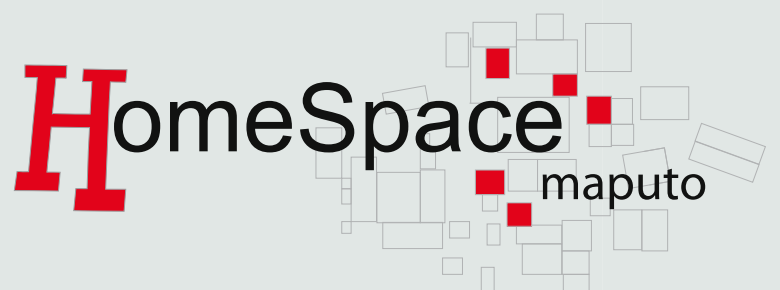


Executive summary

Synthesis Report

Prof. Paul Jenkins





Introduction

This study focuses primarily on the physical aspects of urban development, but draws on inter-disciplinary forms of knowledge to base improved understanding and possible new conceptual development. It raises key queries which are fundamentally derived from current policy and praxis concerning urban development in cities in the global South, and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular – especially the following:

Given that urbanisation is such an important phenomenon, why is urban development not a focus of more national development policies and strategies?

- Why do strategic approaches to urban development generally not recognise emerging peri-urban forms as valid and work with these, rather than assuming these need to be replaced, as the majority of urban space now displays such urban characteristics – and these have existed for some time, with the associated urban forms growing much faster than more ‘traditional’ forms of urban space (largely shaped by Northern experience)?
- What should be the focus for the state’s role and responsibilities in urban development, given its relative weakness in many countries, as maintaining the state basis for most aspects of ‘formal’ urban development tends to lead to *de jure* and *de facto* exclusion of the majority of urban residents who are thus ‘informalised’?
- Is the re-emergence of the concept of ‘slum’ in development discourse of any use, as in fact this has not significantly changed international and/or national approaches to what are normatively defined as urban

deficits, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa where it has had a minimal, or even primarily negative, impact?.

- In the light of limited state capacity, can state-led physical planning, such as developed in the North and transferred to the South, have any success if it does not engage with the wider population and their concepts of land use and rights, as well as engage with those entities which work closely with the wider urban population (through land use control activities seen as 'informal' and/or 'traditional')?

The substantive evidence base presented in the report to discuss the above focuses on peri-urban residents' perceptions and actions, as related initially through a series of representative Life Stories, which illustrate the deeper and wider analysis of empirical material of the research programme. The Life Stories are followed in the Report by an integrated summary of findings from the four components of the programme (physical, socio-economic, ethnographic and contextual studies). These key findings are summed up in six points as follows.

The impact of urbanisation – and the perceived nature of 'urban'

The studies of the programme clearly demonstrate that the fast growing peri-urban population in Maputo generally consider themselves to be urban dwellers, and see their way of life as distinctive in relation to previous, often rural, experiences. It is in this urban context that peri-urban residents imagine their futures will continue to develop, with the city evolving constantly, albeit in a different urban form from the core central area. In the majority of cases they do not aspire to the way of life of the central city – and the most often cited ideal bairros are those on the urban periphery. However they do not refer to the areas they live in as 'suburban', and – as 'peri-urban' is essentially a physical definition - the study suggests that 'proto-urban' is perhaps a better concept for the form of emergent urbanism. Time will tell whether these areas are indeed the antecedents of suburban, or something which needs a different label as a new urban form.

This urbanism is clearly based on a sense of social order, expressed in practices which themselves are in flux. These reflect many influences, not

just those of physical proximity, but also the growing dominance of monetary exchange, employment and changing family structure. However, another component of urbanism embedded within the values highlighted by many respondents is the desire for a sense of physical order. Importantly, however, it is not only the state that is seen as being able to provide this, although state actors are quite involved at neighbourhood level. This sense of physical order is actually also manifested in 'unplanned' areas, and on-going land demarcation is itself a clear manifestation of social order.

The dominant points of reference for peri-urban residents

The manifestation of an underlying social order is also closely associated with the sense of security of tenure. Despite providing legal land tenure being the official role of the municipality, in fact the main forms of sense of security in the peri-urban areas are traditional / long term land rights; the fact that everyone is in the same situation; and especially some form of documented engagement with the local bairro authorities. These documents more often than not have no 'formal' legal basis (other than property ownership and residency), but are seen as legitimising occupation and property rights. While a few residents seem to be aware of the difference between land and building 'ownership' / rights, these are usually integrated in practice.

In all of the above, the respondents are aware they are taking part in creating an urban environment, however they have a limited perception of the role of the municipality in officially planning this environment – and where people have experience of this it is often not positive. They generally do not see the state as providing the urban space, infrastructure and form they need and are often dismissive of the potential for the state to resolve their needs in this (as other) regards. In this context urban planning as a dominantly state activity (which is the basis for the current legislation

and practice of the government – including access to secure land titles) is far from the reality or perception on the ground.

In general there is no sense of the peri-urban areas being ‘informal’ – i.e. as something that is not regulated by the state. This is also true of the concept of ‘slum’, with no-one considering they live in a slum, despite these areas almost wholly falling in this category by the UN definition. Residents are very aware of the deficiencies of their neighbourhoods, but many see on-going progress in providing better urban spaces over time (generally through so-called ‘informal’ activity), although it is recognised that some get squeezed out or constrained in these market-oriented processes.

Overall, therefore, the dominant point of reference for peri-urban dwellers is their family, neighbours and local neighbourhood authority – not the municipality or central state. People’s perception of who ‘builds the city’ is that this is the residents - and those who service them, mainly private entrepreneurs. The sense of security and rights to hold land is thus predominantly a social process underpinned by the local neighbourhood administration (through witnessing of documents), not the legal state allocation of title processes. This is reinforced by the local mechanisms used to resolve most land disputes.

Factors that condition *home spaces* and are conditioned by them in turn

A significant part of the ‘progress’ that residents generally see happening is that which they directly contribute to through their day-to-day practices of home-making. As is evidenced over and over again – by the poorest as well as the most rich - people put enormous value on home-making as a spiritual, emotional and social activity, as much as a necessary physical one. Home-making practices absorb nearly all savings and investment and clearly reflect the importance of family structures and cultural values, and thus ‘urbanism as a way of life’ for these residents is portrayed in their home-making over relatively long periods of time due to the economic constraints. These are generally not life stories of despair – but of hope. Given the proportion of domestic savings these represent, *home spaces* thus have a very important embedded economic value. Here again, the majority save and finance building on their own and with wider family assistance – not through formal savings institutions - and hence the dominant reference point is social and based around family. However, the accumulated value of this domestic saving is significant at city and even national level, although not seen as ‘formal’ or even ‘legal’ and hence potentially at risk.



How these issues are translated into space and form

Home spaces play an extremely important social and economic role and thus the values embedded within these emerge in physical space and form – most manifested in terms of multiple forms of space use indoors and outdoors, but also increasing specialisation of space function. The result is multiple residency in many of the plots through more than one house construction, although still maybe one household unit in a social and economic sense. Increased access to infrastructure assists with this spatial specialisation, but it is also driven by changing social relations within peri-urban society and within families and households – and multiple manifestations of these relations are embedded in emerging *home spaces*.

The resulting *home spaces* embed complex changing household, wider family and social structures as well as cultural values – and are manifested in architecture, construction, landscape, interior decoration, and the ways of life such objects reflect, permit and constrain. The overall house and plot development forms emerging – as evidenced in the physical surveys – can be seen as progressive, and while generally not confirming to state norms, represent generally quite acceptable forms of living space,

including from a public health point of view. However – while it is fairly clear that this has happened to some extent in a context of a lack of direct state engagement - it is not clear that such tendencies are likely to remain benign. There is some evidence of poorer people being increasingly excluded through the processes of land commodification and the rising costs of living and home-making.

Home space aspirations and decision-making

People's aspirations are very much those of their household and family, filtered by the values of neighbours and wider society. While social networks, and especially kinship networks, play a dominant role, with lesser roles of social support through churches and local neighbourhood authorities, this does not mean this is a benign or equitable system without friction. Peri-urban residents become adept at perceiving and assessing risks, and managing the consequences of decision-making. This is played out in a constantly changing context and requires multiple actions in complex social networks inside and outside the family, only a few engaging with the state. Naturally such diverse networks accommodate many different sets of values and these constantly create friction and can erupt in conflict.

The nature of the *home spaces* that people build through daily praxis and over time reflect socio-cultural values of first generation in-migrants to urban areas, but these are changing as social and cultural values change, including new values of urban-born generations. The value of what 'home' means in this context thus is also changing – but not diminishing. In fact it is strengthening as perhaps the one constant in many people's lives. This has immense implications not only for society and the economy, but also for political stability, where any sustained threat to home-making processes by the majority could have serious consequences.



The significance of multiple *home space* creation for the city and Sub-Saharan African cities more generally

While the research programme examines Maputo as a case study of wider significance for Sub-Saharan Africa, it reports specifically on key issues that arise from the research for urban development in Mozambique. Here the study documents the accelerating physical urban expansion, well beyond urban boundaries, noting this is also associated with strong housing consolidation as well as horizontal and vertical densification. It highlights the very weak state presence on the ground – whether of the municipality or central government, certainly as far as everyday practices of urban physical development are concerned. The majority of urban residents have a strong sense of security of tenure and invest heavily in this consolidation. Access to urban infrastructure (water, electricity, public transport) has also improved dramatically in the past 10-20 years, but is also not predominantly state-led – and there are real deficiencies in road access and associated drainage (causing erosion). The dominant urban form emerging may represent the gradual development of suburban areas, but these are likely to remain ‘incomplete’ in relation to prevalent urban norms for considerable time – and thus the ‘proto-urban’ form needs to be seen as valid in its own right.

Residents expressed strong ideas of what they consider the ideal homes and preferred urban locations to which they aspire – and these generally are reasonable in relation to issues of public health and order – despite limited state engagement. The role of the state therefore should be to guide the dominant *de facto* ‘bottom-up’ urban development and not aspire to replace it with one based on generally unattainable norms. Currently relations between the growing number of landlords and tenants are not particularly exploitative, and again socio-cultural norms are more effective than state regulation in this area. The growing *de facto* commodification of land however is leading to more speculative and investment and multiple land holdings, not only for higher income groups. The urbanisation process is changing social structure and forms of social-based welfare, and this may lead to more critical socioeconomic situation in future, especially if the urban poor become landless. Overall the study highlights the need to work with the urban development process which is taking place, as the capacity for the municipality to control this is very limited – and this also means engaging with the lowest level of local (neighbourhood) authority, which plays an active supporting role in urban development in practice.

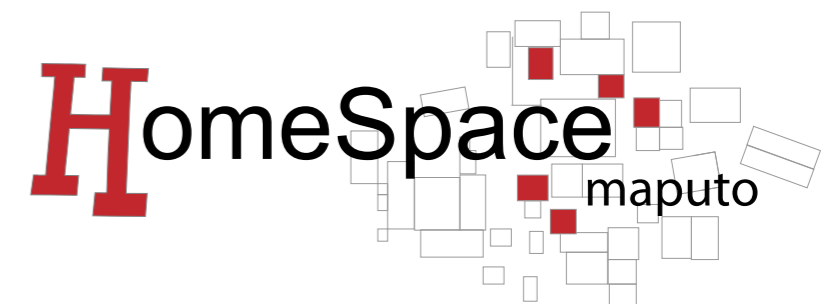
In general – as evidenced in detail in the Context Report - the in-depth study of the Maputo case study area can be seen as highly representative of the rest of the city and metropolitan area of Maputo-Matola. It can also be seen to be quite highly representative of probably trends in other urban areas of Mozambique. It is likely to be less representative in some aspects of other urban areas in the macro-region, however, and here further research is necessary – although such eventual findings are likely to display many similar characteristics of the importance of *home spaces* in the creation of the rapidly expanding cities of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Concluding comments on the nature of knowledge

In concluding the report discusses the nature of knowledge that has been sought through this research – highlighting that this stresses the value of the knowledge of the city dwellers – the role of research being to document this rigorously and analyse this according to key concepts. The study has undertaken this, querying some of the received policy and practice as noted above, arguing that only by understanding the endogenous value of urban development can policy and practice adequately engage with this – as the dominant policies and practice on urban planning, land rights and housing development have had such limited impact in Sub-Saharan African cities over the past decades. This is all the more urgent given the accelerating rates of urbanisation.

The research programme has engaged with potential users of this research at various times throughout the implementation of the component studies, and the publication of these and this Synthesis report is seen as another stage of exchanging the knowledge developed here with that of others involved in creating new urban space and form in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Although the study has not set out to be normative, some recommendations concerning possible relevance of the findings for policy and practice in urban development are made by the author for different potential audiences, drawing on the empirical research – but also four decades of working in Sub-Saharan African cities (and in Mozambique since 1980).



This document draws on the research programme 'Home Space in African Cities', funded by the Danish Research Council for Innovation 2009-2011, under the management of Prof. Jorgen Eskemose Andersen of the School of Architecture, Copenhagen.

The programme was based on a conception and research design by Prof. Paul Jenkins of the School of the Built Environment, Heriot-Watt University / Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

It was implemented in partnership between the above institutions (led by Professors Andersen and Jenkins) and the Centre of African Studies at the ISCTE- Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (represented by Dr. Ana Bénard da Costa) and the centre for Development of Habitat Studies in the Faculty of Architecture and Physical Planning, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique (represented by Prof. Dr. Luis Lage , Prof. Julio Carrilho and Dr. Carlos Trinidad) and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (represented by Dr. Adriano Biza).

The fieldwork was undertaken with participation of students of architecture and anthropology from Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, and had key involvement from architect Silje Sollien and anthropologist Judite Chipenembe.

Generous support from the Mozambican director of the Faculty of Architecture and Physical Planning, and time donated by Edinburgh and Lisbon institutions for their academics' inputs have been a key aspect of the programme's success.

Layout: Anders Bjerregaard-Andersen. Images and logo: Silje Sollien

Maputo, Mozambique 2012

