000 people); (ii) have the capacity to meet the cost of delivery of services; (iii) have its own offices; (iv) have a master plan for land use; (v) water resources are present; and (vi) where district headquarters are established, the area is declared a town council. In the face of central government resource constraints, the changes in internal boundaries and subsequent creation of districts have meant a gradual evolution of small rural service centres into government-recognized urban centres, no doubt without any semblance of urbanity, devoid of appropriate services and infrastructure facilities.

2.5 Age of urban renaissance (2005– to date)

In 2007 the Population Secretariat (2007) took a critical look into Uganda's 75 urban centres and returned with a damning verdict of rot, filth and disease! This is partly

because the towns do not have the financial capacity to provide proper housing and sanitation facilities for their ever increasing, mainly poor populations. The Secretariat estimates that only 1.8 million people, less than half the entire urban population of 3.7 million, have access to piped water, while the rest depend on boreholes, rainwater and springs for their water needs. Onyango-Obbo (2008) reports that urban areas have been turned into a riot of mud-and-wattle houses, and they have all but crumbled under the weight of the new population.

Urban planning systems did not look at a future when urban areas would be 'invaded by natives' from the countryside or the populations would explode and quickly overwhelm the facilities. The collapse of the railway line has also affected towns whose initial stimulus to growth was largely centred on the colonial administration, mining and a cash economy. Most of the small towns in the country came into existence in the early phase of the cotton and copper economy and show few signs of recovery, except to remain as small trading areas, devoid of any serious secondary and tertiary activities. For example, Kilembe town has been dependent on the success of the copper mining industry and once copper ran out, even with an impressive number of missionary schools, hospitals and churches distributed widely in the country, and very many of them dating back over fifty years, they have failed to generate significant urban growth, except for a semblance of erratic trading posts. Further, Entebbe Municipality, despite its earlier colonial importance and the fact that it hosts the international airport and State House for the country, seems to have remained an administrative ghost town devoid of serious commercial activities.

Some of the sites in urban areas are due for renewal. Typical examples that had even been approved as townships in Uganda by 1935, are Butiaba, Kibanga Port, Mbulamuti, Namasagali, Busolwe, Aduku, Nagongera, Busembatia, Bukakata, Ivukula, Masindi Port, Katunguru, Kalisizo, Kabatoro, Kilembe and Kasenyi. Most of these seem to have fallen into decay and manifest all the associated problems of urban deterioration. These towns could qualify as cities of the type which the World Bank (2002) regards as not serving as engines of growth. Instead they are part of the cause of, and major symptoms of, the economic and social crises that have enveloped the country, thereby opening up another frontier for urban planning in the twenty-first century.

Under these conditions, the government of Uganda has observed that much of the urbanization taking place in the country today is informal, organic and haphazard; and existing urban plans have expired and need serious review. At the same time most of the new growth centres and district headquarters have never experienced any planning intervention. The government of Uganda is committed to ensuring orderly, sustainable and organized urban development and has therefore launched a national urban campaign as part of its national development agenda.

Amidst the policy of decentralization, the fight for political control of urban areas and the electorate, in the name of planning and managing urban areas as well as giving power and improving service delivery to the people, is one significant variable influencing the functioning of urban areas in Uganda today. For example, the government is proposing that central government take over the management of Kampala City in order to (i) improve service delivery to citizens; (ii) improve the management of the city, for Kampala has been incompetently and criminally managed; (iii) raise the city to international standards; and (iv) transform Kampala into a modern city. According to the proposed scheme, Kampala's borders will be extended and its

population increased—in sharp contrast to the current policy of creating smaller districts for the sake of 'taking services closer to the people'. If such authority is to come into being, there is a need to re-evaluate the role and task of planning and resource allocation between the metropolitan area and other urban areas.

3 Urban development transitions and implications for poverty reduction and policy planning

The number of institutions which are in some way or another concerned with planning policy in Uganda is large and not clearly defined. The most directly concerned is probably the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development. Originally the most relevant departments, namely Human Settlements, Services, Financing, Development/ Construction and Estates Management, were distributed among the following line ministries: the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Housing and Human Settlement), the Ministry of Local Government (Urban Development and Inspectorate), and the Ministry of Lands, Water and the Environment (Physical Planning and Approval). The Ministry of Health is responsible for the framing of building legislation under the Public Health Act; the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, inasmuch as it is concerned with overall economic policy, must impinge upon policy relating to urban planning. Together with other local urban authorities, the National Planning Authority, private real estate developers/land speculators, and individual landlords, each has considerable weight and power in determining urban development and planning policy variables.

Planning authorities have not been able to reinvent themselves as entities concerned with more than just improving upon the physical pattern of land use. Although planning is now widely accepted at the national, regional and local level, unfortunately city and regional planning has, until recently, been primarily concerned with rectifying problems of immediate and pressing importance rather than with the development of effective long-range programmes for the future.

An inherent difficulty that planning faces in the complex task of thinking constructively about urban areas in the country is the lack of guidelines that recognize the interplay of social, political and economic factors in Uganda. If urban planning is to become (or be allowed to be) a more relevant and effective instrument for increasing the welfare of communities, important questions which were asked by Langlands (1974) forty years ago are still pertinent. They are:

- The question of the Ugandan town: What should a Ugandan town be like? How can the problems of Ugandan towns be seen in light of rendering the urban areas more serviceable units in the future?

- The question of planning targets: What should be regarded as the end product of urban planning in Uganda? Should it be organized primarily to produce detailed master plans for every urban area above a certain size, and outline schemes for all the rest, as it seems to be in terms of the Ministry of Local Government's World Bank-funded project (2007-08) to draw structural plans for Uganda? What ought to be the major direction of work, and what should be substituted for the functions which master plans and outline schemes now perform?

- The question of planning policies: Who should be properly regarded as answerable for decisionmaking in the urban planning field? Should there continue to be a plurality of interests in government, with powers to take action not necessarily subject to coherent direction—for example, land grabbing, schools and parastatal relocation/collapse in the name of investors? Should town planning be properly conceived more in the image of a central government executive and development authority, a civil service bureaucracy or market-led growth planning? At what level in government should any 'overall' executive bodies be placed?

- The question of planning coordination: How should urban planning be properly related to national and regional planning? To what extent is it sensible to prepare town plans, given an absence of certain basic information concerning national and regional economic growth and social policy? At what stage in national planning should plans and projects in the urban sector be introduced for evaluation? How significant is the investment available for urban facilities in the formulation of urban plans and planning policy?

- The question of planning priorities: Which of the problems of urban development ought properly to be given priority in the efforts of planners and governments? Should there be a wholesale relaxation/withdrawal of zoning regulations and building standards in the efforts to incorporate low-income communities and the private sector into an urban planning framework? Does central business district redevelopment take precedence over integrated city development? How is the dimension of time managed: How far ahead is it (i) possible and (ii) necessary to 'plan', and in what sense?

Conclusions

The aim of traditional town planning in Uganda has been essentially to provide for the physical accommodation of urban development as it arose in a piecemeal and ad hoc manner, a practice of 'holding the ring' within the bounds of some overall design concept. The result can be seen in the bulk of urban planning legislation and control practices: a reliance on strict building regulations, the enforcement of layouts and design standards, and the clear interpretation of zoning as a means of activity categorization, and so on.

Most planning efforts are project-based, donor-funded and piloted in a few areas. The question is how these planning efforts can be sustained and translated into urban/city-wide plans. Urban problems have been treated as individual planning projects, rather than being taken up in relation to what will ultimately be an integrated urban pattern. There is a need for planning to calculate lead times. Urban areas can't readily calculate the per capita capacity of many of the current urban facilities. They do not know when that capacity will be reached—that is, population numbers, years, when they will have to add further to current stock, and so on. There is no idea of necessary increments that are efficient, including financial and political components as well as simply construction time requirements. Using known lead times, it would be possible to determine how many years will elapse before the urban areas reach population size X, and thus before it will be necessary to increase and improve facility Y, and so on for various facilities and

services. This would further help to create a series of service capacity thresholds and action lead times associated with them which, taken together, form an essential core of urban plans.

The physical form and sociospatial make-up of urban areas, together with institutional arrangements, power structures and class divisions continue to change tremendously. Further, the process of policy- and decisionmaking in urban areas today is evolving as a terrain of contestation among various stakeholders, falling within the terrain of civil society activism, informality and state institutions. This requires an exploration of the interaction among these actors in determining the future of urban areas in Uganda today.

Planning and development of urban areas have reverted to a *laissez faire* attitude in some measure. It is the contention of this paper that privatization is just reluctance on the part of government to accept a burden of responsibility. Urban management and planning is about forms of regulation of the society and economy in which we live, but possibly the most serious legacy of Ugandan towns since 1986 has been the tradition of public neglect and erratic private sector provision for the needs of the common man, and a failure to provide adequate and sustainable cheap housing, effective and reliable public transportation, safe pedestrian space, secure employment, and security of tenure. The fortunes of the newly created towns lie in the local economic and social circumstances in which they have been declared, located and created. Although most of the planning problems in urban areas so far concern big and growing towns, and mostly Kampala, the small and declining towns also present significant scope for planners. What is important is to ask: at what point is it desirable to have planning in these rapidly emerging urban areas, beyond merely administrative functions?

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