

URBAN AGE CONFERENCE

GOVERNING URBAN FUTURES

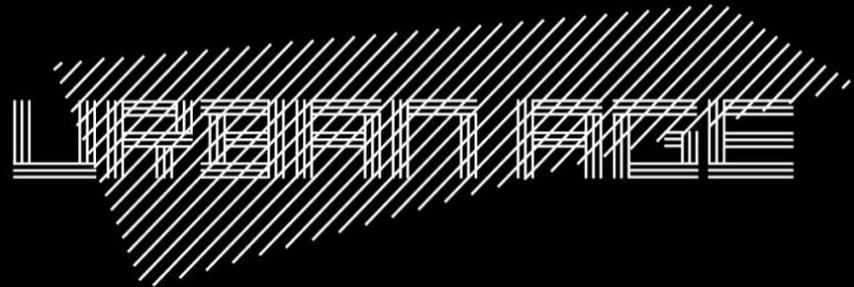
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*Governance needs government: the
case of African cities*

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Governance needs government: the case of African cities

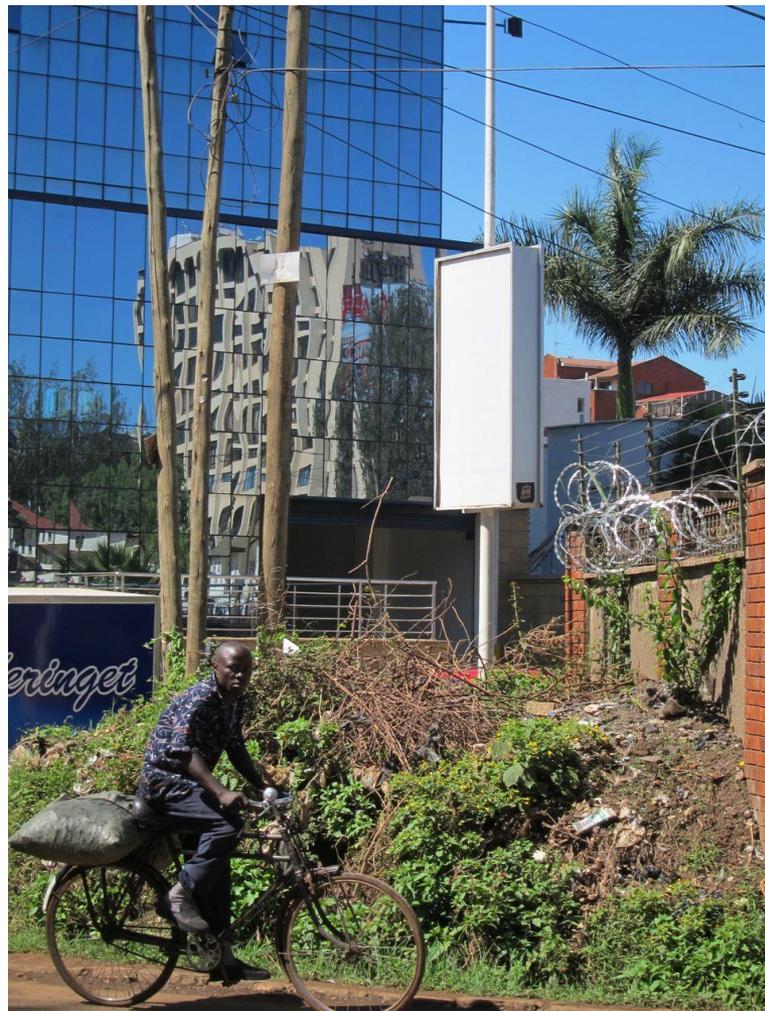
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**URBAN AGE CONFERENCE
GOVERNING URBAN FUTURES
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Nairobi, 2011



We don't talk about **government** because 'the state' is unfashionable across the political and intellectual spectrum

- The impact of neo-liberalism and the hollowing out/reduced power of the state relative to corporate developers and urban financiers
- Poor state performance and the lack of its legitimacy across cities – anti-modernism & the fragility of established electoral democracy
- The push for participation and the increased role for civil society and other parties in urban management

Realities of government for African cities

1. Central government is typically anti-urban or uncertain about what exactly to do about cities

2. Local government is non existent, weak &/ or under-resourced

- Does not have fiscal or legal jurisdiction over peri-urban settlements or residents
- Competes for authority in the city with cor traditional authorities, central government gangs, criminals & civil society
- Faces huge (unfunded) expectations from citizens to build, manage & improve rapidly growing cities that have complex problems

**GIVEN THESE PROBLEMS WHY
LOOK TO THE STATE?**



Why GOVERNMENT is becoming fashionable for (African) urbanists

- Neo-liberalism may not have been as pervasive or as complete as first thought.
- Where neo liberalism stripped the state problems have emerged and the state is being invited back in (to regulate, to enforce, risk management, to provide big long term infrastructure etc.)
- There are some things only states can do - so there is no alternative but to struggle for improved state performance in core areas of urban development
- The state remains the object of most urban politics
- Limits to participation and governance have been acknowledged – especially in large cities
- Construction, especially in large metros, means mega projects & bulk service provision requiring finance and technical capacity that is beyond households and communities

What reinserting the state does to (African) urban politics

- ❑ Puts a focus on political parties
- ❑ Puts the focus on the democratic process at the city scale
- ❑ Puts the issue of what to do with traditional leaders and informality high on the urban agenda
- ❑ Puts the focus on the design, implementation & enforcement of the urban regulatory regime

Africa's Urban Age Needs (inclusive) GOVERNMENT

