URBAN VISIONS OF THE EXCLUDED

EXPERIENCES OF GLOBALISATION IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

Dr Emma Wragg and Dr Regina Lim

Oxford Brookes University
e.wragg@brookes.ac.uk, r.lim@brookes.ac.uk

ABSTRACT:

Economic growth in African cities has seen the rise of a new middle class with aspirations for services and housing which many African cities struggle to deliver. Their emergence has not gone unnoticed on the world stage, and as demand has waned in the shrinking economies of the Global North, international property developers and architecture firms have stepped in offering new visions for African cities, which would not look out of place in Dubai or Shanghai. The incongruity of these plans for cities where 70% or more of urban residents live on the margins in unplanned settlements - raises questions about the processes shaping the future of African cities. Urban theories, in particular neoliberal ideologies of urban entrepreneurialism, offer compelling explanations for how these visions have come to be. What is less well understood is the local dynamics at play in the structuring of African cities and ways in which African cities are responding to processes of globalisation and market liberalisation. This is all the more significant for cities where the State has little or no role in the development of the city - these are places which have been largely constructed and assembled by a diverse amalgam of formal and informal actors. Yet the visions, culture, values and needs of these different groups appear to have had little influence on these new grand master plans. This paper presents the findings from an exploratory study which explores the potential of assemblage theory to understand the lives and experiences of globalisation of local actors in Lusaka. The findings highlight the extent to which these new visions of African cities are at odds with lives and concerns of actors from across the social spectrum.

KEY WORDS

Africa cities, Neoliberalism, Assemblage, Urban Visions, Local Actors, Lusaka, Zambia
INTRODUCTION

African cities are in the throes of change. Rapid urbanisation, globalisation and recent economic growth are having a transformative effect on city spaces. Economic growth has been accompanied by the rise of a middle class with demands for housing and services that few governments have the capacity to meet. But their growth has not gone unnoticed by the private sector. Spectacular new projects in the form of gated housing complexes, mega malls, international hotels and multiplex cinemas are changing the urban landscape. These already dramatic changes could take on an entirely new dimension if some of the new visions for African cities put out by international property developers and architecture firms are realised. These visions - computer generated master plans for cities such as Kigali, Luanda, Maputo, Kinshasa, Dar es Salaam, Nairobi and Lagos - depict modern Corbusian utopias filled with glass mega structures, which would not look out of place in Dubai or Shanghai (Watson 2013). The incongruity of these plans for cities where 70% or more of urban residents live on the margins in unplanned settlements raises important questions about the global processes shaping the future of African cities.

A criticism made of our understanding of African cities, and the impact of global processes within them, is that it continues to be focused around urban theories developed for Northern cities that have little relevance in the South. A particularly dominant theory is the critique of neoliberalism, which has come to define our understanding of many cities in the South. The focus on neoliberalism and its consequences can obscure many other explanatory processes at work in African cities (Parnell and Robinson 2011, 2012). This paper considers the notion of assemblage as an alternative conceptualisation of the African city: a way of surfacing some of the other processes at work in these cities.

The paper documents a short study carried out in Lusaka in June 2013, exploring how the notion of assemblage helps in understanding the social impact of new developments in African cities catering to its emerging middle classes. The approach taken was to investigate different local perspectives and experiences of Lusaka’s urban transformation – focusing in particular on its first major mall, Manda Hill, constructed in 1999 and currently owned by a South African development company.

To give a complete view, this paper first traces the debate in the literature on the limitations of neoliberal analysis and the need for new analytical approaches grounded in the realities of African cities. An account of the context of Lusaka and the methodology used follows, and finally the paper describe key insights that emerged from this preliminary exploration.

A PATH FROM NEOLIBERALISM TO ASSEMBLAGE

THE IMPACTS OF GLOBALISATION – CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE

Economic globalisation underpinned by the export of neoliberal policies provides a compelling explanation for Africa’s changing urban landscape. In this analysis, Africa’s newly opened markets become the latest home to Harvey’s (1989) excess capital as property developers flee Europe and
America’s contracting markets in search of new opportunities. Again critiques of neoliberalism offer a persuasive account of the likely outcomes of this capital flight. This is encapsulated in Potter’s (2008) depiction of globalisation as leading to dual process of convergence and divergence.

*Divergence* is the outcome of spread of neoliberalism involving the deregulation of markets, downsizing of States; increasing control of trade and investment by transnational corporations and a “race to the bottom” as cities compete to make their tax and regulatory environment as attractive as possible to foreign capital. These processes are seen to be closely associated with the exacerbation of deep social and economic inequalities in cities, between those who benefit and those excluded from the circuits of capital (Friedmann and Wolff 1982:322, Potter 2008; Sassen 1991). Alongside patterns of uneven development, the notion of convergence looks at the extent to which people and in particular their consumer habits are becoming more alike as result of globalisation. In the spotlight here is the value of the new consumer markets in emerging economies for multinational corporations from the Global North, and the role of the mass media in promoting the assimilation of Northern American and European tastes. In this analysis cities in the South are seen as important targets for the introduction of ‘emulatory’ lifestyles to support the import of new consumer products from overseas (Potter 2008).

**QUESTIONING THE HEGEMONY OF NEOLIBERAL ANALYSIS FOR AFRICAN CITIES**

The critique of neoliberalism that underpins this perspective has come to dominate understanding of the impacts of globalisation on cities in the South. This is not without good cause – there can be no doubt about the impact of neoliberal policies in African cities and the devastating social consequences of structural adjustment policies (Parnell and Robinson 2011, 2012).

However, there is a growing debate in the literature around the hegemony of this discourse and its impact on our understanding of processes of change in cities in the South. Inherent in this debate is a concern to balance the explanatory weight given to structure, in the form of macro economic neoliberalism, with greater understanding of the role of agency and the micro context of urban life. But it also reflects a real concern that the dominance of neoliberalism may be obscuring our ability to identify other processes at work – both structures of power and agency (Parnell and Robinson 2011). As this debate develops, an increasing number of voices are calling for the “internationalisation” of urban theory, with growing attention being given to the work of urban theorists whose thinking is inspired by the grounded realities of cities in the South. This includes the work of Vanessa Watson, Edgar Pieterse and Sue Parnell from the African Centre for Cities on South Africa; Ananya Roy on informality as mode of urbanism (2005), AbdulMaliq Simone (2004) theorising on African cities, and the work of the anthropologist de Boeck on Kinshasa (De Boek and Plissart 2004).

For Robinson and Parnell (2011), this need for alternative theoretical perspectives is particularly relevant to the African context. As they note, these are cities wrestling with rapid urbanisation, widespread informality, persistent poverty and a limited or non-existent State apparatus. In its place, it may be more relevant to consider the power of traditional authority: religious institutions and the plethora of informal actors involved in the construction of cities where approximately 70% of residents reside in informal areas.
ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING AFRICAN CITIES – FROM GLOCALISATION TO ASSEMBLAGE

There are a number of alternative approaches that could be taken to explore the impacts of globalisation that pay keener attention to the realities of African cities. One would be to look at “glocalisation” – how urban neoliberalism is reproduced in different contexts in different ways and how neoliberal policies are transformed by the local context. In the context of Africa, Parnell and Robinson (2012) also draw attention to the work of the Africanist James Ferguson and his concept of “extractive neoliberalism”. Ferguson highlights the extent to which African communities are excluded from global capital flows, noting that “where capital has been coming to Africa at all, it has largely been concentrated in spatially segregated socially “thin” mineral-extraction enclaves – i.e. capital is globe hopping not globe governing” (Ferguson 2006:38 cited in Parnell and Robinson 2012:601).

This research, however, follows Parnell and Robinson’s call for a more radical approach, which moves away from a focus on neoliberalism and its different forms to explore other processes that may be shaping African cities. Within this context there are a number of different approaches inspired by cities in the South that might be mobilised to delve into the realities of African cities and their encounters with globalisation. One common focus is on the pervasiveness of informality and ways in which informal practices are integral to how cities function (Hansen & Vaa 2004, Roy 2005, Neuwirth 2011). Roy focuses on informality as the key organising logic in cities in the south describing it as “a system of norms that governs the process of urban transformation itself”... (Roy, 2005:148).

Valuable understandings of the relevance of traditional authorities and customary law in peri urban areas have also emerged from use of institutional analysis to explore different sources of power and regulation in city spaces (Rakodi and Leduka 2005). Powerful analytical insights have also come from policy driven research in the South into the causes of poverty (Parnell and Robinson 2011). This has lead to the development of a multi dimensional conceptionalisation of poverty (Wratten 1995; Moser 1998) and a much richer understanding of the multitude of activities that make up urban livelihoods in a context of limited formal employment (Rakodi 2002). However, of particular interest to this research are the ideas and concepts that have emerged from the increasing movement in urban studies towards seeing cities in relational terms. This work, including Simone’s (2011) study of Jakarta and McFarlane’s (2011) work in India and South America offers the research a way of exploring global–local interplays which responds to Parnell and Robinson (2011) call for development of understandings grounded in the realities of African cities.

A useful starting point for this engagement is Doreen Massey’s (2007) seminal research on London and her notion of “a global sense of place”. In this analysis the identity of places is constructed relationally through its interaction with other places. So, rather than being defined by territory and boundaries, cities are what they are as a result of their engagement with other places. In this way cities become conceptualised as a concentration of networks and meeting places.

“what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the face that is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus… Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around,
they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings…. (Massey 1991: 28)

For Massey, the significance of globalisation is the stretching out of these social relations - economic, political and cultural - that makes up cities. As a result a proportion of the experiences and understandings that emerge from the articulation of these networks is increasingly constructed on a much larger global scale than the particular place where they emerge. As Massey notes, this provides for an understanding of place which is “extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local” (Massey 1991:28).

This more positive conceptualisation of globalisation is not, however, an apolitical one. Massey notes that the social relations that stretch out over cities are each full of power with “internal structures of domination and subordination” (Massey 1994:7). These relationships of power relate not only to economic forces but also other social relations of difference – gender, ethnicity, disability etc. So experiences of globalisation need differentiating socially – ‘for different social groups and different individuals are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections…some people are more in charge of it than others…some are more on the receiving end; some are effectively imprisoned by it (Massey 1991:25-26)

Adopting this relational perspective pushes the research towards looking at globalisation as a more diffuse set of processes, which emerge from the stretching out of social relationships and the changes that this produces across the mesh of networks that make up the city. But it also draws attention to how different groups are placed in relation to these global flows and their different experiences of globalisation.

The notion of assemblage makes use of this relational perspective - it is a way of looking at the city as a “gathering process” (McFarlance). This moves away from the notion of the city as a whole to the idea of the city as a work in progress made up of a multiplicity of urban assemblages (Farias 2011).

“As an assemblage is a whole that is formed from the interconnectivity and flows between constituent parts – a socio spatial cluster of interconnections between parts wherein the identities and functions of both parts and wholes emerge from the flows between them. It is not a set of pre-determined parts that are organized to work in a particular way, yet it is ‘a whole of some sort that expresses some identity and claims a territory’ (Wide 2005:77)

An assemblage, then, is a focus on the outcomes of the multiplicity of connections and interactions between sites and actors. It is distinguished from network theory by its concern for their generative power – the extent to which the interaction between different actors, relationships and things creates a dynamic of its own that can both transform its constitute parts but also exceed the sum of its parts. As McFarlance observes: “assemblages are relations not just of stability and rigidity but of access, flux and transformation… assemblage connotes transformation or the work of reassembling, thereby focusing attention of the possibility of invention” (2011:652).

The research explores the potential of the concept of assemblage to better understand the social impact of new urban development in Lusaka. This is premised on an understanding of the city as made up of a collection of assemblages – each representing a dynamic entanglement of people and objects where economy, culture and politics are melded together in variety of ways. Rather than conceiving of new
developments (including Manda Hill) as solely the product of economic liberalisation – an external force of globalisation - the research starts from an assumption that these developments are the outcome of an accretion of social relations that make up the city. These relations are both global and local, both structural and agency based, both formal and informal. In other words, these developments are enmeshed within and are product of diverse local and global networks and relationships that traverse the city. So to understand their impact requires an exploration of the outcomes of the folding together of these different relationships and the trajectories of change that emerge from their interplay.

There are a number of potential benefits to this approach for developing post neoliberal understandings of African cities. Through its investigation of the actors, things and processes that are present or absent within an assemblage, the opportunity is there to uncover other processes at play in the structuring of cities and to expose more fully the heterogeneity of city life. For the same reasons, it also creates a space to reflect more fully on the urban experiences of local actors and the role of agency in city making (Farais 2011). Finally, it has a clear political project, which acknowledges the importance of approaches that can respond to inequalities in cities.

“by revealing who and what is taken into account and who or what is not, and how forms of life are composed, subordinated or excluded, the study of urban assemblage seeks to establish a foundation of empirical knowledge available to the public for a democratic politics…. to support a participatory politics with a richer and more detailed knowledge of the real, including the ways and forms of power shaping city life (Farais 2011: 371)

LUSAKA CONTEXT

Lusaka is a city of extremes – strong economic growth in Zambia in last decade has generated significant wealth in the city, but this sits alongside persistently high levels of poverty- 60.5% of the country’s 13.8 million inhabitants were living below the national poverty line in 2010 (World Bank 2010). Lusaka is also a divided city – British colonial policy in the 1930s aimed to discourage the establishment of a permanent African population, setting the foundation for segregation along racial and now income lines. The initial plan for the city devised by Adshead and Bowling, two British planning consultants, aimed to create a new European style garden city, catering for a European population of only 13,000. This was composed of government buildings and low-density suburbs on higher ground to the east of the railway line (see Figure 1) (Williams 1986). Housing for the African population was subsequently provided in separate high density “African Housing Areas” at Matero, Chilenga, and Kamwala in the west and south of the city, apart from the European residential areas. These African Housing Areas were woefully inadequate in responding to the phenomenal growth of Lusaka’s population, particularly post independence when influx control measures in place during the colonial era were lifted. Between 1957 and 2010 the population grew from 71,755 to 1,742,979 (Collins 1986, Rakodi 1986, GRZ 2010). Growth rates continue to remain high – the average annual growth rate between 2000 and 2010 was an astonishing 4.9%. Unsurprisingly, with such high growth rates and a legacy of underinvestment in housing, an estimated 70% of Lusaka’s population reside in unplanned settlements to the west of the city and on the urban peripheries (World Bank 2002). Although the majority of Lusaka’s 37 settlements – referred to as ‘compounds’ and ‘townships’ - have been recognised as legal settlements, access to basic services in these localities – water, sanitation, rubbish collection – is extremely limited.
The turnaround in Zambia’s economic fortunes in the last 10 years has been profound, bringing to an end a long period of economic decline that began in the 1970s. Post independence in 1964, the newly elected President Kaunda established a one party State and sought to address the inequalities of the colonial era through a socialist agenda known as Humanism. This saw the nationalisation of 80% of the Zambian economy (Rakner 2003) - including the copper mines which account for a massive 95% of all export earnings - the suppression of the land market and tight controls over private enterprise and foreign investment. In the mid 70s Zambia fell foul of its dependency on copper exports as world copper prices plunged - the resulting balance of payments crisis and rise in interest rates led to a steep decline into debt. Finally under pressure from the IMF and World Bank, Kaunda fell from power in the 1990s and the newly elected government lead by Frederick Chiluba embarked on a brutally rapid programme of structural adjustment.

The liberalisation of markets, combined with a vigorous programme to attract foreign investment with taxation exemptions and (until very recently) freedom in the movement of capital out of Zambia, undoubtedly resulted in a significant increase in foreign direct investment from notably South Africa, India, the UK, Italy, Germany and more recently China. Together with high copper prices, this has
contributed to a sharp uptick in GDP – averaging growth of 6% over the last decade. The Economist recently ranked Zambia 9th amongst countries worldwide expected to have the highest GDP growth rate over the next five years (Economist 2011). Nowhere is Zambia’s newfound prosperity more evident than in the bustle and growth of Lusaka. New commercial and residential buildings are going up everywhere and the construction industry is booming. There has been phenomenal growth in the construction of office property, hotels, gated residential housing but most especially in the retail sector. South African retailers were the first to take advantage of the liberalisation of the retail sector and are now dominant as the largest foreign investor holding 39% of the retail market (Zambia Investment Centre cited in Miller et al 2008). Investments from South Africa but also Britain and China as well as local business interests have totally transformed the retail environment. One of the most visible outcomes has been the construction of a number of new out of town retail centres predominately in the more affluent eastern sector of city – including Manda Hill in 1999, Arcades in 2003, Crossroads in 2006, Woodlands in 2009 and Levy Junction and Makeni in 2011.

Despite this strong growth, poverty is still the dominant reality for the majority of Lusaka’s residents. Over time the social costs of market liberalisation have been very high. Privatisations and repeated waves of redundancy resulted in a massive surge in the number of urban dwellers dependent on informal sector incomes – by 2008 it was estimated that only 9% of the city’s population were engaged in formal employment (UNDP 2007). In parallel with this decline, low income residents have borne the brunt of the removal of food and fuel subsidies and the rapid downsizing of the State. Despite all of investment transforming Lusaka’s landscape, the last ten years have brought little in the way of improvements in access to basic services for the majority in Lusaka’s unplanned settlements.

PILOT METHODOLOGY

The aim of the research methodology developed for the paper’s pilot study was to examine the potential of assemblage theory in understanding the social impacts of new developments in Lusaka catering to its emerging middle classes. This involved exploring how these developments were perceived and used by the broad social spectrum that comprises the city.

THE SOCIAL SPECTRUM BASED ON RESOURCES FOR URBAN EMPOWERMENT

The focus in this pilot study was on people and institutions with a range of resources for urban empowerment, including income, education and social capital. Differences in access were manifest in their different experiences of the city along the following key dimensions:

- Proximity to the city centre: far to near;
- Land / plot size: small to large;
- Type of tenure: rent or own;
- Type of settlement: informal/legalised/formal
- Access to utilities/transport;

At the poorer end of the social spectrum interviewees included groups of men and women from Kanyama settlement in the west of Lusaka, a street trader operating at the traffic lights outside Manda
Hill and a women’s church group made up of residents of unplanned settlements in the Leopards Hill area. In the middle were groups of employees of a multinational company earning between K4,000 and K5,000 a month (between USD800 and 1,000) in a context where the minimum wage is set at K1,2000 per month and non skilled workers received K1,700 per month. At the higher end of the social spectrum, interviewees included an executive at a multi-national and a group of expatriate residents. A range of key informants were also interviewed including the manager of Manda Hill and Shoprite, senior planning officers in Lusaka City Council, a member of Lusaka’s National Housing Authority and traders at Kamwala Market.

Fig 2: Range of social spectrum

COLLECTING NARRATIVES FROM CULTURE EXPERTS

The research recognized people as experts of their own city life, how they use it, their patterns of behaviour, and their preferences. As experts of their own lives, they hold the key to shaping future urban visions which can accommodate their ways of living. To explore their use of the city and interactions with its new developments interviewees were asked a range of questions focusing on their activities and experiences including:

- Establishing who they are in order to understand their position in the social spectrum
- What is your typical day? May include experiences and activities on transport and mobility, employment and livelihood, family life, shopping, dining,
- How do you experience / use public space? Social lives in public / private spaces, perceptions of public spaces
- How has the city changed? Focusing on their personal/institutional experiences
- What would your ‘ideal’ vision of the city be?
These basic lines of inquiry structured the narratives but provided enough flexibility to go into more detailed inquiry depending on the direction took interview and if the informants had specialized and useful knowledge and experiences on city use and future urban visions.

ESTABLISHING FOCAL POINTS

To explore the social impacts of Lusaka’s new developments the research established two focal points of the inquiry. The first was Manda Hill shopping centre - a key landmark in the transformation of Lusaka’s retail sector. Interviewees were asked about their usage and views on the development in order to understand points of divergence and convergence in the activities and beliefs that our collage of users presented. The second focal point was a set of rendered drawings of urban visions of African cities (the “Africa urban visions”) created by international firms of property developers and architects (see Watson 2013 and Figure 12). Interviewees were shown the drawings and asked what types of city would or could accommodate them and their lifestyles in the future.

OBSERVING THE CITY BASED ON NARRATIVES: THE COLLAGE OF DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE

The narratives collected were based on individual experiences of people or specific institutions staged within the same city. Understanding this stage - be it a public space such as a road, market area, shopping mall, traffic junction wherein a variety of experiences takes place through direct observation - directed the study towards analysing the activities as multiple layers experienced by the spectrum of city users. This observation process could likewise verify or raise further questions on the narratives. The narratives are recorded oral testimonies which were then verified by field observations and visually recorded. The stage then becomes the place where specific activities are analysed spatially (Fig 3.) By recording these visual observations, the study aimed to analyse how a variety of users from across the social spectrum are using and experiencing particular spaces in the city (Fig.4). This method allows for observing the assemblage of city use and the intersection of various experiences.

This methodology for the pilot study required ten days of collecting field data, which was then qualitatively sorted into key themes exploring experiences from across the social spectrum.
Fig 3: Shopping activity in Manda Hill Mall

Fig 4: Traffic Light Vendors at Manda Hill
SOME PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

1. LAND OF PLENTY – LAND OF NONE

For some, Lusaka’s immersion in the global world was passing them by. For the residents of Kanyama and the church ladies in Leopards Hill, the benefits of Lusaka’s transformation appeared to be very few. Of far greater concern was the impact of rapid development and escalating land prices on their own security and access to land. Whilst aware of the changes, they did not feel a part of it.

“Changes are there, like when you go to the town centre, there were shacks, but those things are brought down, they are building good things, shops, all those old buildings are being brought down and they are building modern buildings, we hear of shopping malls, special economic zones, we hear of those new roads they are constructing to reduce the town centre congestion, these are some of the things taking place”.

Fig 5: Manda Hill

It was easy to see their point when confronted with Lusaka’s new malls – their gleaming glass facades and parade of South African shops – Shoprite, Woolworths and Game and food franchises including Copper Creek Spur and Hungry Lion (see Fig.5) seem more than anything to back up Ferguson’s notion of extractive neoliberalism. They bear little resemblance to the crumbling infrastructure of Lusaka city that surrounds them and their linkages to South Africa are far more prominent that their relationship to the city. As the manager of Manda Hill pointed out “it is almost an extension of South Africa”. Goods routed up from South Africa supply the shops, and Zambia’s permissive attitude towards foreign investment allows profits to move out freely.

Home for the Kanyama interviewees is an unplanned settlement on low-lying land to the west of Lusaka, which is home to an estimated 200,000 residents. Its phenomenal growth in recent years has meant that there is now talk about treating Kanyama as a town independent of Lusaka. Despite this, access to water, sanitation and waste removal is extremely poor and residents have seen few improvements in the last 10 years. It is therefore unsurprising that the residents could not see the benefits of these new developments and expressed frustration about their continued invisibility in the eyes of the State.

Those people who benefit from those infrastructures such as Manda Hill, Levy Junction are those people who have money, but most of the people who stay on western side of Kanyama its
not a benefit… for us it is a disadvantage, we cannot benefit from those infrastructure that are coming.

Whilst they saw no benefits, Kanyama residents and the church ladies were very wary of the possible implications. Fear of displacement, and stories of the displacement of informal settlers in Lusaka’s recent growth were a frequent topic in discussions. Accounts were given of evictions in peri-urban areas to accommodate the construction of Lusaka’s new ring road as well as the upcoming construction of a special economic zone by Chinese contractors in the Leopards Hill area:

*They say we must all leave by the end of the month …..they are telling us just to go….no we are receiving no help…..there are many of us farming here [Leopards Hill site]….where are we to go now ?*

Concerns also surfaced when Respondents were asked their views on the Africa urban visions.

*Who will live in these places? These are things that we also worry about, I am just going to give you an example - when you go to city centre, people who were doing business there, were simple, simple people like us doing business, but then when they built, those people were not there, people with money came to take those places. This is the fear that we have, these places can be built, but if they can just allow us a small portion of land.*

But most apparent in discussions with Kanyama residents and the Church ladies was their sense of disenfranchisement and exclusion from Lusaka’s transformation.

“We feel neglected….. only those up there can go to these malls, if they could do something to suit the community then we can just say no we are not neglected, we are part and parcel of Lusaka”

Despite their exclusion residents of the settlements in peri urban Lusaka are still impacted by this change with evidence of displacements and a heightened sense of insecurity. Determining the extent of market driven displacements now occurring in Lusaka’s peri urban areas will be a key first step in developing a fuller picture of the social impacts of Lusaka’s transformation.

2. A CAPTURED MIDDLE CLASS?

It was not surprising that the networks and activities of lower income interviewees in Kanyama and Leopards Hill appeared to have few connections with the worlds that existed in Lusaka’s new shopping malls. The settlements are far from Manda Hill and they were primarily built to capture the disposal income of Zambia’s growing middle classes. Evidence of the rapid growth of Lusaka’s retail sector and the ever-increasing consumption patterns of Lusaka’s middle class suggested that this was a highly successful endeavour. The growth in demand for consumer goods seems to have come as a shock to even South Africa’s most experienced retailers. As the manager of Manda Hill explains

*When I came here 10 years ago there were no other fashion international brands or retailers at all, there were mostly your independent Zambians buying from the Far East and sticking in your store. When we opened, we traded unbelievably well, our store Woolworths when it*
opened up here used every square metre. Our trading densities were much higher than any other store in South Africa..... When we opened in Mr Price – our opening turnovers were higher than any other Mr Price in South Africa ... it showed there was this huge scope for retail and a huge hunger for it.... Now Hi Fi Corp are telling me they are selling more of the large screen televisions than in any store in South Africa...... there is a lot of disposable income out there and what people are shattered with, especially the South Africans, is that there is no credit, it is all cash money... here we sustain a retail environment with double prices and no credit flow.

Accompanying this growth is strong evidence of changes in consumer behaviour and aspirations that provided more evidence in support of Potter’s (2008) notion of global convergence. A discussion with the manager of Shoprite in Lusaka highlighted changes in diet in particular

There is a growth in middle class, we see it in product categories which 10 years ago we sold next to nothing, so people are definitely exposed to different things and their eating habits have changed, 10 years ago we sold mainly 5 tonnes of pasta in a month, now we sell 55 tonnes! as opposed to just maize meal..... Toiletries are about 6 times the size of what they were, that certainly points to a rise in the middle classes, and then the other category that's very interesting is flavourings and sauces and those sort of things, in terms of what they were eating – previously it was salt, we sold tonnes and tonnes of salt, but now we are selling a lot more sauces (see Fig. 6).
Changing aspirations were illustrated by stories of growing demand for home decorations as Home Improvement stores have flourished, the dramatic rise in the sale of premium wigs made of human hair from Brazil and India (see fig. 7), and evidence of the much higher propensity of Zambians to try out new products - 3 times higher than the more jaded consumers of South Africa. For the manager of Shoprite this was strongly related to the rapid uptake of satellite television in Zambia and exposure to international media:

I think people are exposed a lot more to media here than previously, a huge amount. If you speak to Multi Choice [a leading satellite company], their base has grown dramatically from 10 years ago to now... it's a lot about aspiration, but also what they see on the TV. If something new is advertised on cable TV, - when it's launched, within a day of the advert people will be contact us asking us where they get it...

Discussions with middle-income groups revealed great pride in Lusaka’s changing landscape – the arrival of the new shopping centres was seen as a symbol of Zambia’s new status as a middle income country. As one interviewee put it “it rubber stamps Zambia as a force to be reckoned with”. But discussions also painted a more conflicted picture of their attitudes and engagement with Lusaka’s new developments. For one, Manda Hill was not a place that they all felt they could afford to visit on a regular basis. They enjoyed the comfort and security of socialising in these spacious and clean spaces and watching movies in Manda Hill’s multiplex cinema, but trips were regarded as an expensive treat and they often spent their hard earned money elsewhere. Neither were these developments embraced by all with open arms - concerns were expressed about a loss of culture identity, the lack of Zambian representation in the shops and goods on display, and the pressures imposed by their children’s growing aspirations.
To be honest, I somehow feel, I would like it if there was a bit more of a culture aspect, because it feels like we are adopting someone else’s culture... there is no Zambia store, we are adopting a westernised culture, which I don’t have a problem with but if we could find a way of embrace both cultures... the rest of the world is moving, so we can't stay behind but we must not forget who we are, where we come from

There is nothing you can say, “That’s a Zambian shop”... Edgers, Jet, Mr Price are all coming from South Africa, we are not having an input, but there are good designers here, we are not utilising this, we are just adopting from outside. We should have more local, should have more Zambians, its full of what South Africa are doing, bringing the shopping and branding...

Resentments were also there – against multinationals but particularly directed at South African multinationals for their dominance and profit taking.

“Foreigners dominate the market, its disappointing, locals [shopkeepers] cannot afford to participate.... the rents are too high [at Manda Hill] and investors get tax exemptions – it does not apply to Zambians, tax and rent is not friendly and does not support Zambians.... I don’t like the pricing that goes on in the stores; SA stores don’t convert to Kwacha, they just go with the Rand value, exploitation is going on.”

These issues suggested ways in which new global influences in Lusaka are layering new tensions and complexity onto existing local and regional dynamics. Concerns about the absence of Zambian culture in the malls highlights an existing debate in Zambian society berating a loss of culture identity in urban areas. Similarly attitudes to South African investors are coloured by existing concerns over South Africa’s regional hegemony and a perception that it has been the sole beneficiary of post apartheid regional integration. More than anything, interviewees talked about their desire to see more of a Zambian influence “a Zambian touch” in Lusaka’s development – however quite what this might be was difficult to pin down.

“I have not seen a progressive design by an African architect, the western influence is so huge, all you get to see is Dubai, I have not seen anything that I would call "African". Yes, I would choose to live there, but then again I have not seen a progressive alternative, this is what we see on t.v. and people sought of want this now"

3. GLOCAL COMMERCE FOR THE FULL SPECTRUM

Conversations with our middle income groups also focused attention on market places existing outside the gated complexes of Manda Hill and other malls - frequented by a broader range of social groups but catering also to Lusaka's new middle class. "If you want to see how Lusaka is changing then you should go to the Chinese market- here you can find anything ". The "Chinese market" is a trading area close to central business district known usually as the Kamwala- Luburma market. It functions as a regional wholesale market attracting purchasers from across Southern Africa for goods which traders have brought in from Tanzania, Dubai, Thailand and China. It is a highly diverse in terms of the goods on sale with a high proportion of traders from India, Lebanon and China. It is also one of Lusaka's oldest market opening for African trade as Lusaka's "second class trading area" in the 1950s and expanding after independence into a vibrant and successful retail market dominated by Indian
wholesale traders. Since then it has been the subject of a controversial redevelopment by China Hainan, a private Chinese investor which has transformed the more dilapidated parts of the market with the construction of new shops leading to the re-labelling of the market by some as the "Chinese market" (Hansen 2010).

A visit to the market and conversations with traders highlighted the diversity of transborder trading networks in Lusaka's retail environment and the complexity of global influences and cultural exchanges that went far beyond notions of "westernisation".

In Kamwala the merchants sourced their goods from China, Dubai Thailand and Pakistan and catered to the needs of those who wanted to buy 'cheaper' than Manda Hill. The global exchange of culture, information and art was particularly visible in the form of pirate DVDs - these were not restricted to the outputs of Hollywood but instead promoted productions from Bollywood, Nollywood (Nigeria), China, as well as Hollywood (see fig. 8). These disc creations and original stories travelled from Bombay, Nigeria and California into Zambian living rooms with flat screen television sets purchased by traders from South Africa but made in Korea, China and Japan. The market provides business opportunities for a much greater range of the social spectrum and its customers with access to globally sourced commodities at prices significantly below those found at Manda Hill (Fig 9).
Chinese investment had however had a significant impact on the market. Some traders have been forced out by the higher rents put in place and others complained of the much greater level of competition they were experiencing as a result of an influx of Chinese traders. A theme which emerged from discussions was an increase in levels of mobility by Zambian traders. To respond to the competition Zambian traders felt they had had to increase their travels seeking out different goods to sell and new trading networks. One trader explained how his journeying had expanded from Dubai and South Africa to now encompass a number of different regions of China where he now sourced the majority of his goods.

The influence of Chinese traders was not limited to the whole sale markets of Kamwala. A local market in Kanyama as well as the surrounding vendors lining the streets en route to the compound provided for yet another level of commercial activity for the spectrum of users. These stalls cater to those requiring value for money found in recycled goods, locally sourced fresh food, storage containers for water, firewood, portable cookers, second hand clothing and products available in the smallest retail size suitable to the customers limited budget. The product range caters to the needs and spending power of the Kanyama residents, but is sourced both locally and globally (Fig. 10). There was much evidence of cross border trading including the transport of dried catfish en route from Kafue in the South to the Congo as well as the lucrative trade in Salaula or second hand clothing sourced from charities in Europe and North America.
But here again complaints were made about increased levels of competition from Chinese traders. The arrival of Chinese traders in the market has significantly reduced the cost of key staples including chicken and cabbage but infuriated Zambian traders.

Clearly, globalization is not the preserve of the wealthy: global influences were evident in the different markets patronized by city users from across the social spectrum. Across these different market places a diversity of longstanding global trading networks were visible - liberalisation is exposing these networks to greater competition increasing the variety of goods on offer to consumers, dropping prices and stretching the trading networks of Zambian traders as they seek to stay afloat at the very bottom of an already crowded urban trading system.

4. ENSNARED BY THE AUTOMOBILE: IMMOBILITY AND ME

Traffic! Across the spectrum, the common complaint was dealing with traffic. The improved earning capacity of most Zambians have also made is possible for many to own their own cars. The Road Safety and Transport Agency estimated that in 2011 alone 52,000 vehicles were imported into the country contributing to a 49% increase in the reported number of road traffic accidents from 2010 to 2011 (RTSA, 2012). The increase in the number of cars has not been followed by an improved road network nor has the need for mobility been supplemented by an efficient and useful public transport system. Yet people need to get around. People need to get to work.

The privately owned and operated mini buses come closest to providing public transport for those without cars. For those with lower incomes it becomes a major expense to cover transport cost as well as quality time stuck in traffic. However, even for those owning private cars with higher incomes and better job positions, having one to two hours of commute each day for the short distance it takes to get to work has an impact on the quality of family life and leisure activities. Peoples activities are increasingly controlled by traffic patterns with lifestyles adapting to this – the time they wake up to get to work, the number of hours they see their children, the places they go to, the way they shop, the leisure activities they miss, the length of time they spend in the office all to avoid or manage traffic patterns.

For many, the option of having an efficient public transport is quickly becoming preferable to having a private automobile that offers limited mobility.
Congestion was affecting all, the expatriates complained of the impact it had on their mobility. As traffic congestion became worse, they are less inclined to travel from their homes in the East to South of Lusaka. As a result their social worlds were becoming increasingly localize to their immediate neighbours.

A perceived ‘invasion’ of residential areas by businesses seeking more affordable and accessible office premises outside the city centre was also blamed on traffic and congestion. Areas that were primarily residential have started to accommodate a mix of office space catering to NGO activities, manufacturing and other service provisions. A long term resident bemoaned the impact this was having on neighbourhood life:

*Along my residential road in Woodlands which was completely residential when I moved there in 2001, I should say is now 50% business and offices. Houses rented or purchased have been changed to businesses and offices, and its been a drastic change for me, because it has changed the nature of the road where it was completely residential, we all knew each other, and it was a playground for the children during the day – and its changed a lot. It was really quiet off the main track road, it was not a main road.*

The difficulty in moving around the city of Lusaka has resulted in a type of zoning where clusters of residential types, commercial uses such as NGO offices, factories and other types are requiring localized services and decentralizing shops.

Once again the limitations of transport mobility and accessibility to the city troubles those with the least resources for urban empowerment. With the peri-urban church ladies, who have come from the rural areas and moved to Lusaka with their husbands, their ability to supplement family incomes are curtailed by their proximity to the city centre and mobility options. Without affordable public transport, walking is the main mode of transport so traveling long distances to find better paying employment becomes impossible. Furthermore, living expenses increase because commodities from bought local retail shops are sold at a premium. Not only is their earning capacity compromised, they spend more for the same commodities available at cheaper prices closer to the city centre. However, for them, shopping in centralized commercial malls such as Manda Hill becomes a laughing matter, a fantasy, inaccessible both for their disconnection from the city centre and their limited income.

5. THEM AND US – WHO’S CITY IS IT?

Lusaka’s description as a “boom town metropolis” on tourist information websites is easy to understand – liberalisation has attracted migrants, refugees, investors, NGOs and donors from places both far and near. Visits to Manda Hill suggest a melting pot of ethnicities, nationalities and age groups. Pushing their trolleys along the expansive corridors are African family groups who often socialise and dine out as families in the malls at the weekends. As they make their way they encounter groups of South African and European mothers drinking coffee at the popular “Mugg and Bean” outlet. Also prominent are Lusaka’s Asian community, Zimbabwean migrants both new and old and aid workers from Japan, Scandinavia and many other countries. On the second floor Chinese men dominate a casino managed by members of Lusaka’s Greek community. As they pass through the
central foyer shoppers may also encounter groups of young Zambian school children on a school trip marvelling at a model marketing a new Chinese housing development and teenage girls from the near by Lusaka Secondary school passing time in the mall during their break. (see Fig. 11). Among these groups mills traders and shoppers from the nearby Garden compound and the occasional group of children playing on the escalators and watching nervously for the return of the security guards.

It was frequently said that the malls had become public spaces, particularly places where African families met and socialised at the weekends

“now a lot more people are socializing outside of their houses; before you would have a braai [barbecue] at someone’s house, now they go out to the movies, birthday parties have to be planned at Arcades [Mall] or at the cinema; ...the malls have become public space

Younger professionals in particular saw the malls as a place to meet and socialise at the weekend. Manda Hill and Levy Junction were particularly popular for watching films with Arcades providing an alternative more affordable venue when cash was short. Lusaka and its settlements are bereft of public spaces –many of its parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities have been privatised or lost to land invasions as the demand for land has accelerated. There is some scope for questioning whether the malls are providing opportunities for new encounters and interaction between Lusaka’s varied social groups – opportunities that may not have been there in the past with the absence of public spaces. This was not a theme which emerged in this research - discussions on public spaces tended instead to highlight long standing social divisions in Lusaka, and ways in which Lusaka’s expanding social diversity was layering onto these existing divisions new conflicts and alliances.

Among expatriate groups - there was a tendency to speak of “the others” lack of responsibility for public spaces, their failure to collect garbage and keep spaces clean, or of how “others” venture into crime and petty theft. Deficiencies of social responsibility for the urban environment were always imposed on the behaviour of the ‘other’, referred to as they and them, never us or we. These comments were directed at the African population. They exposed both a limited sense of belonging to the city
for these expatriates - despite the longevity of some residents’ stay - and long standing divisions in Lusaka’s society along racial lines despite growing wealth.

I would say that there is still something of a split, would you agree? Even in restaurants, I mean new restaurants like the Delhi which is a prime example, there no exclusion at all, what so ever, but places like Design House, the Delhi, Abba House, are still predominately expatriate…. no it’s not the prices, there are plenty of [African] people with a lot of money

These existing divisions were compounded by new forms of social stratification across the disparate expatriate society - existing residents wrestling with the impacts of new arrivals. Long term Lusaka residents complained of the influx of “expatriate” communities from the Copperbelt, from South Africa and most recently Zimbabwe. Animosity was directly particularly at the white Zimbabweans, who were blamed along with the South Africans for greatly exacerbating racial tensions in the city. But among these groups there was also a strong dislike of conspicuous wealth and consumption of Lusaka’s NGO community, who were held responsible for distorting Lusaka’s salary market - offering salaries that far exceeded pay scales in the government and local firms.

But comments on the behaviour of “others” were also a feature of conversations with middle-income groups, who could sometimes display the greatest intolerance of the residents of Lusaka’s unplanned settlements. These included comments about the need to “do away with the compounds” and “move people out. The compounds were seen as both an obstacle to Lusaka’s development and the achievement of a “clean town”. For some Lusaka’s problems reflected a lack of political will to confront the growth of unplanned settlements:

“squatters are a problem, one that has to be addressed politically….Mugabe did it….China has done it…..they give you a warning and if you don’t move, they demolish the structure, there has to be some law and order, where people don’t respect that there is going to be haphazard planning; progress must be made”

Their views revealed strong prejudices against those that resided in unplanned areas and a lack of willingness to see residents as a part of the city. Economic growth appears to be creating new forms of social stratification across urban society as Zambia’s middle class expands.

Overall, the exploration of Manda Hill’s use as a public space did not suggest a picture of urban cosmopolitanism; rather it exposed some of the complexity and layering of existing and new social divisions in the city. What are the implications? For some, growing income differences were creating tension and “jealousy” that had not been there before. Others went further, blaming a recent spat of armed robberies in the Leopards Hill Area on unfulfilled aspirations created by the malls and growing wealth. Perhaps most significantly, for Lusaka City Council it highlighted a great difficulty they perceived in getting Lusaka’s disparate communities to take ownership of the city and participate in addressing its problems

“And the other dream we have is for everyone to be on board so that they say “this is my city”, because that has been a problem… we want everyone to feel that this is my city, to be proud of their city “
6. POLICIES FROM ELSEWHERE – A WEB OF GLOBAL INFLUENCES?

A visit to the planning department of Lusaka city council aimed to explore the role and influence of the planning department in Lusaka’s changing urban form. The discussion was awash with ideas and provided insights into Lusaka’s newly approved Integrated Development Plan put together with JICA - the Japanese donor. The global reach of planning policies from the industrialised cities of the North was all too evident in description of new concepts introduced by the plan including ideas of urban renewal and mixed development. This was mixed with discussion about the need to modernise Lusaka to cope with the traffic congestion and the lack of land available in the city for public development. This envisaged a city of by passes, flyovers, high rise buildings and satellite cities – not unlike some of the new urban visions for African cities

“...transportation is a major challenge to the city – you can see the confusion in town on our roads so we are pursuing the concept of ring roads....also for the roads overpasses, spaghetti junctions those have already been approved.... then for residential we now pursuing the concept of going up, rather than building laterally...there is no more land left in Lusaka, we need to maximise the use of space

But visions of modernisation were also tempered with notions of “planning with a human face” – acknowledging the existence of Lusaka’s settlements and the value of upgrading rather than resettlement – a keystone of international development policy on poverty alleviation. Discussions also covered the increasing role of the Chinese in the design of the city – including Lusaka’s new sports stadium - and the continued involvement of a range of donors and international non-governmental organisations in the upgrading of Lusaka’s unplanned settlements

The web of global policy influence in the offices of Lusaka’s planners was highly visible if not a little overwhelming and raised many questions particularly as to how they managed to reconcile these different concepts and mediate between different interest groups. But the reality of trying to implement the city’s new plan and the extent to which these ideas were likely to be realised related to issues which were much closer to home. For the planners, a key challenge for the city and a major obstacle to their ability to carry out their role was linked to the continued activities of political leaders in the allocation of land. Known sometimes as “party chairman” or “cadres” their existence reflects the extensive use of State patronage during Kenneth Kaunda’s era to maintain political support for his one party state (Scott, 1980 cited in Rakner 2003). This system of patronage filtered down into the settlements through the creation of a hierarchal system of control based on constituencies, branches and sections each composed of 25 households under the jurisdiction of a party chairman. The system was modelled on the authority of village chiefs in rural localities to enhance its acceptance and gave the Chairman the authority of village chiefs included the right to carry out informal land allocations. The handing out of land by the Chairman with tacit support of the State was an important mechanism for maintaining political support particularly prior to national elections (Seymour 1976; Hansen 1982; Rakodi 1983; Rakodi 1989). Despite the obvious problems with this system of political patronage, it has in the past provided a significant means for low income groups to gain access to land in the city (Wragg, 2010). Surprisingly, despite the disbanding of one party state and a number of changes of political power, this process is continuing to play a role in allocation of land.
"we can say that people are not following the law of the land, all in the name of politics, it is so rampant when we are close to elections – they will pretend to be coming from one political party or another, because the politicians they want to please the people, sometimes they will just say they are politicians, when they are just thugs, ............ and they steal money from people and they offer land – illegal land allocation is very rampant in the city”

Combined with budget constraints, political allocations contributed to a feeling of helplessness on the part of planners in their ability to perform their role. It suggests that the investment activities of international capital and the accelerated growth of real estate markets are not the only force to be reckoned with - the activities of the Party Chairmen continue to be an important force shaping the growth of Lusaka. From the perspective of the study it is also highlights the existence of local processes - outside the domain of neoliberalism- influencing the development of the city. Identifying the role of Party Chairman in Lusaka’s assemblages and who benefits from their land allocations in the context of Lusaka’s growing global engagement will undoubtedly help to build a greater understanding of the dynamics structuring this city.

CONCLUSIONS:

CONCLUSION: URBAN VISIONS - A CITY FOR PHANTOMS

In the study, there was no denying the relevancy of neoliberal analysis in understanding some of the processes of social change in Lusaka. Ferguson's (2008) notion of extractive neoliberalism appeared particularly pertinent to many of Lusaka's new shopping malls. But there were other issues that arose from the interviews that had less to do with the impacts of liberalisation and were more a feature of local and regional dynamics. Many of these processes were globalised in their own way, highlighting the existence of different experiences and manifestations of globalisation beyond the neoliberal analysis. Some of the dynamics that surfaced in the research included the emergence of new forms of social stratification; regional tensions in response to the growth of South African investment; the ramifications of competition from Chinese traders at the very bottom of the urban trading system; the role of political patronage in the distribution of land and social change emerging from the paralysis of the transport network. The findings support the need for theoretical approaches that allow for greater understanding of the multiplicity of connections and interactions that make up the city. Using assemblage theory to unpick, in more depth, the processes at work in Lusaka's many arenas - it may be possible to achieve a greater knowledge of the different dynamics at play in city and to explore the ways in which their interaction may potentially be driving urbanisation in new directions.

What was most evident in the study was the stark differences between understandings of the needs of African cities on display in the urban visions created by international firms of architects and the concerns of residents of Lusaka across the social spectrum. The architecturally rendered urban visions shown to Respondents (see Fig. 12) were consistently greeted with polite approval and thoughts on how they may benefit the country or the city

"It's marvellous, it's a very nice plan, It will be very beneficial to the nation to have a city which look like this one, even it may attract some, like a tourist attraction, some tourists will be attracted to visit the city"
‘Nice. Yes, it is possible. It would make us proud of Lusaka. We would be able to hold global events like the World Cup.’

Positive approval came when the vision was detached from any personal circumstance. Questions and opinions of concern arose when these visions were located within the respondents’ space and place within Lusaka. Concerns on how these complex residential areas would be maintained with poor city governance, the cost of high rise flats being out of reach for lower income groups, how would people be compensated for the land they are now occupying in order to build the complex, whether the traffic would get worse, who would gain and who would lose in this future vision. Most importantly, it emerged that these rendered visions did not accommodate the way current users within the spectrum lived in the city nor considered many of the issues they have raised in the key themes. Ideally, an urban vision would accommodate the assemblage of activities that the city’s spectrum of users live by. The shortcoming of these architecturally driven urban visions became evident when they were located within the space, place and reality of the different respondents.

Given that these visions are: detached from grounded realities; fail to accommodate the collage of activities from a broad spectrum of city users; and do not consider complex and intricate glocal reactions to globalization, how then would a more locally appropriate urban vision be shaped?

REFERENCES


The Economist (2011) The lion kings? Africa is now one of the world’s fastest-growing regions [Online] Available at: http://www.economist.com/node/17853324?goback=.gde_58967_member_39594505


Farias, I (2011) The politics of urban assemblages


Parnell, S and Robinson, J. (2012) (Re) theorizing cities from the global south: looking beyond neoliberalism *Urban Geography* 33(4) pp593-617


