

Perspectives in Governance and Global South Urban Crises: The Case of Nairobi

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Abstract

Drastic changes in global urbanisation trends, coupled with political and socio-economic insufficiencies, have resulted in severe societal problems that necessitate new and innovative discourses, policies and practices, in spatial development and planning. Recent and past global, political-economic crises have significantly influenced Global North's spatial policies and practices, which in turn have also profoundly impacted the planning and policy agenda in the Global South. Using the case of Nairobi, Kenya as an example, this paper looks at the linkages between global crises, European policies and their impact on the Global South's urban policies and practices. Nairobi exemplifies many Global Southern cities that are currently experiencing rapid urbanisation coupled with increasing socio-spatial inequalities, urbanisation of poverty, environmental degradation and proliferation of slums. Attempts to deal with these urbanisation challenges has led to several policy and action initiatives, which however have failed to adequately deal with the challenges and in fact some of those initiatives have contributed significantly in worsening the situation.

Subsequently, since the 1950s, each decade has seen a paradigm shift in initiatives and approaches towards these urbanisation challenges. Currently there is the shift from government to governance which is taking root in urban planning institutions and practices. Indeed 'good urban governance' is increasingly being seen as a prerequisite for dealing with these complex urban challenges in the Global South. However, the urban arena in the Global South has become very complex and fragmented, involving heterogeneous actors at various scales, all with disparities in their powers, roles, interests and perspectives. Furthermore, these actors possibly have different paradigmatic positions which stand in the way of attaining common ground and effective cooperation. As a result, tackling these perpetual urban challenges of the Global South necessitates an appreciation of the actors' relations that could lead to an appropriate multi-level urban governance system, geared towards sustainable and inclusive urbanisation.

Consequently, this paper examines Nairobi's urban arena, focusing on the roles and perspectives of 'low income housing' actors, both formal and informal. Employing a multi-level-actor analysis and following an analytical framework from Giddens' structuration theory, its concepts of structure, modality, and interaction are explored.

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It examines the actors' different paradigmatic positions and interests that hinder attaining of mutual understanding and effective cooperation which is necessary for 'good urban governance'. Finally, with the aim of proposing alternatives for improvement, it points towards the search for appropriate innovative discourses, policies and practices; and effective ways of involving all the relevant stakeholders and actors, both weak and strong, towards dealing with the Global South's urban challenges.

Key Words: Urban housing crises, governance, actors, policies and practices

The need for new discourses and practices - the global urban arena

Globally, ongoing socio-economic, political and environmental changes are resulting in severe societal crises. These changes in addition to questioning existing models and discourses also raise new questions necessitating a better appreciation of contexts and development of appropriate discourses in spatial development and planning. Future and current urban planning must be more cognisant of past, present and future challenges such as globalization, climate change and environmental degradation, rapid urbanisation, immigration, global economic and financial crises, increasing poverty, marginalisation, and slum proliferation. Furthermore, there is need for planning to interact appropriately with challenges and opportunities afforded by increased awareness and the demand for democratized decision-making processes and socio-economic rights by ordinary people. Accordingly, with the ongoing shift from government to governance discourses, the urban planning arena is awash with many new planning approaches such as collaborative planning, strategic spatial planning, participatory urban appraisal and community action planning.

However, a closer look at the global urban arena reveals great disparities between theory and practice, normative and positive, as well as the desired and reality in terms of inclusiveness, effectiveness and responsiveness to societal needs. Besides, current policy and academic discourse continue to view Global South's urbanisation through a prism of "abnormality" or "exceptionalism", terming it "pathological" or "dysfunctional" due to rapid substantial structural population growth without commensurate poverty reduction which greatly contrasts the Global North's urbanisation experience (UN-Habitat, 2010). Moreover, economic growth in the Global South is not reducing informal settlements neither is it improving the lives of the majority of its residents; depicting a fundamental lack of political will to deal with the urban problems in a systematic way, which is compounded by failure in policies and initiatives. These policies and initiatives, usually driven by powerful interest groups, have often times failed to benefit the urban poor partly due to political structures that preserve the undesirable status quo. Additionally, rapid urbanisation has also been fuelled by non-traditional reasons for example populations escaping hunger and conflict. This could be due to failing agriculture due to not only natural environmental causes, but also due to global political-economic reasons. In addition, persistent regional and internal conflicts continue to generate refugees and internally displaced people. Thus spatially, despite many informal and formal links and networks, many urban areas in the Global South may be misconstrued as uncoordinated patchworks of informal settlements and gated communities, industrial zones and luxurious resorts, refugee camps and golf courses and many other fragments (Coy, 2006). In sum, all these complexities mentioned above, raise questions and demand answers that transcend conventional discourses, policies and practices. They point towards the need for deeper self-reflection and appreciation of the situation, in both global and local contexts.

This paper therefore attempts to discuss those complexities facing Global South's urban areas, which became more apparent since 1950s. Since that time, the world has

continued to experience very rapid urban growth, such that majority of the global population is now urban. What is more is that UN-Habitat (2010) projects that by 2050 over 70 percent of the global population will be urban, terming them *Homo sapiens urbanus*. However, this recent rapid growth is concentrated in the Global South, and is in fact happening through the growth of informal settlements, in that; many urban areas are growing at the same rate as informal settlements. For instance, in 2005, informal settlements in Sub-Saharan Africa were growing at 4.53 per cent compared to urban growth rate of 4.58 per cent per year. Moreover, in some countries such as Sudan, Central African Republic and Chad, the informal settlements accommodated around 90% of their urban population, and in total, one billion people, representing a third of the global urban population, currently reside in informal settlements (UN-Habitat, 2005 2010). Proliferation and persistence of informal settlements have been seen to represent societal failure or unwillingness to deal with problems besetting the poor members of society. Depending on the prism through which the problem is viewed, at different times in history and according to different actors, it has been described as a different form failure including: economic, policy, planning and market failure; failure to provide; failure to modernise; failure to benefit from or tame globalisation; and currently it is being viewed as failure in governance (Tosa, 2009; UN-Habitat, 2003, 2009b).

Indeed, since 1950s, each decade in the Global South has seen a different conception or a dominant paradigm on how to deal with informal settlements. It started with modernisation, progressing to the current governance paradigm with 'good urban governance' being seen as a panacea for dealing with these complex multifaceted Global South urban challenges. What is more, is the Global South informal settlements arena has experienced a proliferation of actors and stakeholders both international and local, formal and informal, state and non-state, all with different interests, resources, powers, perspectives and approaches. However, this scenario generates a number of questions for instance: why the various approaches have failed, why the paradigms shifted, who defines the dominant paradigm and whose paradigm it is. In briefly trying to look at these questions, this paper, also examines the possibility of different actors following different paradigms while at the same time purporting to be pursuing the current paradigm espoused by the prevailing powerful actor's interest at the particular time. This is explored Giddens' *Structuration Theory* following its concepts of structure, modality, and interaction; which demonstrate a "duality of structure" i.e. continual interaction and mutual constitution of 'structure and agency'. In this theory, modalities i.e. frames of reference, allocative and authoritative resources, and norms; provide linkages through which structures are generated and maintained in the flow of practices or interaction (Giddens, 1971, 1976, 1979, 1984). Therefore, could this be evident in the informal settlements' arena that is comprised of many actors with different frames of reference resulting in a multiplicity of social worlds, 'rationalities' and practices co-existing in the arena with complex power relations? Consequently, in an attempt to explore the above, the following section of this paper briefly presents the Global South's informal settlements' challenge against the backdrop of the situations in the Global North. This is followed by a glimpse into the policy, politics, polity and

governance context of Nairobi Kenya. Subsequently, the actors' paradigmatic positions and frames of reference are briefly reviewed, and finally the conclusions discussing the role of competing paradigms in Global South's informal settlements arena are presented.

Global South's Urban Crisis in a Global Context

Soon after the Second World War, the Global North's economy quickly recovered and grew well past pre-war levels, experiencing an economic boom with rising incomes and general improvement in social well-being that lasted till the 1970s. Fordism as a "regime of accumulation" was characterised by mass production and mass consumption in protected domestic markets with Keynesian economic policies as the prevailing mode of regulation (Aglietta, 1979). However, for most Global South countries which were still under colonial rule, the post War period saw the struggle for independence, which was often very bitter and violent, but also brutally suppressed. Growth of informal settlements was checked by laws that prohibited the natives' entry into urban areas, and also through brutal evictions and demolitions of native settlements in and around the urban areas. Informal settlements were seen as generators of disease, crime and political dissent (Myers, 2003).

In the 1960s, many African countries became independent and removal of restrictive laws led to massive rural-urban migration that overwhelmed the urban areas, leading to rapid growth of informal settlements. To deal with the many problems besetting these new emerging countries, 'modernisation' became the global development paradigm aiming to transform these countries from 'traditional' into 'modern' societies. Informal settlements were seen as a problem of 'backwardness' that would be solved by modernising. Therefore, informal settlements were demolished, and were to be replaced by 'modern public housing'. As public housing proved to be inadequate, a *laissez-faire* approach towards informal settlements ensued, as the urban crisis was seen as a temporary situation that would disappear with economic growth and modernisation (Obudho and Aduwo, 1989; Weru and Bodewes, 2001). Failure of modernisation practices brought the dependency discourse to prominence in the 1970s. In response, International Labour Organization and the World Bank advocated a basic needs development strategy, in which housing needs were addressed through site and services schemes as aided self-help. The 1960s and 1970s approaches were based on Keynesian principles, with the state playing a dominant role, in a top down manner. However, the public housing produced was highly inadequate and unaffordable to the urban poor and as a result, informal settlements grew exponentially.

The breakdown of Fordism and Keynesianism, and the coming into power of conservatives such as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan lead to Post Fordism; and Neoliberalism became the dominant paradigm in the 1980s (Harvey, 2005). Towards the end of the 1970s, as the Fordist model was breaking down, the Global North experienced stagflation and an economic crisis exacerbated by the 1970s oil shocks. The oil crises also generated enormous profits for petrochemical corporations

that recklessly lent them through commercial banks to Global South countries. These countries were mostly run by corrupt leaders who diverted the money from development to overseas accounts or purchased weapons to repress their subjects. However, declining commodity prices due to stagflation in the Global North, and the increase of interest rates, produced a possibility of Global South's debt-defaulting, triggering a debt crisis and possible collapse of banks (Hart, 2001). To prevent this from happening, the lending countries directed the IMF and World Bank to bail out those Global South countries. The bailout was given on condition of implementing Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Thus neoliberal policies also referred to as the Washington Consensus, spread to the Global South, with devastating effects to the local economies as well as social wellbeing of these countries (Hart, 2001; Broad, 2004). Furthermore, to cut costs, Global North manufacturing shifted to the Global South, where to compete for foreign investment, bargaining processes between Global South governments and multinationals led to low wages, deplorable working conditions and extreme levels of labour and environmental exploitation. Thus Taylorism was introduced into Global South contexts which had very lenient regulations producing 'bloody Taylorism' (Lipietz, 1982; 2008). Moreover, neoliberal policies required the withdrawal of the state from service provision and a shift towards reliance on the private sector and civil society, henceforth, in dealing with informal settlements the government was required to be an *enabler*, to create an *enabling* environment for the private sector and other non-state actors, to deal with housing problems. As a result, many Global Southern states abdicated the role of housing provision, but the private sector and the market, despite many incentives did not take the role. With increasing poverty, inequalities and marginalisation, proliferation of informal settlements continued in the 1980s (UN-Habitat, 2006).

The realisation that unregulated market and globalisation forces, were causing serious social and natural environmental degradation globally, even threatening the very existence of the human race, led to Brundtland Report and the Rio Earth Summit; thus Sustainability and Sustainable development became the dominant paradigm in the 1990s (Fergus and Rowney, 2005). The government's role became that of regulating the market forces. To deal with Global South's urban problems, Sustainable urban development was prescribed, to produce liveable and inclusive cities with social harmony, economic and environmental sustainability. Participation of the target groups and bottom up practices were emphasized. Therefore participatory slum upgrading projects led by the civil society were proposed which aimed at improving the environment of informal settlements and regulation of security of tenure (Sietchiping, 2008). Deepening globalisation, and increasing role of non-state actors towards the end of the 1990s among other forces brought to prominence the 'good governance' paradigm in the 2000s that called for partnership between the governments, private sector, civil society and supra national entities among others. Furthermore, at the end of the Cold War, Global Northern countries, which had previously turned a blind eye to corruption, repression and violation of basic rights and civil liberties in the Global South, through multilateral and bilateral organisations, demanded institutional reform to create 'good governance'. Additionally, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), aimed at addressing

Global South's problems, specifically mentioned good governance and reducing slums as its targets. However, for different actors involved, good governance has different definitions, approaches and understandings, thus it motivates different practices among them (Kirby, 1997). In dealing with informal settlements the government's envisioned role was that of a partner-to partner with other stakeholders in the form of public-private partnerships and creation of city-wide and nation-wide city strategies and alliances such as espoused by the 'Cities Without Slums' initiatives. All in all, these initiatives have produced very little impact on the Global South's urban challenges and the problem of informal settlements persists, calling for more appropriate attention and actions.

Table 1: Paradigm shifts in prescribed responses to Global South's urban crises

Paradigm	Containment	Modernisation	Basic needs	Neoliberalism	Sustainability	Good Governance
Decade it was dominant	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Geo-political and economic context	Post war era Late colonial	Independence Keynesianism	Oil shocks Stagflation Debt crisis Fordism crisis	Thatcher- Regan Post Fordism & bloody Taylorism	End of Cold war Globalisation deepens	New Millennium
Development orthodoxy	Containment (by law & force)	Modernisation (accelerated growth & trickle down)	Basic needs (dependency theory- redistribution)	Economic- liberalism Enabling approaches , state roll back	Sustainable development	Good governance and MDGs
Urban and housing strategies	Restriction repressions eviction and demolitions Maintain purity of the city	Slum demolitions replaced with modern public housing	sites-and- services, aided self-help	housing without houses, create an enabling environment	Slum upgrading urban management tenure regularisation	Public-private partnership, Cities alliances
Role of the state	Architect for idealist cities	Planner for development	Provider of basic needs	Enabler of the private sector	Regulator of market forces	Partner with stakeholders
Mode of governance	Authoritarian & Clientelist	representative democratic	Managerialist	Corporatist	Pluralist	Inclusive democratic

Based on these criteria, the study identifies five dominant paradigms that dominated the Global South's urban housing arena in various decades. They are; containment, modernisation, basic needs & redistribution, neo-liberalism, sustainable development, and finally good governance. Seemingly, periods in history and other geo-political and economic forces at one time or another, have favoured a particular paradigm over others, making them dominate discourse and policy. Nonetheless, these paradigms are ideal types, and do not exist in pure forms or revolutionarily replacing each other, but the new paradigms have evolved from the previous ones and in fact as shall be discussed later, they all continue to co-exist and are actually competing in the Global South's urban arena.

Additionally, several ideal types of modes have been identified, i.e. the informal arrangements that define the governing relationships among actors in the urban arena. They include, authoritarian, clientelist, representative democratic,

managerialist, corporatist, populist, pluralist democratic, inclusive democratic, oligarchical, criteria driven, entrepreneurial consensus, inclusionary argumentation, pro-growth, and welfare (Rakodi, 2003; DiGaetano and Strom, 2003; Healey, 2003; Healey, 1997; Pierre, 1999); with each paradigm having a peculiar preferred mode. However, whilst in theory each paradigm prescribed a different mode, in practice, any given time there prevailed hybrid forms such as authoritative/clientelist. In sum, the paradigm shifts presented, reflect dominant discourses and policies that dominated the Global South's informal settlements and urban housing arenas. Indeed, policy and programme documents reflect closely those paradigm shifts. However, there was and still is great variance between what was desired or intended as compared to what was actually practiced. Different actors or stakeholders have acted following different paradigms; depending on several issues including their vested interests, motives, and sources of funding and knowledge. Additionally, the socio-economic and political contexts in which the initiatives are conducted also play a significant role.

Structuration perspective in Global South's urban governance arena

The different perspectives in the Global South's urban crises, governance and paradigm shifts in the informal settlements, housing policy and practice arena, could be viewed through Structuration Theory. According to Structuration Theory (Giddens 1984), there is a 'duality of structures'; in that social structures make social action possible and at the same time social action creates those very structures, presenting a continual interaction between, and mutual constitution of, 'structure and agency'. By defining *structuration* as being "the structuring of social relations across time and space, in virtue of the duality of structure" (Giddens, 1984 pp. 376); and *structures* as being 'recursively organized rules and resources' that both constrain and facilitate or enable social actions, and structures existing as 'memory traces' (Giddens, 1984 pp. 377); This theory could provide a way of situating the actions and interactions of actors involved in housing, policy or governance within structuration processes.

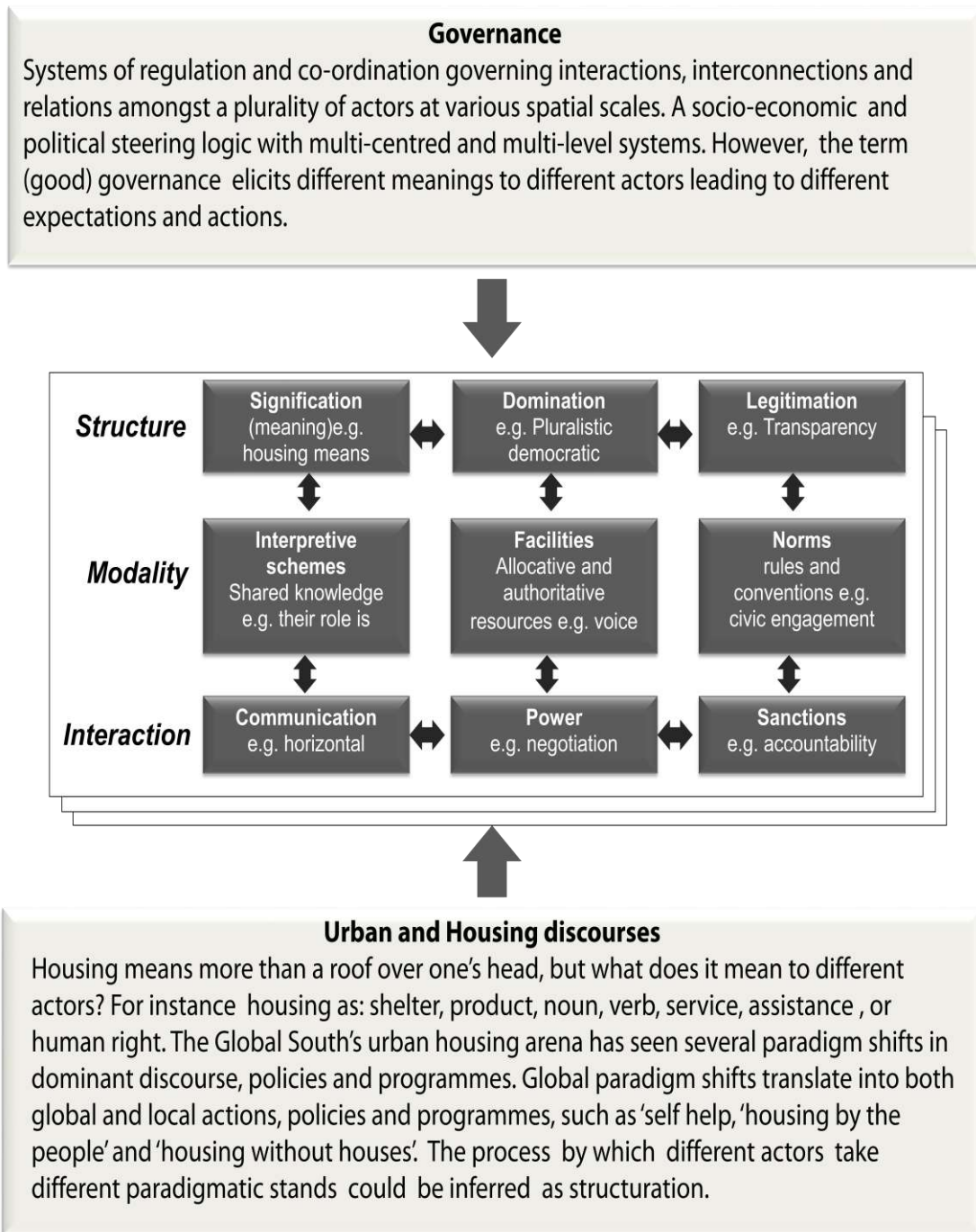
Pursuant to Structuration Theory, three modalities i.e. interpretative schemes, facilities and norms, mediate the linkage between social structure and human interaction. Firstly, interpretative schemes are shared stocks of knowledge which actors draw upon to interpret actions and achieve communications while interacting, and thereby producing, reproducing or reinforcing structures of signification or meaning. Interpretative schemes include semantic codes and discursive practices and are "the core of mutual knowledge whereby an accountable universe is sustained" (Giddens, 1979 pp. 83). Secondly, Facilities are allocative and authoritative resources through which actors exercise power and realise their intentions, thus creating structures of domination. Facilities are thus, "reproduced relations of autonomy and dependence in social interaction" (Giddens, 1979 pp. 93). In urban governance therefore, the existing or prescribed authoritative and allocative systems not only depend on different actors' vested interests, but also on routine social relations, practices and institutional designs all structured by deeper values and

conceptions such as paradigmatic positions (Healey, 1997). And finally, norms are rules that actors use to sanction behaviour and produce legitimacy i.e. the structures of legitimation, hence norms are “the actualization of rights and enactment of obligations” (Giddens, 1976 pp. 86), norms are standards and laws that define how actors should act within a particular context.

Hence, while interpretative schemes reveal what terms like urban problems, informal settlements, housing policy or good governance mean for a certain actor; facilities depict what resources are used or should be used (normatively) to meet the stated common objective. It is by means of facility that it is determined who is or should be included or excluded in governance process, in addition to determining who has or should have a controlling stake or voice in a governance setup. In this way, with more facility determine whose paradigm becomes dominant. Conversely, norms show the justification or reason for pursuing certain normative actions or taking a certain housing policy or good governance stance, by stating what and why it should be done because of what. In sum, these structuration concepts could aid in the appreciation of the complex and multifarious milieu that encompass the Global South’s urban governance and housing issues, and as such, the Nairobi’s informal housing and policy arena.

As discussed in the previous sections, attempts to deal with the Global South’s urban problems including informal settlements have been inadequate; and each decade since the 1950s has seen a different dominant development orthodoxy and preferred approach towards these urban problems. This is shown mainly in paradigm shifts in discourse and policy and programme documents and the actions of powerful interest groups whose voice dominated the scene in each decade, beginning with restriction and modernisation, and the latest paradigm being ‘good governance’ as shown in Table 1. There are many and varied definitions of governance and its normative form good governance, however, a common denominator among them is that they concern certain actors making binding decisions that will enable or constrain their own, or others actions and interactions. Governance includes the regulation, co-ordination and interaction systems amongst these diverse actors, with varied interests and positions. However, governance means different things to different actors, leading to different actions and expectations and creating multiple structurations. Moreover, the situation is complicated further by differences in meaning of the normative ‘good governance’. Consequently, through Structuration Theory, the various actors in Global South’s urban governance arena, acting, interacting or preferring different paradigms can be seen as having different frames of reference and therefore different structuration, thus acting in a certain way and producing certain structures that define, shape and direct actions and interactions in the arena, for themselves and other actors.

Table 2: Structuration in Global South’s housing and urban governance arena



Paradigmatic positions in Nairobi's informal settlements arena

In theory all the actors and stakeholders involved in the informal urban housing arena in Nairobi, have closely followed the paradigm shifts and changes in policy and approaches as shown in table 1 (GoK, 2005; UN-Habitat, 2003; Huchzermeyer and Karam, 2006). All the policy and programme documents have at least in part referred to the dominant orthodoxy, for instance in the 1990s almost all programs and initiatives mentioned 'sustainability' or 'sustainable urban development' while currently they mention 'governance', or 'good governance'. However, in practice, there is great variance between the desired changes or action compared to the actual changes or actions that were taken (Pugh, 2001; UN-Habitat, 2009a), and in fact, the actors have often acted or interacted according to different paradigms, with different frames of reference. Indeed, this was observed in the ongoing field-study in Nairobi's arena, firstly, based on what the actors said about themselves, and their policy and programme documents, their *modus operandi*, why and how they acted and interacted with other actors; secondly, analysing what other actors said or thought about the particular actor under consideration, what the actor did or should have done; thirdly based on scholarly evidence, studies and discourses about the said actors; and finally all this was explored through a 'structuration, housing and governance' framework presented in table 2. A summary of the findings presented below show the co-existence of multiple paradigmatic stands and frames of references by different actors, all involved in the same policies and programmes, and in the same locations; all which could contribute to a fundamental lack of mutual understanding and could also prevent the attainment of common ground, necessary for 'good urban governance' or effective initiatives, policy, projects and programs.

From the international level, multilateral organisations are the major players in Nairobi's informal settlements arena, and indeed, over the different decades, they have introduced, influenced or decided most of the time what the dominant paradigm should be. These include the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), Cities Alliance, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) among others. While all these actors currently promoted good governance, there was divergence in their approaches; for instance the World Bank, providing financial and technical assistance, and in terms of governance highlighting public-private sector management and the rule of law, was seen to have a more neo-liberal stand, focusing on enabling the market and private sector to work towards solving housing and urban problems (Pugh, 2001; Omenya and Huchzermeyer, 2006; World Bank, 2008; Kedogo *et al.*, 2010). Then United Nations organisations such as the UNDP and UN-Habitat emphasised human development aspects such as horizontal coordination, collaborative action, and human rights. Currently, UN-Habitat aims at socially and environmentally sustainable urban areas and adequate shelter for all emphasising community participation themes, all this in line with the sustainability paradigm (UN-Habitat, 2010). The Nairobi informal settlements arena also has several bilateral agencies and development assistance programmes from various countries, either acting directly or supporting the government and the civil societies. These include

German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Italian Development Cooperation (IDC), just to mention a few. These bilateral agencies mainly reflected values and priorities of their mother countries, but mostly followed a basic needs paradigmatic approach. Moreover, beyond their divergent approaches, these alliances, multilateral and bilateral agencies have complex internal governance arrangements resulting in heterogenous paradigmatic views, even within those institutions.

Currently, at the national and local government level, all ministries, parastatals, and all state agencies have governance and good governance in their policies, mandates, service charters, programmes, and short term and long term plans and visions. However in dealing with the informal settlements their approaches varied depending on the party affiliations, visions, vested interests, and motives - both positive and negative. For instance, on the one hand, some departments persisting in evictions and demolitions were seen leaning toward the restriction paradigm with authoritative governance approaches and seemingly apathetic to the plight of slum dwellers, but more interested urban renewal and beautification to attract tourism and international business and. On the other hand, other departments favour a more welfare, provision of subsidised public housing akin to the modernisation paradigm (GoK 2011). While some politicians were engaged in more clientistic modes of governance with patron client relations with residents, slumlords, private militias and local mafias; other politicians' engagement with informal settlement was more populist, setting out initiatives that seemed to address the needs of the majority, but in fact were only symbolic and without any resource allocation to match them, the only aim being to gain political power. All this is further complicated by varying personal and political interests of the ever changing key personalities in those institutions, rendering the position of those institutions even more inconsistent (Huchzermeyer and Karam, 2006; Mitullah, 2008).

The private sector, with varied actors ranging from giant multinational corporations to small informal enterprises, appears seemingly to have benefited immensely from the persistence of informal settlements, which enable payment of low wages and maintain a pool of casual labours, thereby sustaining 'bloody Taylorism' which in turn propagates more informal settlements in a vicious cycle. Private sector involvement in improving the situation in Nairobi's informal settlements has been minimal. The public-private sector initiatives espoused in Good urban governance paradigm have in practice merely been tokenism; the private sector involvement has been limited to a few corporate social responsibility projects and funding of some civil society activity. Thus private sector actors, seen to be gaining from the status quo have preferred a *laissez-faire* approach in a neo-liberal paradigmatic manner that maintains the current status quo, with its many layers that sustain the exploitation of the urban poor.

The informal settlements arena in Nairobi is teeming with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) varying in scale from international to grassroots level, all with

diverse interests and approaches. They include Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Religious or Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), and many other formal and informal community self-help groups and Non-State Actors (NSAs). The 1980s saw the proliferation of CSOs when multilateral and bilateral organisations began channelling development assistance directly to NGOs, following a Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), a neo-liberal approach, also due to an aid ban to the Government owing to Kenya Governments reluctance to reform, reduce corruption and embrace the SAPs (Syagga *et al.*, 2001; Kedogo *et al.*, 2010; GoK 2005). Currently, there are some human rights oriented CSOs following a sustainable and rights based paradigmatic theme, but also many pragmatic project based CSOs, following a basic needs approach. While many CSOs purport to represent the views of the informal settlements dwellers, it has been observed and argued that many CSOs, being dependent on donor funding, aligned their agendas with that of donors' primary interests and paradigmatic approaches. Moreover, some CSOs have been seen to be gaining from the current situation and have apparently opposed several interventions in the informal settlements, preferring a *laissez-faire* in a neo-liberal paradigmatic way. All these have resulted in myriads of conflicting approaches, duplication of efforts, wasteful competition and sometimes outright violence experienced in many slum upgrading initiatives (Mittullah 2008)

One of the main goals of the good governance paradigm is to ensure the views and voices of the most weak and vulnerable in society are taken into account and heard in decision-making, which would result in more responsive actions towards the needs of the urban poor. However, the voice of the majority of the urban poor in Nairobi's informal settlements is rarely heard. Several Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have set out to represent the voice of the urban poor, but only ended up representing the views of their funding organisations. Moreover, an attempt at increasing participation in government led projects has often been hijacked by powerful interest groups or other gate keepers. In Nairobi, the informal settlements residents also displayed a variety of preferred approaches, influenced by their relative income, and more so based with their contact with NGOs or government led initiatives. Some residents also expressed fear for any slum-upgrading activity as from their past experiences, slum-upgrading only lead to further displacement and worsening of their welfare (Syagga *et al.*, 2001; Huchzermeyer and Karam, 2006). However, many preferred public housing that would be leased to them at subsidised rates, with a more supportive government that protected and listened to them; an approach that seems contrary to the prevailing dominant paradigms. The poor, who with time have increasingly become more vocal and active in demanding for democracy, basic rights and justice, have often blamed the government for neglecting them, and failing to protect them from the vagaries of society. Moreover, many residents have become more and more suspicious of upgrading initiatives, both by state and non-state actors, as they saw these initiatives and their outcomes would not be in their best interests. Accordingly, all these findings point to the need to review the current approaches leading to the development of more effective and responsive approaches and strategies suited to the needs, locations, policy and political milieu and all the surrounding complex issues. As shown in Nairobi's informal settlements' policy and

practice arena, there is simultaneous co-existence and co-presence of sometimes competing paradigms ranging from containment to good governance, not only among different actors, but also within the different departments of given institutional actors, and even between individuals acting in them. There a strong indication that these competing paradigmatic stands could also be contributing to lack of political will, poor implementation of policies and programme initiatives, inappropriate policies and initiatives and many other such factors which prevent effective solutions to the urban problems but in fact perpetuate the deplorable living conditions for many residents in Nairobi.

Conclusions

This paper, while focusing on Nairobi, has discussed the Global South's urban arena in the context of prevailing urban crises, global geo-political and economic forces, and complex policy and political contexts, which is complicated further by presence of a myriad of actors with differing interests, resources and approaches. While there was convergence in theory, there was wide divergence in practice. Whereas, currently most of the actors said and wrote according to the prevailing good governance paradigm, the term produced different meanings for different actors. This could be explained by the fact that different actors could be having different paradigmatic references i.e. the ideological postulates, implicit theoretical foundations and representations of the world that frame their definitions, actions and interactions. Moreover, changes in dominant paradigms in the larger arena seem to have resulted only in changing of names and labels of initiatives, while the underlying paradigmatic approaches of many actors prevailed. For example when the term 'austerity' becomes politically incorrect, it is replaced with 'efficiency' without any policy change. This is also exemplified by the fact that to some actors in the Global South's arena the term good governance is just as other aid conditionality, and is therefore viewed the same way Structural Adjustment Programs were viewed (Doornbos, 2001; Mkandawire, 2007). In sum, could all these explain why many actions aimed at or purporting to improve the lives of the urban poor in fact end up worsening the situation further, deepening further the layers of exploitation of the poor? Therefore, with these actors possibly have different paradigmatic positions standing in the way of attaining common ground and effective cooperation, tackling these perpetual urban challenges in the Global South necessitates an appreciation of the actors' relations, actions and interactions, taking into account their different frames of reference and stands, as this could lead to an appropriate multi-level urban governance system, geared towards sustainable and inclusive urbanisation.

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