

Panel RR: Livelihoods, housing and urban poverty (chair/coordinator: Laura Stark)

1) Laura Stark (University of Jyväskylä, Finland): From slums as problem to slums as solution: some reflections on urban poverty and the future of cities in Sub-Saharan Africa

UN-HABITAT defines a slum as an area that lacks: (1) access to safe water; (2) access to sanitation; (3) secure tenure; (4) durability of housing; and (5) sufficient living area. According to the 2003 UN-Habitat report, nearly 1/3 of the global urban population lived in slums in 2001, a number expected to double by 2030. Although Africa is often perceived to be a rural continent, Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's highest rate of urban migration. Of Africa's urban population, 70% find themselves living in informally occupied urban settlements ranging from shanty towns to slums. UN-HABITAT has recommended that in-situ upgrading of slums is far better than resettling slum populations to new areas. Yet currently there is a discernible paradigm shift in the academic literature towards questioning whether upgrading represents the best solution to the alleviation of urban poverty. Informal urban settlements everywhere sit on potentially valuable real estate, and upgrading inevitably increases its value. Slum residents with informal or customary tenure agreements can, in the best-case scenarios, generate capital for small enterprises by renting out and subletting buildings, rooms or roofs. After upgrading, even if some slum residents have been given ownership of the plot they inhabit, renters are left with nothing, and rental costs on upgraded land can easily rise beyond the means of the poorest residents, who must usually move further away from the city center and from income opportunities. Many Asian and Latin American slums and shanty towns, for example, are home to thriving informal economies which provide a minimum livelihood for survival. When upgrading occurs, these tiny informal businesses which make up the main share of the informal slum economy are often driven out of the upgraded area. In Sub-Saharan Africa, both the rental markets and informal economy appear to be founded on much more thorough exploitation of slum dwellers than is the case in much of Latin America or Asia. Most African slum-dwellers rent rather than 'squat' on land, and most landlords are absentee. It has been estimated that buying and renting out shacks in Nairobi's vast Kibera slum is one of the most lucrative ventures in the city. Drawing upon extensive reading of existing literature from multiple disciplines as well as my own fieldwork in the Tandale ward of Dar es Salaam, I seek to identify which factors in informal urban settlements are conducive to providing for the basic needs of the urban poor as well as a thriving informal economy. I suggest that if investing in the *physical* structures of the slums through upgrades only raises the property value and therefore rents in the slums, pushing out the poorest residents time and again, the most feasible solution for assisting the urban poor can only be investing in *human capital* through education. Private schools which are affordable to the urban poor already exist in the slums: their potential needs to be studied further.

2) Susanna Myllylä (University of Jyväskylä, Finland): The geography of 'non-places'. Informal settlements and livelihoods in urban Africa

The regional urban growth patterns have changed in Africa. The smaller cities minor to 500,000 people are facing rapid expansion, instead of larger cities that have dominated the urban scene and urban discourses. This increase is due to the natural growth, rather than immigration, as the large majority of the urban population is under the age of 25. Since the formal sector cannot offer subsistence to the majority of the inhabitants, they have to rely on

various livelihood strategies within the informal sector, functioning in the sphere of illegality. It thus first appears that urbanization has been disconnected from economic growth in Africa – or is it? The informal sector's exact role is not officially well-known in urban development. Slums have become a denominating feature in urban areas and in many larger cities there can be found large shanty-town corridors, e.g. in Nigeria. Informality and its multiple manifestations in urban space disrupt the ideal of the modern metropolis. Informal city does not conform to aestheticism and order that are highly valued by modern urban planning and global business. Although the informal city has a symbiotic relationship to the elites, its position is generated through Otherness, by using negations, such as the 'lack of' resources, or the multitude of 'problems'. Informal city, without registered structures and functions, should not basically exist – in the urban Master Plans it is often marked as a grey area. Yet it poses a self-organizing, uncontrollable entity in the urban space, with its own leaders, laws, sanctions, and networks. Informal city is a shadow society, yet so holistically present in current urban Africa. This paper is mainly based on a literature overview on the current situation of urban informal settlements and their new phenomena in sub-Saharan Africa. Some empirical material from the Kibera settlement (Nairobi) will be presented. Two main themes are: 1) settlement structures, and 2) people's livelihood strategies, i.e. resilience capacities in the face of urban crisis, particularly in regard to the urban-rural dichotomy that is exceeded when people take advantage of their various assets (translocality issue). In addition, some societal limitations of local level actions will be considered.

3) Christal Mudi-Okorodudu (University of Helsinki, Finland): Extracting a living from the road-side: Street traders, Resilience and the Urban space

Towns and major cities in Africa play hosts to street traders with a large diversity of wares and trades, and varying degrees of legality. Street trading has slowly emerged from obscurity to the limelight due to the rising unemployment, poverty, and increasing number of vulnerable people that have continued to coerce a living from the venture. Life as a street trader is tough, tricky and highly volatile. Competition is stiff and customers very few, yet there are tall, man-made barriers that attempt to create complex challenges to customers and make street trading more demeaning, tougher and volatile. Urban authorities who act as custodian of the environment (rather than of the vulnerable people) have adopted a range of responses towards street trading – ranging from tolerance (in most cases) to outright ban (in the worst case scenario). The increasing demand and call for urban planning, environmental 'beautification' and landscape development in contrast to the rising poverty, unemployment and global economic downturn has led to varying degrees of clashes between street traders and urban authorities. This history of conflict has witnessed different situations such as adaptations, recognitions and victimizations: Consequently, street traders have developed resilience; resilience in this sense is beyond individual innate attributes, to include social and ecological conditions. This paper is a theoretical exploration of the resilience of street traders as they jostle for space, recognition and a means of livelihood in urban centers. It analyzes the continued existence of street trading as a process of enduring learning and a quest for survival and relevance in an urban space. Their resilience maintain a social perspective of the urban space. The paper is a theoretical part of my PhD research in South Africa.

4) Margareta Espling (Gothenburg university, Sweden): Coping with Change – Trajectories of urban livelihoods in northern Mozambique

Taking its point of departure in own research made in the mid-1990s on how poor women in three urban communities in Mozambique had transformed their livelihoods in order to cope

with dramatically changing circumstances, this paper aims at illustrating how trajectories of people's livelihoods have evolved over the years, as processes of social and economic change are continuously ongoing. In focus are the particular livelihood spatialities of a town in northern Mozambique. Despite the prolonged period of economic growth in the country, extended poverty prevails in northern Mozambique. Under such economic circumstances it is of interest to find out how ordinary people, often poor and vulnerable, are coping in their everyday lives. It is particularly of interest to find out how economic growth and reduced poverty incidence reported at the national aggregated level are reflected, or not, at micro level through looking into how households' are coping. The theoretical standpoint is that gendered livelihoods of women and men in particular places encompass the material and ideological processes that shape and are shaped by economic strategies in diverse geographical locations. Place-based livelihood strategies are, thus, continuously transformed in response to economic restructuring. That process of adaptation represents complex intersections of gender identities and material conditions played out within existing power relations in particular places, shaped by both local and national social institutions. The empirical material is based in one town in northern Mozambique. Tracking of the same women interviewed in the mid-90s was carried out in 2007-08. In all, 17 women were found and interviewed. Additionally, 15 children of these same women were interviewed; two focus group discussions with key informants were carried out, as well as a mini-survey in two different neighbourhoods. These techniques were complemented by informal conversations and observations in homesteads and the neighbourhoods.

5) Sidi Lamine Bagayoko (Univ. of Bamako, Mali): Unavoidable increasing of urban poverty

More than one decade ago, urban poverty was announced to be one of the preoccupation in Africa. The trend has been confirmed the current situation in many sub-saharan African cities. For example in Bamako, beyond the beggars strewn over the borders of the mains of the city of which we can attribute to culture in some extent. Looking in the inner-suburbs, we realise that the situation is worse above all when try to look at the schooling condition of many children. That situation has led certain populations to create what they call community schools in order to help the Malian government to help schooling children who do not have place in public school and whose parents cannot afford private schools. Despite that initiative and the tremendous efforts to school their own children on their own, many parents become incapable continuing to pay their contributions while the local political and school authorities responding behalf the government are failing to provide the minimum support to those community schools. In this communication, I would like to deal with the dynamic rural-urban throught children education and the situation of of many persons who are forced by the lack of rains falls in certain sub-saharan countires, to practise exodus from village to town in order to survive. To illustrate that forced exodus, I will have as example, the case of the principal of the community school Sector II who tried his luck in both rural and urban milieu.

6) Alazar G. Ejigu (KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden): Socio-Spatial Tensions and Interactions: Analysis of Low-cost Condominium Housings of Addis Ababa

Although direct government provision of low-cost housing has featured in the policies and practices of most developing countries, it has been proved that this sector is unable to address the needs of the poor. Such policies directed at actually providing "low-cost" housing are, often, inappropriate as they often do not take into account the social and cultural needs of the people and they lack to provide for the diverse needs of the target groups as they are often grossly identified. (Hamdi, 1991;Turner, 1980) Like many other countries Ethiopia has tried

to solve the problem of housing shortage during the process of rapid urbanisation through the modernist provider model, i.e. strong public sector involvement in a centralised production of ready-made minimum-standard units for anonymous residents. An ambitious government program for 'Low-cost Condominium Housing' provision, in recent years, has resulted in the production of large number of apartment housing units. As part of ongoing doctoral research the paper analyzes the social and functional performance of this type of housing in the context of diverse cultural and spatial needs the target groups. The underlying assumption is that there is a mismatch between the physical form of the housing and the lifestyles of major parts of the inhabitants, for instance when it comes to the use of shared spaces. Main research methods are ethnographic observation and key-person interviews supplemented with focused questionnaire survey. Preliminary results show that ideas and assumptions held by politicians and planners as well as tenants and owners have resulted in a conflicting use and management of shared spaces and facilities.