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**“Urbanizzazione Africana: da criticità a punto di forza per
una crescita economica sostenibile del continente.”**

**“African Urbanization: from a critical issue to a strength for a
sustainable economic growth of the continent.”**

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Introduction

This thesis focuses on the African urbanisation process. Specifically, it deals with the problems related to this process, also providing a comparison with China, i.e., a country located in a completely different part of the globe that managed the same phenomenon in a very different way, and that is playing a key role in African. The main goal of this thesis is to show that, in contrast to difficulties related to urbanisation, there are many positive signals for a current and future sustainable economic growth of the African continent.

The first Chapter highlights the current situation in two different types of areas in the African continent, namely rural and urban areas, that show huge social and economic differences. It is important to say that there are huge inequalities between people living in the countryside and those living in urban areas. These inequalities represent the reason why the majority of African countries are facing consistent rural-urban migration processes. It is important to understand what is happening in cities with an increasing number of residents leaving the countryside and, after that, stabilizing in immense slums. The last paragraph of the first Chapter describes different governments's approaches to slums and how they react to the proliferation of this uncontrolled urbanization dynamics.

The second Chapter focuses on the interesting relationship between China - i.e., an economic superpower - and the African continent, that is facing huge problems, it being the least developed continent of the world. China experienced a consistent rural-urban migration too, but there were - and there are - several differences that brought to a different result with respect to African's rural-urban migration pattern. China's urbanisation process highly contributed to the economic growth of the country in the last decades, while in many African countries the fast urbanisation process represents an obstacle for development. China is also the largest buyer of specific materials useful for the national industry, while Africa represents the main supplier of those materials, very precious and required by developed countries and large multinational companies. The help China is offering to African countries through investments in infrastructure and other sectors is repaid by the strong commercial relationship between the two parties. Africa is a 'treasure chest' for Western developed countries too, and for centuries it has been colonised by those developed countries. Today is visible a new kind of colonialism, that has involved unfair trade between Western developed countries and African ones.

The third and last Chapter of the thesis describes another issue that many African cities are facing, which every year is getting worse: air pollution. The increasing number of people living in cities is leading to an increase of pollution, in particular air pollution. This ‘enemy’ is killing a lot of people, and represents a huge obstacle for a good and safe development of African cities. Different associations all over the continent are active to battle this problem, to spread awareness about the issue in the population and to improve sustainability in over-crowded cities. The last paragraph of the Chapter concludes describing what African countries members of AU decided to implement in the continent, for the next 50 years (Agenda 2063), and which is the vision they agreed on for Africa’s future.

CHAPTER 1

The African Urbanisation issue

1.1 The Rural-Urban migration

This Chapter will focus on the reasons why many African nation-states are facing a consistent migration of people from rural regions to urban areas.

Rural areas are low-density open swaths of land with few homes or other buildings, and a reduced population, and where the main economic activity is agriculture productions (National Geographic Library).

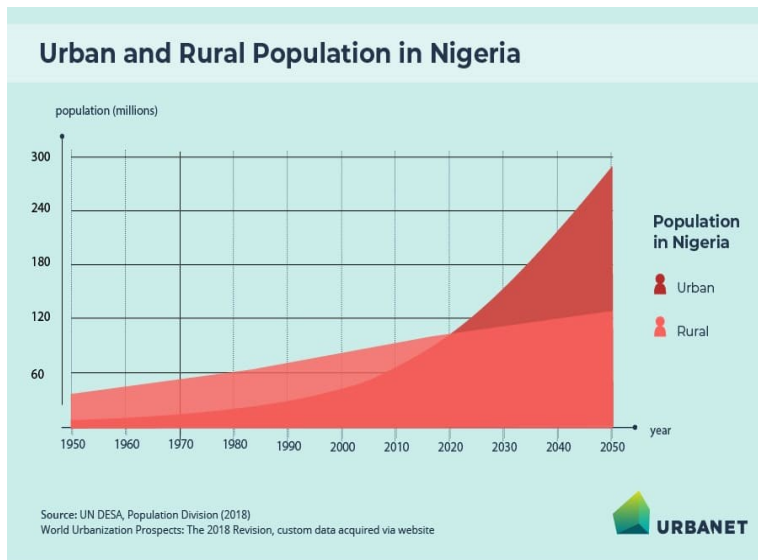
By contrast, an urban area is the region surrounding a city (National Geographic Library). Every country has a different definition of urban area: Zambia, for example, classifies as urban all localities with more than 5,000 inhabitants, where majority of the labour force is not engaged in agriculture activities. More in general, an “urban area can be defined by one or more of the following: administrative criteria or political boundaries, a threshold population size, population density, economic function or the presence of urban characteristics as sewerage, electric lighting” (UNICEF definitions).

Understanding why people living in rural areas may decide to migrate permanently towards cities is essential to manage this fast and uncontrolled urbanization process.

Nigeria is the African country with the most urbanized population and has been facing a consistent rural-urban migration process during the last decades. As shown in Figure 1, the urbanization rate in the next few decades is expected to increase dramatically. Population living in cities and outskirts in the 1950 was less than 60 million, while in 2050 there will be 300 million Nigerian living in cities (URBANET, 2018).

Why is Nigeria facing such a huge migration flow?

Figure 1: Urban and Rural Population in Nigeria



Source: URBANET (2018)

Nigerians who reside in rural areas are driven to move towards cities by the desire of finding a better life, being able to seek job, sending children at schools, improving living standard, or just surviving. This significant flow of people is causing an impoverishment of rural areas in the country. Young men representing the core of the labour force in the countryside are moving towards cities with the hope of finding a job.

Another factor, that contributes to the impoverishment of the countryside has been the lack of political and public investments in these regions due to the increasing oil exploration and production in the Niger Delta region. Indeed, starting from the mid-1960s, successive governments have continued to give more attention to crude oil production rather than the agriculture sector. Nowadays, the decline of the agriculture sector in Nigeria is contributing to high rates of undernourishment in specific regions such in the North East and North West of the country. With a population that grows rapidly, the country is not able to fulfil food demand and relies on imported foods (Eigege and Cooke, 2016).

Another problem of rural regions in Nigeria is the high percentage of children who stop studying and start working to support the family. As highlighted by UNICEF (2013), the “education deprivation in northern Nigeria is driven by various factors, including economic barriers and socio-cultural norms and practices that discourage attendance in formal education, especially for girls”.

In the North East and North West of the country, the attendance rate to primary school for females is only 47.7% and 47.3%, respectively, meaning that more than half of young girls do not go to school (UNICEF, 2013). This phenomenon has severe repercussions on social and economic factors. Illiterate young girls without an appropriated level of education are more easily going to get married and have children at a young age. Young girls do not have the appropriate tools to build healthy and educated families, and this, in turn, will increase the level of poverty in rural areas. Low levels of education and poverty go hand in hand. Increasing the percentage of educated women will have positive effect on the income of the country, as they will join the labour force and, consequently, the level of poverty will diminish in certain areas. According to UNICEF (2013), when the rate of girl attending school increases by 10%, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) tends to increase by 3% on average.

Many individuals move to cities also to survive, because in the countryside they do not feel safe and protected by the State. Government disregards the countryside and particular regions of Nigeria due to the strong presence of criminality and militants threatening acts of terrorism. The most well-known terrorist organization is Boko Haram, which addresses insurgency more in rural areas than urban ones. In the countryside, the government has less control over people, and villages live in a profound situation of insecurity. This is the case, for example, of the rural areas of North of Yola, where rural areas are more vulnerable than urban areas. This contributes to explain the huge migration towards cities from specific regions such as the North of Yola (Akinwotu, 2017).

In “Urban-rural inequality in living standards in Africa”, Sahn and Stifel (2001) have analysed differences between urban and rural areas. They consider different indicators, from monetary poverty to infant mortality, to understand the divide between these two different realities, and find that living standards in rural areas lag far behind those in urban areas.

For example, considering neonatal care in Burundi, they highlight the fact that in urban areas skilled health personnel is responsible for 83% of births; by contrast, in rural areas of the nation the same percentage drop to 16%. Another example is given by the enrolment rate, which is equal to 68% in urban areas compared to only 18% in rural areas.

In 19 countries over the 24 analysed in the paper, infant mortality is higher in rural areas than in urban ones: for example, in Zimbabwe malnourished children are twice in the countryside than in urban areas. Table 1 summarises the inequality between these two types of areas.

Table 1: Differences between Urban and Rural Indicators

Table 2: Differences between Urban and Rural Indicators

Indicator	Asset Poverty	Enrollments	Ratio of girls-to-boys enrolled	Infant Mortality Rate	Neonatal care with skilled personnel	Contraceptive use	Child Stunting	Adult Malnutrition
<i>Positive (negative) values indicate higher levels of well-being in urban (rural) areas^a</i>								
Countries								
1 Benin (1996)				-14.7	24.4 **			
2 Burkina Faso (1999)	68.6 **	50.5 **	37.3 **	10.7 **	69.4 **	26.5 **	16.3 **	4.0 **
3 Burundi (1987)				-66.2 **	65.7 **			
4 Cameroon (1998)		17.7 **	7.8 *	30.3 *	37.5 **	11.7 **	9.9 **	
5 Central African Republic (1994)				41.4 **	52.3 **			
6 Chad (1997)				-20.5 *	35.2 **			
7 Comoros (1996)				6.6 +	30.1 **			
8 Cote d'Ivoire (1994)				19.7 **	48.1 **			
9 Ghana (1998)	48.0 **	13.9 **	4.8	22.8 *	46.4 **	4.7 **	15.3 **	7.3 **
10 Kenya (1998)	30.3 **	0.7	-1.0	11.8	35.9 **	12.9 **	9.6 **	4.9 **
11 Madagascar (1997)	45.3 **	24.3 **	-11.5 *	26.4 *	28.1 **	10.8 **	4.4 *	
12 Malawi (1992)				2.0	38.9 **			
13 Mali (1995)	62.0 **			44.7 **	54.1 **	15.8 **	11.4 **	
14 Mozambique (1997)				7.7 **	57.6 **			
15 Namibia (1992)				11.2 +	26.4 **			
16 Niger (1997)	59.1 **	40.9 **	38.9 **	67.8 **	61.7 **	23.1 **	11.7 **	7.5 **
17 Nigeria (1999)	45.9 **	18.4 **	4.8	4.8 +	21.5 **	12.0 **	5.5 +	
18 Rwanda (1992)				-30.8 **	39.4 **			
19 Senegal (1997)	42.3 **			56.6 **	50.1 **	22.1 **	15.5 **	
20 Tanzania (1999)	51.0 **	21.4 **	8.4	23.5 **	49.1 **	23.9 **	21.9 **	1.6 +
21 Togo (1998)				8.8 **	49.1 **	9.7 **	9.2 **	
22 Uganda (1995)	34.7 **			11.9 +	46.8 **	21.5 **	18.3 **	
23 Zambia (1996)	77.3 **	20.5 **	7.3 *	-6.3	50.9 **	16.3 **	16.1 **	2.1 **
24 Zimbabwe (1999)	56.2 **	5.3 **	7.6 +	14.0 +	28.5 **	16.7 **	8.3 **	0.8
Pooled	47.4 **	18.4 **	7.4 **	23.6 **	35.4 **	14.9 **	10.5 **	3.9 **

^a These are simply the arithmetic differences of the indicators. For enrollments, ratio of boys-to-girls, neonatal care and contraceptive use this is $D_i = U_i - R_i$, where U_i is the level of the indicator in urban areas and R_i is the level of the indicator in rural areas. For the remaining indicators, this is $D_i = R_i - U_i$. The implication is that positive values that appear in the table indicate higher levels of welfare in urban areas, while negative values indicate higher levels of welfare in rural areas.

Note: ** indicates significance at 99% level of confidence, * at 95% level of confidence, and + at 90% level of confidence

Source: Sahn and Stifel (2001). Blank spaces for unavailable data.

The inequality that we saw previously is the reason of the huge migration from the countryside to cities and outskirts. But is this inequality between rural and urban areas going to be permanent or just temporary?

Sahn and Stifel' (2001) study suggests that there is no evidence supporting the fact that rural areas are improving with higher rates than urban areas. There is only one indicator in which rural and urban areas rates are converging, namely infant mortality. Table 2 summarises this insight: "Yes" means that welfare improved more in urban areas or worsened in rural areas, while "No" means the opposite.

Table 2: Has Welfare Improved More in Urban Areas?

Table 3: Has Welfare Improved More in Urban Areas?

Indicator	Asset Poverty	Enrollments	Ratio of girls-to-boys enrolled	Infant Mortality Rate	Neonatal care with skilled personnel	Contraceptive use	Child Stunting	Adult Malnutrition	Total
<i>Countries</i>									
1 Benin (1996)				No *	(Yes)				1/2
2 Burkina Faso (1992,1999)	Yes	Yes **	Yes *	No **	Yes **	Yes **	(Yes)	No	5/8
3 Burundi (1987)				No **	(No)				0/2
4 Cameroon (1991, 1998)		Yes **	No	No	Yes	Yes +	(No) +		4/6
5 Central African Republic (1994)				No	(No)				0/2
6 Chad (1997)				No *	(No) +				0/2
7 Comoros (1996)				No	No +				0/2
8 Cote d'Ivoire (1994)				No	(Yes) *				1/2
9 Ghana (1988, 1993, 1998)	No **	No	No	No	Yes	No *	Yes	Yes *	5/5
10 Kenya (1988, 1993, 1998)	No *	No	(No)	(No)	(Yes)		No	(No)	2/8
11 Madagascar (1992, 1997)	No **	No *	No *	No	(No)	No **	No *		1/7
12 Malawi (1992)				No	Yes *				1/2
13 Mali (1987, 1993)	Yes			No	No	Yes **	(Yes)		5/5
14 Mozambique (1997)				No *	Yes **				1/2
15 Namibia (1992)				Yes	No				2/2
16 Niger (1992, 1997)	Yes	Yes **	Yes	No	No *	Yes **	(No)	(Yes)	6/8
17 Nigeria (1990, 1999)	No **	No **	No *	No +	No	Yes	(No)		1/7
18 Rwanda (1992)				No *	No *				0/2
19 Senegal (1986, 1992, 1997)	Yes **			Yes **	No **	Yes **	Yes +		5/5
20 Tanzania (1991, 1996, 1999)	Yes	Yes **	Yes	Yes	(Yes) *	Yes +	Yes **	No +	6/8
21 Togo (1988,1998)				No	Yes +	Yes	No		3/4
22 Uganda (1988, 1993)	No			Yes	(Equal)	Yes	No		2/5
23 Zambia (1992, 1996)	(No)	(No) *	No	No **	(No)	No	(Yes)	No	1/8
24 Zimbabwe (1988, 1994, 1999)	(Yes) **	(No)	Yes	No	No	No +	No	(No) *	2/8
No. with significant convergence	4	3	2	8	5	3	2	2	
No. with significant divergence	2	4	1	1	6	6	2	1	
<i>Pooled</i>	<i>Conv **</i>	<i>Conv **</i>		<i>Conv **</i>	<i>Conv **</i>				
<i>Pooled w/out Nigeria</i>	<i>Conv **</i>	<i>Div **</i>							
Number of countries	12	10	10	24	24	14	14	7	

Key:

"Yes" indicates that welfare improved more in urban areas, or that it improved in urban areas and worsened in rural areas
 "No" indicates that welfare did not improve more in urban areas, or that it improved in rural areas and worsened in urban areas
 "Equal" indicates that welfare increased in both urban and rural areas at the same rate.
 "(Yes)" indicates that welfare decreased in both urban and rural areas and the rate of decrease was smaller in urban areas.
 "(No)" indicates that welfare decreased in both urban and rural areas and the rate of decrease was greater in urban areas.
 "(Equal)" indicates that welfare decreased in both urban and rural areas at the same rate.

Note: ** indicates significance at 99% level of confidence, * at 95% level of confidence, and + at 90% level of confidence

Source: Sahn and Stifel (2001).

Those inequalities represent a good reason for why many African countries are facing a huge rural-urban migration. In the next paragraph, it will be indicated where the majority of people from countryside move to.

1.2 Economic and Social situation in slums

Slums in the African continent represent a consistent quota of urban areas. A slum is a densely populated urban area marked by crowding, run-down housing, poverty and social disorganization (Merriam-webster dictionary).

This is particularly true in Sub-Saharan countries, which have the highest rate of "slums incidence" in the continent, with the 60% of urban areas consisting in densely populated areas where people live in shanties, without appropriated sanitary services, electricity, water supply and other basic facilities. The three countries with the highest percentage of urban

population living in slums, in the world, are Sierra Leone, Sudan and Central African Republic (Oya, 2010).

Table 3: Slum incidence by region and for selected African countries

Table 1 – Slum incidence by region and for selected African countries

Region	Slum population as % of urban population		
	2000	2005	2010
<i>Region</i>			
Developing Regions	39.3	35.7	32.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	65.0	63.0	61.7
Southern Asia	45.8	40.0	35.0
South-eastern Asia	39.6	34.2	31.0
Eastern Asia	37.4	33.0	28.2
Western Asia	20.6	25.8	24.6
Latin America & the Caribbean	29.2	25.5	23.5
Northern Africa	20.3	13.4	13.3
<i>Selected African countries</i>			
Ethiopia	88.6	81.8	
Tanzania	70.1	66.4	
Nigeria	69.6	65.8	
Ghana	52.1	45.4	
South Africa	33.2	28.7	
Zimbabwe	3.3	17.9	

Source: UN-Habitat (2008)

Source: Oya (2010).

As shown in Table 3, the second urban area mostly characterized by slums in the world is South-Eastern Asia (34%), around a half of the Sub-Saharan percentage.

Why Sub-Saharan has such a huge proliferation of slums?

The first reason is due to the fact that cities are facing a consistent migration from the countryside that local authorities are not able to manage, such that people move in that part of the city where houses are cheap and relatives already live.

There are other two main reasons. The first one is that some political and economic actors can take a lot of profit through underdeveloped urban areas. With the absence of property rights and a proper legislation about land use, politicians and bureaucrats can offer to squatters protection from eviction, while getting back political support or economic rents. This phenomenon is called 'land racketeering', i.e., an illegal practice that is very profitable for criminal groups, but very disadvantageous for common people.

A second reason why this region is characterized by an important percentage of slums is the anti-urbanization way of thinking that emerged in the late 1970s. Publications as Kenya's *Population Policy Guidelines* (Fox, 2013), used to highlight the fact that urbanites were parasites feeding behind work done by peasants in the countryside. Governments started

disinvesting in urban areas, and at the same time implementing policies to discourage rural-urban migration. During this period, due to this approach adopted by many African governments, the continent faced an important contraction in international development assistance for urban projects (Fox, 2013).

Table 4: Trends in World Bank shelter lending in sub-Saharan Africa, 1971-2005

	1972-1981	1982-1991	1992-2005
Total shelter lending	\$498 million	\$409 million	\$81 million
Equivalent per capita	\$5.20	\$2.74	\$0.32

Notes: Shelter lending data from Buckley and Kalarickal (2006); per capita estimates based on total urban population in sub-Saharan Africa at the end of each period (i.e. 1981, 1991 and 2005) drawn from World Bank, World Development Indicators online database, accessed September 2012.

Source: Fox (2013).

Table 4 describes the trend of World Bank shelter lending in Sub-Saharan Africa. We can notice a decrease from 498 million during the period 1972-1981 to 81 million from 1992 to 2005. This is the consequence of political decisions taken by African Governments during the 1970s.

The following step is to understand if African slums will follow the same pattern observed by Whitechapel in East London during the industrial revolution, or the Hell’s Kitchen area in New York City. Those two areas, during the industrial revolution, were enormous attractions for immigrants from all over the world, who were searching for a better life and jobs. For how they were in the past, these areas could have been compared to modern slums. Today, these areas are fundamental part of those cities and contributes in a consistent way to the economy of London and New York City. Some scholars suggest that slums are a transitory phenomenon characterized by fast economic and population growth, as Whitechapel and Hell’s Kitchen had been (Marx, Stoker and Suri, 2013).

Is this the case also of African slums?

Marx, Stoker and Suri (2013) describe the reasons why past slums in today’s developed nation cannot be compared with ‘modern’ African slums. They consider African slums as poverty traps. They do not see African slums as temporary situations before a fast-economic growth, but as a part of urban areas where standards of living are not going to be improved

in the future because there is a continuous rural-urban migration, and governments are not facing the problem with appropriate policies.

Marx, Stoker and Suri (2013) provide a list of what could be the mechanisms that lead slums to become a poverty trap. As said before, in most of African slums there is an enormous lack of public goods and basic amenities, such as water and sanitary facilities, or not sufficient living space. These problems have consequences for future generations, living in the same slum.

As reported by Lopez-Casanovas, Rivera and Currais (2005), health improvements for population in developing countries help reducing poverty and inequality. They suggest that investing in health could be the main tool to escape from a poverty trap situation. Increasing life expectancy of a generation could induce them to increase familiar investments on children education. Consequently, there could be lower infant mortality, as well as a reduction in birth rates because there is no need, anymore, for more family labour force. An educated child has more opportunities for a higher salary than an uneducated one, so families will be less numerous. In fact, a more educated population increases productivity, while poverty rate will reduce dramatically. It follows that the first strategy to escape from a 'poverty trap' is to invest in health, but with a focus on a precise target population. This target is represented by the poorest part of the population, and in the African case it means those people living in slums and the countryside.

Another mechanism that makes slums poverty traps is investments inertia. There are different factors that impede to invest in slums: one of this is the informality of property rights. Slums' dwellers are discouraged to improve the quality of their home because there is no legal title that can clearly guarantee land ownership. Another reason for a low level of investments in urban areas is explained by the Todaro Paradox (1976): improving standard of life in slums will cause an increase of rural-urban migration, and this will increase the unemployment rate either. This could give little incentives for public investments in infrastructures. However, evidences suggest that people are pushed to leave the countryside, more than pulled to move into cities. That means the main reasons why people leave rural areas to move into cities can be defined as 'push reasons'. Those reasons consist in low living standards in the countryside, violence from armed militias, and lack of basic facilities, which push people to leave rural areas (Marx, Stoker and Suri, 2013).

Marx, Stoker and Suri (2013) also explain why African slums are in a policy trap. The strong presence of informal land owners in the slums makes it difficult for governments to consider those areas as eligible for urban planning or public investments. Moreover, the impossibility to identify exactly the number of residents in slums can be a problem for

governments to actualize policies in slums' territories. Often, this number is undercounted, thus making policy interventions very difficult. The last issue underlined by Marx, Stoker and Suri (2013) is the presence of illegitimate governance in slums. Often, regulatory power belongs to private actors, chief, and sometimes criminal groups that do not have any relationship with city governance. Any desire of intervention in the slum tends to create a conflict between municipal authorities and those actors controlling and governing effectively the slum.

1.3 Government attitude with slums

After having seen what slums represent in the African continent, how they formed, and what are the problems characterising them, we will focus on how African countries are facing this issue and which policies they put in place to stem this phenomenon.

Over the last decades, African countries have adopted several strategies to reduce the spread of slums and informal settlements. One of these approaches is the benign neglect. This approach has been introduced earlier in the first part of the Chapter and corresponds to the laissez-faire attitude based on the notion that slums represent only a temporary situation and that they will disappear with economic growth. According to this approach, slums should be tolerated because it is claimed that in the future these areas will be absorbed by the city. The neglect of slums caused a complete disregard of these areas, without providing any basic service to slums' dwellers, or even indicate slums in the map. Governments pursued a specific program of low-cost housing because of the migration of poor people from rural areas. The rationale for this strategy was the same described before: slums will disappear with economic growth. But this approach, particularly in African countries, proved to be wrong.

A less benign and neglect approach of governments to slums' proliferation is forced eviction and slum clearance. This method is more severe than the previous one. It consists in the removal of residents from their home or land, even if it is against their will. The second step, after the removal, is the demolition of slums. This approach has been adopted after seeing that benign neglect was not the right way to face slums. Even today, in some African countries, this approach is used: one case is Zimbabwe, where the government imposed a clearance of slums in Harare. These actions captured international attention, as the United Nations has condemned them: "The scale of suffering is immense, particularly among widows, single mothers, children, orphans, the elderly and disabled persons" as it was written in the UN report in 2005 (BBC-News, 2005). After this clearance, 700,000 people

lost their homes, but the government said that there were good reasons for doing that. The African experience showed that clearance and demolition of slums is not a good way to face problems inside slums (Arimah, 2020; UN-HABITAT, 2020).

Clearance of slums can become an optimal approach only if it is followed by a strong and valid resettlement strategy.

In a resettlement program there are different actors, and it can be actualized in different ways. Often households are expected to build their houses on plots provided by the government. With resettlement programmes we do not mean only giving a house to displaced people, but also giving the possibility to access water and other basic facilities. Sometimes people receive a compensation, in order to replace a lost asset, resource or income due to the expropriation of their land or house. Different institutions have a role in this phase, such as the African Development Bank, whose aim is to minimize the social impact of an involuntary displacement it could have financed. As written in the report “The African Development Bank’s involuntary resettlement policy”, the “primary goal of the IR (involuntary resettlement) is to ensure that, when people must be displaced, they are treated equitably and share in the benefits of the project that involves their resettlement”. The main rule of the African Development Bank is to improve displaced people’s living standards, and to monitor the performance of resettlement programmes (African Development Bank Group, 2015).

The World Bank estimated that there are 10 million people displaced in the world. Comparing Ghana and India, we can see that in the African countries 1% of the population is displaced every year, while in India only the 0.013% (African Development Bank Group, 2015). These figures allow us understanding better why these programmes are particularly important in the African continent, and when they fail, without providing new location and basic amenities to displaced people, they could worsen living standards of those people and increase problems for the national economy.

As said before, there are different ways of managing slums, one is the upgrading of slums using funds provided by the World Bank. This strategy consists in reducing the degree of obsolescence and decay in many slums through the improvement of basic services, infrastructures, and water access. This strategy, compared to the previous ones, is less expensive and occurs with a minimum loss of physical assets (Arimah, 2020; UN-HABITAT, 2020).

One case of slum upgrading is given by Kenya, where there is a huge need for intervention in the capital city, Nairobi. The Central Bureau of Statistics estimates that 30% of Nairobi population lives in slums. The incidence of economic poverty is around 73%,

unemployment 26%, and only 3% of the population lives in a house with permanent walls, access to water and electricity (Gulyani, 2008).

The main goal of the Kenya Slum Upgrading Program is to improve living conditions in slums, investing in infrastructures, and supporting the Ministry of Housing and local authorities in dealing with future migrations and population growth with additional housing. The estimated cost of the program is US\$ 140 million, and the total amount is divided into five different components. The first one is 'Institutional Development', to assist local authorities and the Ministry of Houses and Lands. The second one is the 'Community Mobilization', that supports mobilized communities to conduct household identification and registration, helping residents to have access to loans in micro-finance entities for house construction or micro enterprises. The third component consists in the improving of tenure security and infrastructure; this phase will create a significant number of jobs, and infrastructure contractors will be encouraged to hire workers. The fourth component will implement sustainable mechanisms for increasing delivery of services land for housing. Finally, there is the implementation of 'Management, Monitoring and Evaluation' systems and future program formulation (Gulyani, 2008).

To sum up, African governments can act in different ways to solve the issue of big shantytowns. Some ways are faster than others, but create many more problems (i.e., clearance and demolition). Others are more appropriate if there is low financing (upgrading). Other methods require more time and more financing, but in the long term could reveal as the best strategies (clearance and relocation).

CHAPTER 2

China's role in African Urbanisation and the Unfair trade

2.1 Chinese Urbanisation

From 1940 to 2007, in China the number of cities increased from 69 to 670 due to a consistent migration from villages (The World Bank, 2008). Even though from 1978 to 2004 the urban population grew from 18% to 41% (Foggin, 2008), today' slum incidence in China is far lower than in African countries. In 2001 UN-HABITAT estimated that 38 % of China's urban population lived in slums (UN-HABITAT, 2005).

Which are the strategies used by China to manage such a fast urbanization process?

Differently to African urbanization, in China few slums formed even if the number of migrated people was very high. The government and local authorities were able to channel migrants in small or medium sized cities, preventing crowding and the formation of slums in the biggest cities. Indeed, "One of China's greatest success in its rapid urbanization has been that it has managed to contain the process to the extent that there are crowded living conditions but very few slums", according to what said Shahid Yusuf, Senior Adviser in the World Bank's Development Research Group (The World Bank, 2008).

For different reasons, China has been able to manage a huge migration from rural regions. One of the most important tools used by the Government is the "Hukou system", i.e., a physical small maroon passbook acting as an internal passport containing information about the owner, such as marriage, divorces, birth, city or village to which the person belongs. Every resident of a city must own one Hukou.

Without a Hukou it is more difficult for a person to have free access to health care, education, pension and other facilities that the government provides. Also buying a house or a car can be problematic. This represents an important difference with respect to the African fast migration and urbanization process, because, as discussed in the first Chapter, cities/slums as Nairobi in Kenya or Lagos in Nigeria do not have an efficient method to conduct a population census. The unknown number of residents in slums can be an obstacle for governance interventions in these areas.

Another winning strategy adopted by China to face fast migration and urbanization was the increased presence of decentralization. The devolution of many administrative functions to

local authorities brought to a better management of cities and problems related to urban areas (The World Bank, 2008). While China increased the level of decentralization to local authorities, in Africa there is a consistent presence of centralized regimes/democracies that devolve very few resources to local government of cities. For example, in Senegal three quarters of government expenditure is spent on the two largest cities of the country (Dakar and Ties), which represent only the 25% of the population (Brosio, 2000). The rest of the country is neglected by the central government, and few resources are distributed to medium and small sized cities.

The rural-urban migration in the Asian country has not stopped. In fact, in the next 5 years it is likely that another 200 million people will migrate to China's cities, and the government is preparing cities to be able to manage this flow of people.

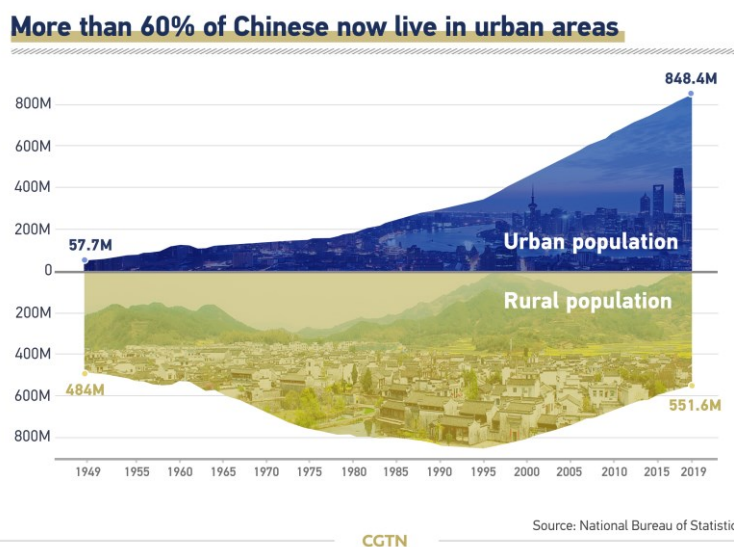
Knowing that, the Chinese government must implement *ad hoc* strategies to be able to manage future flows of migrants. It is fundamental to understand that an urban citizen has completely different needs and consumption with respect to a rural dweller. An urban resident uses 3.6 times the energy used by a rural dweller, so the government needs to implement renewable energy, providing more energy for more residents and, at the same time, reducing environmental impact (The World Bank, 2008).

Another variable to be taken into account is the land for agriculture. The government cannot sprawl urban territories to infinity, as there is need for agriculture land in order to face rising consumption. In China agriculture is one of the most important sectors for the national economy. This sector provides 12% of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country and gives jobs to over 300 million people, almost a half of the total work force of the country. In China only 15% of the available land can be cultivated (EconomyWatch, 2010), while in Italy it was 70% in the 1970 and decreased to 43.23% in 2016 (IndexMundi, 2019), but it still remains a higher percentage than in China. These numbers could explain why the Chinese government is so concerned on trying to safeguard agriculture land.

The Chinese government has recently unveiled the 14th Five-Year Plan (FYP), i.e., a set of social and economic initiatives valid for the next five years (2021-2025). In the last ministerial press conference (2020), the Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu said that "with this new FYP there will be a tougher assault on pollution" (Yifan, 2021), but with an increasing rate of urbanization every year it will be a difficult challenge. The Chinese government in the recent years has done a huge improvement on cities pollution. For example, PM_{2.5}, which describes fine inhalable particles with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometre and smaller (United States Environmental Protection Agency

definition) fell by 33% in 74 cities from 2013 to 2017, while Beijing’s pollution level dropped 53.8% in the fourth quarter of 2017 from a years earlier (Reuters Staff, 2018). By the 2025 there will be 65% of the population living in urban areas, meaning that every year 10 million people will migrate to cities. In 2019 the percentage of people living in urban areas was 60%. As reported in Figure 2, in 2019 848.4 million people lived in cities and the percentage is going to increase dramatically, while rural population facing a huge reduction in the recent 20/25 years (Yiwei and Xuechen, 2021).

Figure 2: Urban and Rural population pattern.



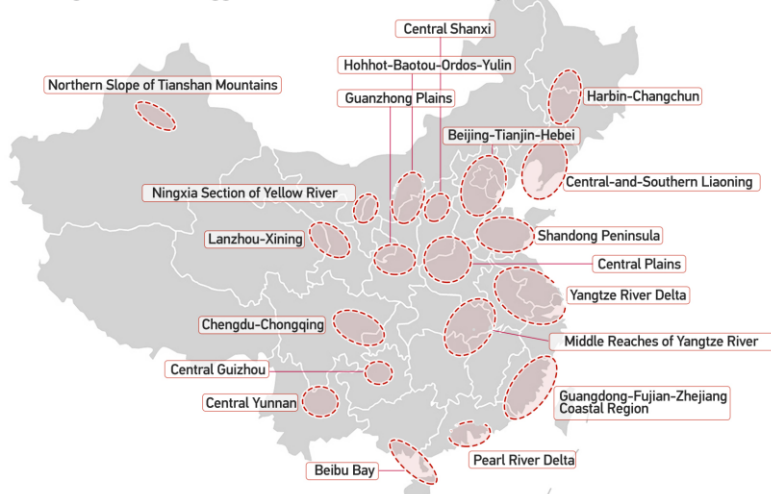
Source: Yiwei and Xuechen (2021).

The 14th FYP contains important initiatives for the urbanization of the country. In particular, there will be more attention to specific areas as the Western Taiwan and the Guangdong-Fujian-Zhejiang Coastal Region, in addition to the 19 clusters integrated by the 13th FYP (Yiwei and Xuechen, 2021). All these clusters are represented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: China's megalopolises plan.

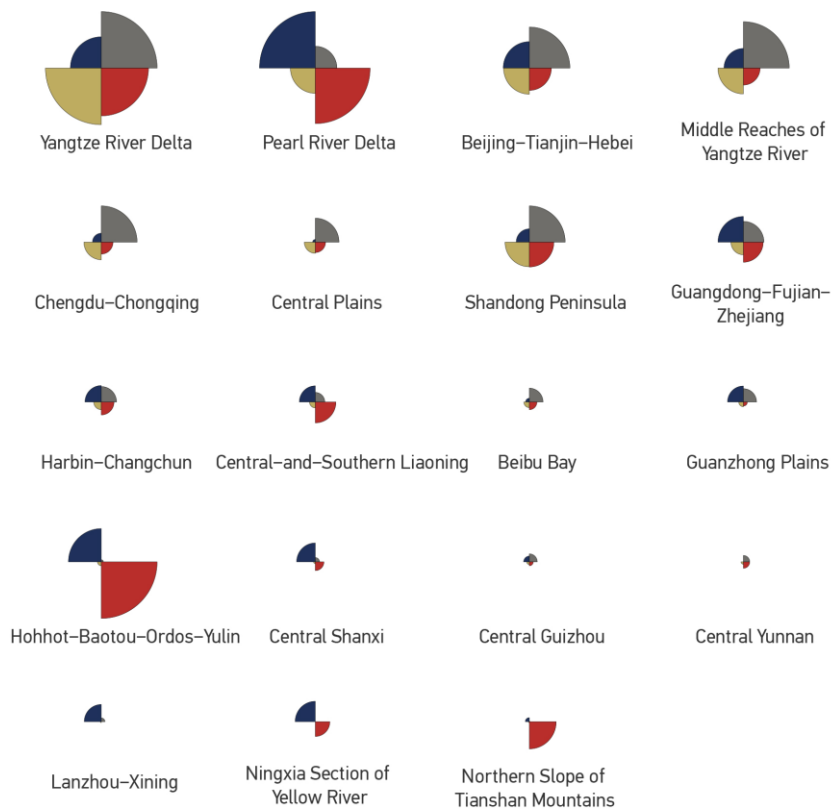
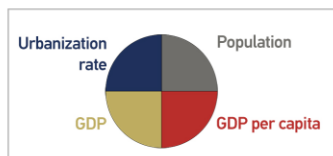
China's megalopolises plan

The following are 19 urban agglomerations listed in the country's 14th Five-Year Plan



How do they compare?

*Data has been processed to show their relative sizes in 2018.



Source: Local statistics bureaus and public reports

CGTN

Source: Yiwei and Xuechen (2021).

The population living in these clusters represents the 45% of the total Chinese population and the 80% of the national GDP, while occupying only 25% of the national land. One of the main goals of the 14th FYP is to narrow gaps between different regions, in particular between North-Eastern and Eastern versus Central and Western regions – i.e., the least developed areas of the country (Yiwei and Xuechen, 2021).

In a 2013 interview, Karen C. Seto, Professor of Geography and Urbanization at the Yale school, said that fast urbanization in China had a fundamental role for the economic development of the country and will continue in the future due to the fact that the urbanization rate is going to increase every year. Professor Seto said that China faced different kinds of urbanization, depending on the geographic location or on government policies. For example, during the 1970s and 1980s China faced the first wave of urbanization in particular areas. The first cities subjected to this urbanization started seeing an important inflow of investments from foreign investors, and this contributed to the development of modern cities as well as to reduce the poverty rate in nearby cities. This is an important lesson for African governments. The first thing to do should be focusing on a specific area or few cities, transforming them in special economic zones as reported in Professor Seto's interview. These economic zones will become an attraction for foreign investments and FDIs that will contribute to the economic development of the overall country. After that, the same process has to be adopted for other areas. In addition, as the Chinese government did, African governments should channel migration from rural areas to different urban zones, avoiding crowding in slums and outskirts of the largest cities.

Can African countries follow the same urbanization pattern that characterized China? If not, why?

China is governed by a single party rooted in Maoism: the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism developed in China chiefly by Mao Zedong (Merriam-Webster definition). By contrast, in Africa there are different forms of government, from constitutional monarchies (e.g., Chad, Zambia, Niger) to democracies (e.g., South Africa, Zimbabwe), to military regimes (e.g., Egypt).

The Chinese single party system implies that the population has little voice in government decisions, that could directly impact them. For example, when construction of the Tree Gorges Dam (dam on the Yangtze River) officially began, 1.3 million people had been permanently relocated from their homes. Local authorities did not ask the permission to the residents (Shepard, 2019). In China, all the land belongs to the government, which has the right to clear the land whenever it wants. This is not the case for African countries, where

land is usually divided by families or tribes, and the central government has no right on these lands.

African governments do not have such power and capacity to act like the Chinese government. Some African countries may lack the authority and finances to support infrastructure plans, while in China a mega-project can be planned and finished in a relatively short period of time.

Another problem affecting African governments is the substantial presence of corruption in the majority of African countries. Corruption could have a devastating impact on the development of a nation, and different negative effects: high transaction costs, high level of inequality, and low capital accumulation, meaning that liquidity moves to advanced economies due to the behaviour of few corrupted actors. This liquidity will not sustain local development and investments (Amateye, 2021). By contrast, China has made huge achievements in fighting corruption, from an anti-corruption education of the population to a zero-tolerance stance against corruption (CGTN, 2021).

2.2 China's investments in the African continent

The previous paragraphs described the Chinese urbanization process occurred in the recent years, and underlined differences with respect to African nations. This paragraph, instead, will explain why the Chinese government and enterprises are not just spectators of African urbanization, but also promoters of it.

On the one hand, rapid urbanization in the African continent presents big challenges; on the other hand, it could represent big rewards for those countries willing to invest huge amounts in the continent. The country that is investing the most in the African continent is China. But what does attract so much Chinese investors and infrastructure building companies?

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) describes Sub-Saharan Africa as the second fastest-growing region of the world, underlying how it is ready to reach a \$5 trillion economy in the next few years (Shepard, 2019). An example of Chinese investment in an African country is the Belt & Road Africa Fund financed by China. The fund will invest in Africa through infrastructures, technologies, eCommerce, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and other sectors. The African fund will cooperate with Chinese businesses and will operate in the majority of African countries. The fund will consolidate African-China trade relationships, that in 2018

reached a \$200 billion volume (Shira, 2019). This fund represents a win-win relationship between the continent and China: both will gain a lot from this partnership.

The Chinese relationship with the African continent started in the mid of the XX century: African countries had an important role in the diplomatic struggle between China and Taiwan, supporting China' side. In the 1950s, China started investing in African infrastructures and supported independences of different nations (Ayodele and Sotola, 2014).

China is very interested in creating a strong partnership with the African continent for many reasons. The first one is China's huge need of crude oil to support the expansion of its industrial base. More than one third of China's oil comes from Africa. Moreover, African natural resources as precious metals, aluminum, copper, and iron are very important for Chinese industries. The Democratic Republic of Congo owns half of the planet's cobalt, very useful for Chinese enterprises that produce battery of devices, such as smartphones (Shepard, 2019). The increased demand of minerals and other extractives by China helped to increase world prices of those raw materials, and African governments gained a lot from this boost in prices.

What Africa is gaining from this strong relationship with China?

The growth of the African economy touched the peak of 5.7% in 2007, and this is partially thanks to Chinese investments. It is also true that China invests in those African sectors where Western countries do not invest, such as physical infrastructures, industry, and agriculture. Since the late 1970s, the US Agency for International Development has not invested in infrastructure projects in the African continent, and in the 1990s the World Bank reduced support for the agriculture sector in Africa by 90% (Ayodele and Sotola, 2014). By contrast, Chinese firms continued to build bridges, railroads, and telecommunication networks.

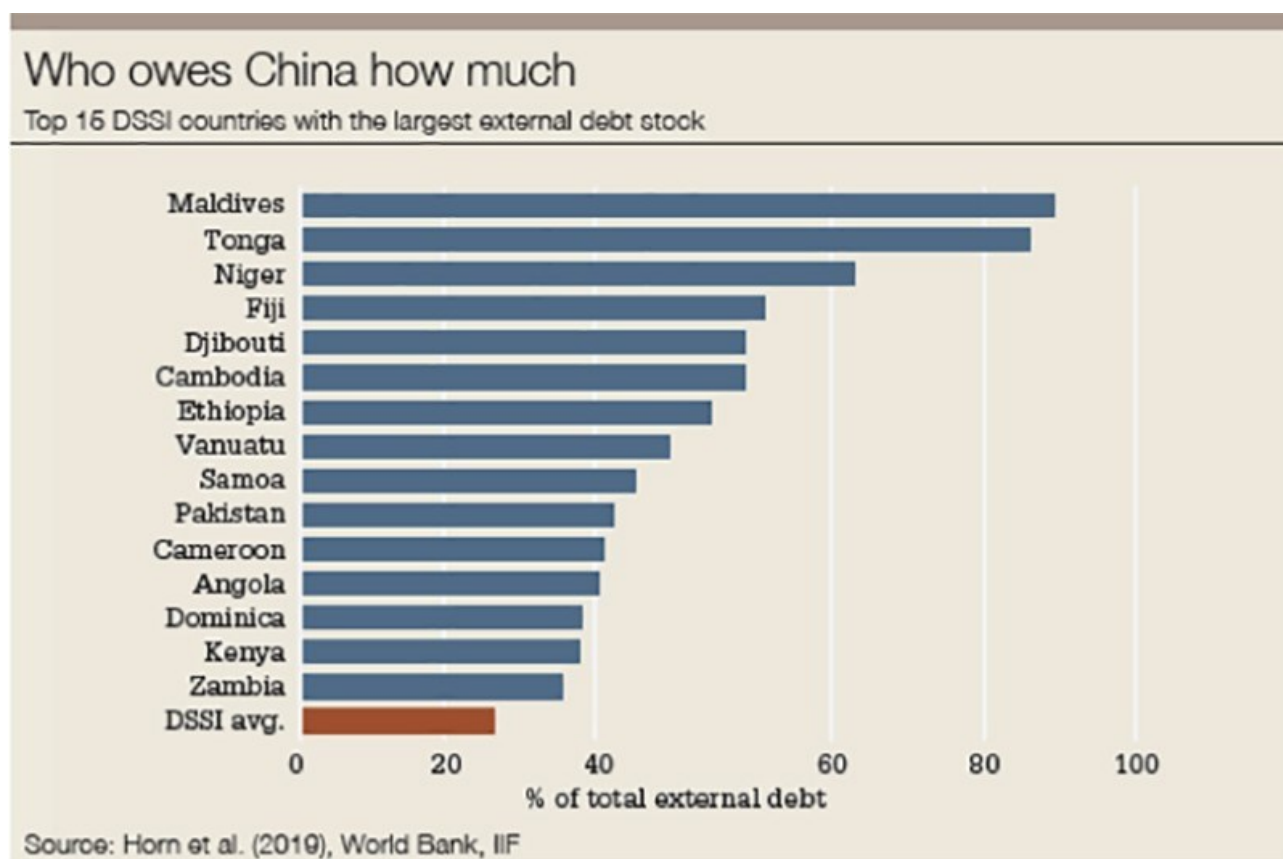
In 2005 China and Nigeria signed a \$800 million crude oil sale agreement, implying that China had to buy 30,000 barrels a day for five years. China also won a license to operate four oil blocks and take-over of the Nigerian refinery. This agreement could have never been done with Western countries because it entails a lot of risk and money losing venture (Ayodele and Sotola, 2014). This was a demonstration that Western countries have a different approach compared to China's investment approach in Africa. China has provided, to some African nations, training to many professionals, and it built many factories to process African raw materials directly in Africa. All this contributes to the formation of many professionals and the creation of many jobs.

Africa represents a huge market for Chinese products, in particular cheap ones. Prices imposed by China are very cheap and affordable for a relatively high percentage of the African population. Some of these products are mobile phones and computers that once were exclusively affordable to rich families, while now more people can afford them. So even from this point of view the relationship with China turned positive for Africa's development process.

There is another interesting fact that consolidates the relationship between China and Africa. The IMF found that in 2012 China owned about 15% of Sub-Saharan Africa's external debt (Brown, 2018). Today, China represents the Africa's largest creditor. The China-Africa Research Initiative team at John Hopkins University (2017) has recorded about 1,000 loans amounting to \$152 billion and extended to 49 African governments between 2000 and 2018 (Furness, 2020). It is clear that many African nations highly rely on Chinese financing.

Figure 4 shows which are the countries mostly in debt with China. Many of them are African countries.

Figure 4: Who owes China how much.



Source: Furness (2020).

2.3 Unfair trade and solutions

Today Africa is facing a new kind of colonialism called Neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism consists in economic and political policies through which a foreign country indirectly maintains or extends its influence over other areas or people (Merriam-Webster definition).

Unfair trade is a 'tool' highly used in this new form of colonialism. Unfair trade means trade practices with the presence of deceptive, fraudulent, or unethical methods to do business.

European countries and the USA are the greatest importers of cocoa bean, while West Africa produces two third of total cocoa in the world. Ivory Coast and Ghana (major producers of cocoa) are accusing chocolate producers, such as the American Hershey, of unethical business practice as not respecting the Living Income Differential payment amounting to \$400 per tonne or supply from African companies that adopt child slavery (The African Gazette, 2020). This is a clear example of unfair trade by Western companies, trying to take advantage of small and medium sized African farms and workers.

Another interesting sector hugely related to Western companies is mining materials. British companies own mining operations in 37 Sub-Saharan African countries, controlling \$1 trillion worth. In this case many children, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo, are forced to work in mines with little or no pay (Cherneva, 2020). These unethical methods to do business touch everyone because those materials are used for devices created by tech giants such as Google, Apple, or Dell.

During the last decade different organizations have been set up with the purpose to improve fair trade between local producers and multinational companies importing products from Africa. One of these is the Africa Fairtrade Convention (AFC). This convention takes place in different African countries and consists in a period when small-scale farmers and workers meet together. In the convention those actors discuss about how improving fair trade, and the positive consequences that this can have on wages and livelihoods of African farmers. Today, this organization supports over 700,000 farmers and workers, i.e., 310 producer organisations in 29 countries across the continent. The final goal is to strengthen small-scale farmers' position in the value chain, trying to reduce the lag of power between large companies and small-scale farmers (Helen Yosef, 2012).

The South African government in 2003 introduced the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act 53 in order to promote economic empowerment of the country's black population. This act includes improving Fairtrade for those farms owned by black Africans that for a lot of time had disadvantages during apartheid. Farm workers

employed in South African fruit and wine farms are the most vulnerable and poorest section of the country's population. Those workers are still working for low wages, with lack of job security, unsafe working conditions, and low-quality housing. On the other side, also smallholder farmers in the country are facing big issues such as small plots of lands, lack of government support, limited access to machinery, and debt dependence. Fairtrade, for those actors, plays an important role in South Africa. Thanks to Fairtrade, many workers received a higher wage: for example, at Sun Orange (citrus producers in the Eastern Cape Province), in 2008 and 2009 wages increased by 12% and 8%, respectively. Sun Orange could provide to their workers Adult Basic Education Training, with the aim of upgrading their skills. Fairtrade had positive effects also on developing a network of workers and managers, aimed to create an easier exchange of information among them. This movement also improved the situation of women in the sector by providing them with training courses and supportive social forums. Fairtrade has also provided a range of social and environmental benefits, such as giving the possibility to children to attend school (Impact Briefing Paper, 2010).

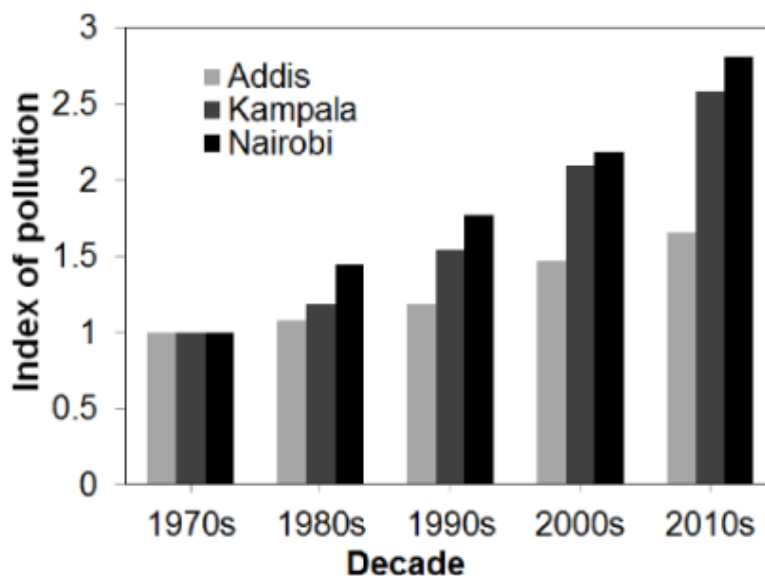
CHAPTER 3

The future of Africa’s economic growth

3.1 Air pollution in African cities

By 2050, the African population will increase from 1 to 2 billion people. Over 80% of this growth will occur in cities (Makoni, 2020). As highlighted in the first Chapter, in Nigeria by 2050, 300 million people will live in cities. Such a high urban population rate causes increased traffic and a growth of air pollution in many cities. An East African study, “Visibility as a proxy for air quality in East Africa” by Singh et al (2020), it describes the path of air pollution in three cities in the East of Africa, namely Addis Ababa, Kampala, and Nairobi. The study uses visibility data as a proxy for air quality. Since 1970, there has been a loss in the visibility in all the three cities: 60% for Nairobi; 56% for Kampala; and 34% for Addis Ababa. PM pollution increased by 182%, 162%, and 62%, respectively, since 1970. Figure 5 shows the path of air pollution in these three cities from 1970 to 2010.

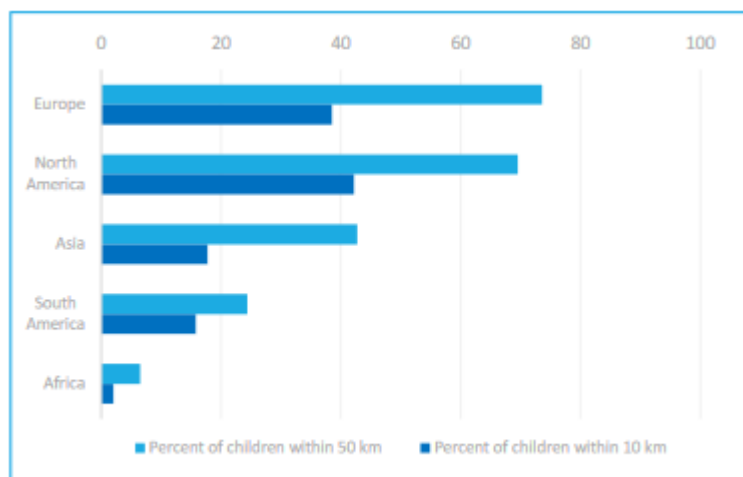
Figure 5: Decadal index of PM pollution for Addis Ababa, Kampala, and Nairobi, calculated from historical visibility data.



Source: Singh et al. (2020).

The air pollution issue is not just an East African problem. The majority of African countries are facing huge growth of air pollution, and many associations are trying to battle this problem. For example, in 2019, the environmental justice group Groundwork and a Mpumalanga community organisation, Vukani Environmental Justice Movement in Action, helped by the air pollution specialist Andrew Gray, took South African government to the High Court. They accused 14 facilities (12 coal-powered plants, and 2 fuel refinery) of causing between 305 and 650 deaths in 2016 (Makoni, 2020). Those facilities did not follow restrictions on emissions and for years contributed, in a consistent way, to polluting the air. To be able to battle those big polluters – such as Eskom, Sasol, ArcelorMittal –, governments and activists guided by scientists, should collect a lot of data about air pollution in specific areas, but this is not always possible. Figure 6 shows a lack of air monitoring stations in the African continent, compared to Europe or North America. Without a consistent monitoring of air pollution, it is difficult to evaluate the health impact of air pollution. Indeed, public data on the level of air pollution are important to increase popular awareness about the issue, and support people on changing their behaviours.

Figure 6: Only 6 percent of children in Africa live near air monitoring stations.



Source: CIESIN / UNICEF

Source: UNICEF (2019).

The most exposed to air pollution and related diseases are children. Air pollution could cause pneumonia and respiratory infections, and due to the smaller respiratory airways of children, infections are more likely to cause blockages in children than in adults. Air pollution has been shown to impact children’s growing brains too. Only in 2015, 40,000 children died in Africa due to high rates of air pollution. Children premature deaths have

also social and economic consequences. A recent study estimated the economic cost of premature death in Africa amounting to \$215 billion (UNICEF, 2019).

The high rate of people dying due to air pollution has repercussion also for the national economy. In Sub-Saharan Africa, lost labour income as a result of air pollution is equal to 0.83% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Worland, 2016). Local authorities and governments must focus more on this topic and invest in air monitoring stations.

3.2 African sustainable urbanisation

In recent years, in Africa, different initiatives were set up with the aim to highlight the scale of the challenge related to air pollution. Those initiatives want to improve public awareness about the importance of clean air, sharing practices adopted by communities, organisations, and cities to fight air pollution.

#UrbanBetter consists in initiatives adopted by different African countries, 24 cities across the continent. Thanks to these initiatives, different communities located all over the continent take actions to improve air quality, sustainability, and environmental protection. One of these communities is the Susty Vibes Communitrees based in Lagos and Abuja (Nigeria) with the aim of mobilising young people for tree planting and climate advocacy. Another community is the Hustlenomics, specialised in the construction of sustainable houses using eco-bricks in Soweto (Johannesburg, South Africa). There are many other communities – such as in Uganda, Ghana, and Burkina Faso – concerned about social and environmental issues (Oni and Muoki, 2021).

Another issue, by which governments all over the world should be concerned about, concerns the global emissions of Greenhouse Gas (GHG), which are growing faster than many other types. About 23% of total GHG emissions is related to transport and motorization (UN-HABITAT, 2010).

Due to the increasing number of urban population, local authorities and national government must improve a mobility system that reduces Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions, and that could guarantee affordable transports to people living both in cities and in rural areas. Fighting Carbon Dioxide emissions due to the increasing rate of motorization does not mean only increasing the number of electric cars, but it consists also in ensuring good services, such as roads and bike lanes. Also, the establishment of an efficient public transport will have an important role in sustainable mobilization.

In Africa, only 7 km per 100km² are paved roads, compared to 170 km per 100km² in Europe. There is also huge lack of facilities for non-motorized transport, such as bike lanes

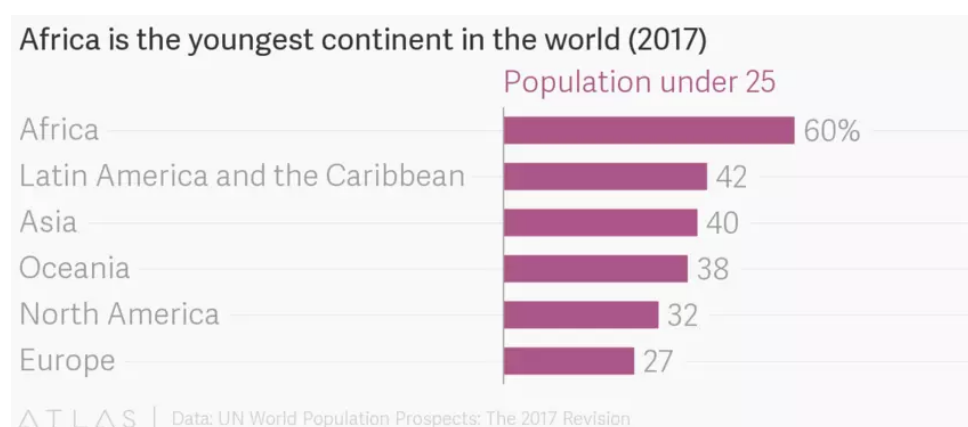
or footpaths (UN-HABITAT, 2010). There are different actions that local authorities could implement, including adopting urban transport programmes that favour high occupancy or encourage non-motorized transport modes after providing facilities related to them. For example, the government of the city of Mombasa adopted an integrated city planning approach that includes transit-oriented planning, parking management, and the creation of high-quality walking areas in the city centre (UN-HABITAT, 2010). It is important for African governments to invest today in transport infrastructures, because it will have a positive impact for future generations and sustainable growth.

In Africa, it is growing the number of entrepreneurs ready to improve services for their cities or countries with innovative ideas. For example, the huge lack of paved roads in African countries has been taken in consideration by an innovator called Nelson Boateng. He combined the problem of plastic pollution with the consistent lack of paved roads in African countries and developed a new kind of asphalt containing plastic waste and sand – 80% of the asphalt is made by plastic, and 20% by sand. This new form of asphalt is more resilient compared to traditional asphalt used in African countries, and it does not rot and crumble with high temperatures. Boateng is paving throughout Ghana with 230 collaborators working for his company, the Nelplast (McCarthy, 2018).

This a good example of what new African generation, with access to high level of education and useful resources as internet, can do to improve standard of living in African countries and, at the same time, fighting the increasing pollution.

Africa is the youngest continent of the world, characterised by a very young population: the median age is 20 years, and, as shown in Figure 7, around 60% of African population is less than 25 years old.

Figure 7: Africa is the youngest continent in the world.



Source: World Economic Forum (2020).

A survey conducted by the PSB Research (The African Youth Survey), revealed a rising Afro-Optimism about the future. The African Youth Survey 2020 highlighted a strong sense of individual responsibility, a post-colonial mindset, entrepreneurialism, and a confidence in a shared African identity. African youths believe that it is possible to solve problems as corruption or improving personal living conditions collaboratively. African youths are positive for their future: 72% of young people interviewed are confident about their financial future; 65% believe that the 21st century will be the African Century; 76% of young men and women would like to start a business in the next five years; and the survey revealed a consistent concernment about the environment as water scarcity, plastic waste and poaching of wildlife (Africa Youth Survey, 2020).

3.3 African development and network growth

On May 2013, Head of States and Governments belonging to the African Union (AU) celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), precursor of the AU. The OAU/AU had been established on 25 May 1963 in the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The declaration evokes the uniqueness of the history of Africa, reaffirms African Nations commitment to the ideals of Pan-Africanism, determines to take full responsibility for the realisation of a unique vision of the continent, and many other statements. The 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration highlighted the Pan-African Vision as an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa in the Agenda 2063. The Agenda consists in a concrete manifestation of how African country members of the AU, and in general of the continent, intend to achieve the vision in the next 50 years. The Agenda is divided into Aspirations, such as attaining a peaceful and secure Africa, or an Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential Global Player and Partner. Then, there are Goals such as achieving a high standard of living or transforming the continent in an environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economy. Aspirations are achieved only through attaining goals that must focus on Priority Areas such as income, jobs, education, health, water security, and renewable energies (Agenda 2063, 2013).

In the Agenda, an important role is covered by flagship projects. These projects consist in key programmes and initiatives identified as promoters and accelerators of Africa's economic growth. A flagship project is the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This free trade area covers a dynamic market of 1.2 billion people (2.5 billion in 2050) and a GDP of \$2.5 trillion.

Businesses currently face higher tariff when they export within the continent rather than when they export outside Africa. With the establishment of AfCFTA, trade among African countries will be subjected by less economic tariffs.

AfCFTA could also benefit to small and medium size enterprises, representing the 80% of total businesses in the continent. These businesses face huge difficulties on exporting outside the continent, also because they are not as competitive as non-African ones (Western or Asians firms). On the bright side, they are well positioned into regional markets, so they could use regional markets to grow and then expand outside Africa. Growing within Africa will be easier without economic barriers and with a large network of firms from different countries (African Trade Policy Centre of the Economic Commission for Africa, 2013).

The AfCFTA involves many improvements, such as: reducing/removing tariffs on a large variety of goods traded among African countries; improving the cooperation among customs authorities over product standards and regulations; the mutual recognition of standards, licensing and certifications; the progressive liberalisation of services, so that service suppliers will have access to markets across different African countries; choosing the best suppliers for themselves.

There are many others flagship projects, such as the African passport and free movement of people, or the establishment of a single African Air-transportation Market.

Another initiative of the Agenda 2063 is the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The main objective of this program consists in promoting socio-economic development and poverty reduction in the continent by integrating regional infrastructure networks and services all over the continent (African Development Bank Group, NO DATA). In this way, it will be easier to decrease production and transaction costs, increase competitiveness of businesses across the continent, and attracting foreign direct investments in Africa. There will be investments priorities in transports, energy, ICT and Transboundary water sectors.

The African continent has the opportunity to become a powerful start-up growth engine. Thanks to a network of start-ups and tech firms, Africa could be able to lead a sustainable tech revolution, thus pursuing sustainable economic growth.

In Kenya, it is located the so called “Silicon Savannah” in Nairobi. More than 200 start-ups are established in the Nairobi’s hub, and the total value of those businesses goes around \$1 billion (Mallonee, 2018). In the Silicon Savannah, digital start-ups find an ideal ecosystem to grow, and they could benefit from the presence of big tech firms such as Google, Intel, and Microsoft that are already established there.

The presence of lot of firms and start-ups, concentrated in a specific area, could bring huge benefits for economic development of the country. In an economic and business hub, firms join network benefits, from being able to communicate easily with other firms to the opportunity to collaborate with each other. The possibility to share knowledge and well-prepared workforce lead to an increase in firms' competitiveness.

African tech hubs could contribute accelerating economic growth in their countries. This is what is happening in Kenya, where the largest tech hub of Africa is located. Those hubs derived from high number of innovators.

To promote entrepreneurs to invest money and time on innovative projects, African governments must implement a solid legislation on property rights and many other incentives for those people that want to innovate. To conclude, it is important to say that today's governments decisions will affect future urbanisation process and economic growth, so it is important to take the best decisions today.

Conclusions

Bill Gates, in an interview to the Financial Times in 2018, said: “If we don’t do better in investing in human capital in Africa, yes, the number of people in extreme poverty is actually going to go up”.

Through this thesis, I wanted to analyse a problem that is perpetual since the formation of the first cities: fast urbanisation. I want to highlight the word ‘perpetual’ because fast urbanisation is a phenomenon that do never stop even in developed countries, and the forms it assumed were – and are - different.

Urbanisation manifests in a specific way in each country. The African urbanisation process, from my point of view, is particularly interesting because it is something happening currently, and because, if managed well, I think it could become a strength for many African countries.

As showed in the thesis, Africa has many obstacles to overcome, among which poverty, corruption and criminality, but the new generations, more aware about social importance and sustainability, have the strength and willingness to lead the continent to a prosperous future.

To conclude there is also need for other countries, which have huge interests in the African continent, to change their way of seeing the African continent and to help African countries to achieve a sustainable economic growth, without simply ‘exploiting’ them. The African urbanisation process plays a determinant role on climate change and in the future, it will be even more relevant. I believe African countries will be able to follow a unique urbanisation path, and it will be easier and faster to achieve a sustainable economic growth followed by a good urbanisation with the help of developed countries.

The way Africa is seen is already changing. For example, Twitter Chief Jack Dorsey in November 2019 announced to the public the desire of moving for up to six months in Africa (Bekiempis, 2019). During his staying he visited different countries and met entrepreneurs, software developers and owners of tech start ups and firms. This event demonstrates that Westerns’ view of seeing Africa is changing. The future of Africa is not being anymore the ‘treasure chest’ for Western multinational companies, rather becoming the next global investments centre of the World.

Another interesting event that will have huge impact for the future of Africa is the Akon City. The optimal answer to fast demographic growth and fast urbanisation process could be, building a city from scratch. The man behind Akon city is Aliaune Thiam, better known to

the Western public as Akon, an American rapper. As discussed in this thesis, there are huge opportunities in the African continent, and the presence of immense land brought Akon to decide of building a city from scratch. This city will be unique, because it will be powered 100% by solar energy, and there will be a new form of financial system through cryptocurrencies (Esquire, 2021). Akon's project will take place in Sudan, and will represent in a very good way the future of African countries, i.e., the perfect combination of sustainability and economic development.

In the next decades investments in Africa by Western firms or privates will increase exponentially, and Africa will become the continent of the Century as many young African people believe.

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Abstract in italiano

L'elaborato è suddiviso in tre capitoli e affronta diversi argomenti, tutti correlati al tema principale, ossia il processo di urbanizzazione in Africa. L'elaborato è strutturato in maniera tale da porre inizialmente il lettore di fronte all'attuale situazione economica e sociale di due differenti aree del continente Africano: zona rurale e zona urbana, diverse tra loro sotto vari aspetti, ma soprattutto soggette a forti disuguaglianze sociali ed economiche. Queste disuguaglianze sono la principale causa per cui molti Paesi africani stanno vivendo una forte migrazione dalle campagne alle città. Il problema derivante da questa migrazione è una cattiva gestione da parte dei governi locali e nazionali, incapaci di incanalare questi enormi flussi di persone in apposite aree urbane. Da ciò ne deriva un sovraffollamento di alcune aree, ovvero baraccopoli che prendono il nome di "slums". Queste zone delle città non contribuiscono in nessun modo ad una crescita economica della città, anzi ne rappresentano una minaccia. Sottosviluppo, povertà, criminalità, e corruzione sono alcune caratteristiche delle baraccopoli che caratterizzano le principali città africane. Nei decenni precedenti i governi africani hanno reagito a questo fenomeno in diversi modi, ma non è stato dedicato abbastanza impegno per risolvere il problema.

Nel secondo Capitolo si introduce il lettore alla situazione della Cina e alla gestione di un fenomeno di migrazione simile a quello che sta interessando l'Africa oggigiorno. La Cina è riuscita a gestire a proprio vantaggio un grosso flusso di persone provenienti dalle campagne, trasferitesi in città alla ricerca di una migliore condizione di vita. La Cina è stata protagonista di una veloce urbanizzazione nel corso degli ultimi decenni, e ciò ha garantito un'altrettanta veloce crescita economica. Esiste una consistente differenza nella gestione di questo flusso migratorio tra Cina e Africa, a causa di differenze politiche, sociali ed economiche.

Nell'elaborato si affronta anche il forte legame economico andatosi a formare nei decenni tra la Cina e il continente Africano. La Cina, come pure i paesi occidentali, hanno forti interessi nei confronti di ciò che l'Africa può offrire in termini di risorse naturali e non solo. Spesso, questi forti interessi economici da parte di multinazionali occidentali portano a scambi commerciali non corretti nei confronti di piccole e medie imprese africane. Negli ultimi decenni sono nate diverse associazioni con l'intento di proteggere imprese africane, contadini e lavoratori africani, da trattamenti non etici da parte di imprese estere.

Nell'ultima parte dell'elaborato si affronta un ulteriore problema legato al sovraffollamento delle città: l'inquinamento dell'aria. Questo problema non è affatto da sottovalutare, perché oltre ad avere conseguenze economiche negative, ha conseguenze negative anche per la salute di molti lavoratori e, in particolare, per la salute dei bambini. Diverse comunità e associazioni si stanno attivando con

lo scopo di aumentare la consapevolezza dei cittadini sull'importanza della sostenibilità ambientale per uno sviluppo economico sostenibile del continente.

Per concludere, l'elaborato si focalizza nel descrivere un cambiamento dinamico che si sta presentando in diverse nazioni africane e che rappresenta il futuro dell'Africa, con un focus su una nuova generazione di persone consapevoli del cambiamento climatico e delle relative conseguenze, e allo stesso tempo istruite e desiderose di creare innovazioni utili per il futuro della società africana.