

# Actors and Modes of Governance of Cities in Africa

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**Abstract:- Africa is characterized by strong urbanization and is accompanied by multiple challenges in terms of urban governance by different actors according to the political contexts on the continent. Thus, this article, essentially based on a theoretical study, aims to better understand the main actors and methods of urban management in Africa. This investigation shows that African cities are managed by a multitude of actors, including public actors, Technical and Financial Partners, private sector actors and populations. Moreover, these actors use governance strategies that can be summed up, among other things, by urban policies, urban planning instruments and tools. Despite the existence of these urban management methods, the study shows that they currently have limits in terms of spatial governance.**

**Keywords:-** *Cities, urban governance actors, urban management policies, Africa.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a global and irreversible process. It results in an accelerated growth of the world's urban population. In 1700, this urban population comprised approximately 8% of the world's population, or 47 million. In 1910, it had risen to 19% or 335 million. In 1950, 33% of the population was urban, i.e. 724 million, and in 2006 the threshold of 50% of the world's population was reached [1].

However, urbanization is more or less advanced depending on the continent. It is very advanced in the countries of the North, with three quarters of the population living in cities, and is currently experiencing its full development in the countries of the South. According to the [2], by 2050, Africa is expected to experience the fastest urban growth rate in the world. By this time, African cities should be home to an additional 950 million people. This growth is largely taking place in small and medium-sized towns. Indeed, in 2010, Africa exceeded one billion inhabitants, of which 400 million (or 40%) lived in urban areas. According to estimates, 50% of the African population will live in cities in 2035 and 58% in 2050 [3].

This rapid urbanization of the African continent, out of step with economic growth, is creating enormous difficulties for cities. Indeed, the growth of the population of African cities is everywhere accompanied by a peripheral extension [4]. We are then witnessing a growth, more or less rapid, of unplanned neighborhoods or spontaneous housing. For example, 72% of urban dwellers in sub-Saharan Africa live in slums. This situation ranks the region second in this area after Southern Central Asia [5]. In addition, the extreme poverty of the populations of African cities, linked to the predominance of the informal sector in these cities,

constitutes a real economic challenge for the authorities. Also, urban structures are deficient [6]. Thus the rapidity of urban growth, the spatial sprawl of cities, the lack of financial means of municipal authorities explain the shortcomings of collective equipment (transport, water, energy, waste, education and health) which make life difficult for the inhabitants. Large African urban units [7]. Added to this are the ecological risks linked to natural and sometimes technological disasters, the consequences of which are harmful [8].

Faced with these problems, the colonial administration and, later, the national administrations endeavored to control urban growth and to organize it. Urban management strategies are implemented [9] by different actors according to the political contexts on the continent.

Thus, this article, essentially based on a theoretical study, aims to better understand the main actors and methods of urban management in Africa. In other words, this investigation based on documentary research makes it possible, on the one hand, to identify the main actors of governance and, on the other hand, to study the management strategies of cities on the African continent.

## II. SEVERAL ACTORS IN THE GOVERNANCE OF AFRICAN CITIES

Major African cities are managed by a multitude of actors, including public actors, Technical and Financial Partners, private sector actors and populations. These actors often have relations of supervision, competition, cooperation, association or partnership [10]. As part of this research, their role is analyzed in the context of decentralization.

### A. Public actors

The public actors who intervene in the management of cities are essentially made up of the central State on the one hand and the decentralized State on the other.

Concerning the central State, the governance of large African cities requires its involvement at a higher level as the main driving force. As a result, the central State, through the government and the various ministerial departments intervening directly or indirectly in the field of town planning and housing and the organizations under its supervision, plays a leading role in the design, development and implementation of urban strategies at the national level. According to [11], the central state has a fundamental role in terms of redistribution, design, and monitoring of equalization mechanisms within the national framework. A role of arbitration concerning the choices conditioning the use of urban space, the operation of services and the allocation of resources. The objective is to have, according

to [12], a more legitimate, transparent State with a great sense of responsibility and national service which can carry out the three main missions:

- Chart the path that can lead to economic growth. It is a question of finding a new balance between the respective roles of the public and private sectors, where the responsibility of the State would be essentially centered on the functions of sovereignty, the provision of physical and social infrastructures, and the creation of an enabling environment for private and public productive activities. This role would also include facilitating access to economic data and information as well as developing effective regulatory capacity, in order to prevent monopolies, minimize political interference in economic management, and other aberrant practices;
- Broaden participation in the development process. The aim would be to guarantee the effective participation of the population in the decision-making process, access to information, respect for the rule of law, and equal opportunities in the economic field;
- Reconnect the State to civil society. This reconnection consists of building a governance system that is more pluralistic and participatory. This means greater delegation, and decentralization to local communities, to create more real synergy and partnership between central government institutions and those of local and traditional governments.

Nowadays, the central State appears doubly threatened because its powers seem to be amputated by globalization on the one hand and by decentralization movements on the other. This double movement invites us to rethink the place and position of the State in management [13].

Regarding the decentralized State, it is represented by the local authorities. For example, in Burkina Faso, the territorial community is a subdivision of the territory endowed with legal personality and financial autonomy. It constitutes an entity for the organization and coordination of development. The local authorities are the region and the commune in Burkina Faso [14], but each country has its own territorial division which is not necessarily identical to Burkina Faso.

Local authorities are the main players at the local level in the implementation of any housing and urban development policy. In this sense, the development of municipal and civic culture is essential [15]. As such, the town is a school of civics, a center of initiation for life. One city is distinguished from another by the dynamism of municipal management, by the creative spirit of its city officials, by their dedication to the cause of their constituents. As former President Senghor of Senegal points out, who believes that the Commune should be the first framework for responsible popular participation and that a sound municipal policy should safeguard the interests of the community while preparing the citizens in a hard and pure effort, to their permanent role as agents of development [16].

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[16] specifies that the procedures for implementing the aid allocated differ from one agency to another, but the objectives targeted remain the same. According to the author, the first objective is to strengthen the administrative and technical structures of the new African local authorities, by assisting the States in the legislative and regulatory implementation of decentralization and by providing means for the training of elected officials and executives. municipalities, in particular within the framework of regional programmes. The second is to promote the mobilization of resources, in particular of tax origin, by assisting the States or local authorities in the reorganization of their tax systems, by supporting the creation and management of databases for tax purposes, and by financing setting up loan funds for local authorities. The third, finally, is to improve the financial and technical management capacity of the municipalities, so that they gradually become responsible for improving the living environment of the

inhabitants and for developing the infrastructure and equipment needed to increase the economic productivity of the urban sector.

Moreover, in the countries of the South, especially in Africa, the tendency is to question the Central State because its power is often decried, its legitimacy controversial and its authority remains to be demonstrated [13]. In this context, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) very often provide support in the governance of cities in this part of the world. These NGOs are generally linked to international donors like the World Bank or with Western cooperation organizations like OXFAM and Quebec II [20].

These international NGOs are at times used as intermediaries for the financing and technical support of African civil society organizations for development.

Thus, [16] shows the different forms of intervention of large international NGOs and the areas of intervention. He believes that Northern NGOs have adopted three different behaviors. Some have created NGOs from scratch in the South, others have decided to disengage from action in the field by encouraging locals to take over by creating autonomous structures and, finally, others have accompanied the maturation embryonic organizations of beneficiaries. As for areas of intervention, NGOs took their first steps at a time when the major problem to be solved was that of hunger. Today, they have evolved and become close to the city, in three registers. It is first of all about the accompaniment of the poorest in the fields of health, education, management of the problems experienced by children. Then that of support for urban struggles and finally, later that of the environment. In addition, several NGOs (such as Action Contre la Faim, Triangle, Solidarités, Enfants du Monde et Droits de l'Homme, Force d'Action Rapide, Congress of Racial Equality, Child War, etc.) denounce violent urban policies and explain that it would be wiser for the State to build housing rather than intervene so brutally [13].

In short, despite these denunciations, NGOs are actors to be taken into account in urban management in Africa because they very often accompany the central State and especially the municipalities. In terms of support in the management of cities on the African continent, it is necessary to integrate the Technical and Financial Partners. Today, in addition to these actors already mentioned, populations are involved in the governance of African cities.

#### *B. Technical and Financial Partners and private sector actors*

Technical and Financial Partners as well as private sector actors are significant players in the governance of cities in Africa.

Indeed, there are a multitude of partners with whom municipalities can work to develop actions and development projects [17]. Most of them are technical and financial partners for development. These are, on the one hand, multilateral partners such as the World Bank, the European Union, the UNDP, the African Development Bank, UN-Habitat and, on the other hand, bilateral cooperation such as

the French Development Agency (FDA), the North/South cooperation agreements signed between the cities of the North and those of the South, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDC), the Partnership for Municipal Development (PMD) and the GTZ (German cooperation).

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### C. *The populations*

In the context of decentralization and democratization, the participation of the population in the management of the city would be essential.

The populations are represented by the civil society which is embodied mainly by the associative movement which plays a role of mediation between them and the State [21]. For this reason, the associative dynamics of urban development are most often born from the will of the populations to take charge of their problems, to face the crisis. They emerge especially on the initiative of groups of young people and women concerned with improving their living conditions and who ask for the support of external actors [16]. Thanks to this support and the access it allows to external funding, these self-organizing movements have established themselves as major interlocutors and have probably been a job-creating sector over the past twenty years [22].

For [23], it was the evolution of the national contexts of many African countries during the 1990s and, more indirectly, that of the global political environment, which gave rise to unprecedented opportunities for participation. Popular and institutional to local development. The populations then organize themselves into urban associative movements (associations, groups, federations of groups, cooperatives, community organizations, small NGOs) and participate in the management of cities through a multitude of works and practices. socio-economic, political, environmental and cultural issues.

If the management of large African cities involves a spiral of actors, there is however a lack of coherent coordination between them. The power of the State always seems central and the local authorities are most often left behind. Large African cities are most often divided into autonomous districts within the framework of decentralization. However, these districts remain increasingly dependent on the central town hall. Associative movements are growing in the sphere of actors, leading to a complexification of actors. The intervention of large NGOs is often seen by African states as interference. The state is increasingly losing its authority following the resurgence of civil society. However, a better coordination of the actors is essential for a good elaboration of the instruments and tools of urban management.

## III. URBAN MANAGEMENT METHODS IN AFRICA

These include urban policies, urban planning instruments and tools and their limits in the development of cities.

### A. *Urban policies*

Urban policies in developing countries and in particular in African countries have been strongly marked by the colonial imprint and then by the austerity policies of the Breton Wood institutions. Most of these policies are assimilated to urban planning policies [24]. In addition, urban policies in Africa constitute isolated actions or interventions in well-defined sectors that come under sectorial policies [6]. Thus some positive results were recorded.

According to [25], both before and after independence, the public authorities endeavored to "produce" housing, through state or mixed companies, housing assistance, subsidies, special funds, etc. This was the task of bodies such as the Office of African Cities in the Belgian Congo, the real estate company of FEA (French Equatorial Africa), the real estate company of Cameroon, the real estate company of green Cap and the Office of LRH (low-rent housing) in Senegal. This system still works, in various forms such as the National Housing Offices, the Housing Financial Management Company (SOGEFIMA) in Abidjan, etc. They have actually produced tens of thousands of homes, individual or in collective buildings, but still encountering some difficulties. This initiative is accompanied by a land promotion which consists in providing applicants with cheap land, it is up to them to build their accommodation, if necessary by imposing minimum rules (number of rooms, nature of materials, etc.) Like the Urban Land Equipment Company (SETU in Côte d'Ivoire).

Furthermore, [5] shows that since the end of apartheid, South Africa has invested considerable resources to guarantee decent housing for all its citizens. This through a program focused on housing assistance but also financial assistance to property developers to establish the necessary infrastructure. This commitment has ensured space, housing and services for the urban poor.

The author [16] explains that to promote and stimulate local governance, African countries have been engaged for several decades in a process of territorial decentralization. It is a political, administrative and financial process of setting up decentralized local authorities allowing shared management between the State and civil society, of local affairs. This process reflects a certain evolution of democracy in Africa. Decentralization therefore appears a priori as an instrument for facilitating and consolidating local development, breaking with the practices of centralized development, initiated and programmed without real involvement of local actors.

In addition, investments supported by the State and by aid agencies have enabled the construction of means of transport, educational and health establishments, as well as urban infrastructure and services, where the demand exists,

that is to say in large cities [24]. For example, [6] emphasizes that to achieve the objective of sustainable and equitable improvement of accessibility, Mozambique benefits from funding from the French Development Agency which relates to projects with high social impact. The country also has a drinking water improvement program for the benefit of Maputo, co-financed with the European Investment Bank and the European Commission Water Facility.

All these policies mentioned in this part are increasingly accompanied by urban management instruments on the African continent.

#### *B. Urban management instruments*

Urban management instruments are generally regulatory documents governing the planning and management of cities. It is therefore regulatory town planning which includes, depending on the town, the Master Plan for Development and Town Planning (SDAU), the Land Use Plan (POS), the subdivision plan, the strategic plan, the budget, etc.

The Master Plan for Development and Urbanism (SDAU) is an instrument for urban planning and management. It sets the fundamental long-term guidelines (around 20 years) for the development of a territory, makes it possible to identify the actions to be carried out in the medium term (10 years) and defines the general destination of the soils and the programming of major facilities [26]. In addition, it integrates and coordinates the objectives of the State, local authorities, public or private establishments in terms of sustainable urban development at municipal level [27]. It then serves as a frame of reference for planning the urban development of a given territory. It presents itself nowadays as an important urban planning document for a functional organization and the creation of relatively homogeneous sectors despite the difficulties it faces in its development and implementation [17]. [26] also points out that the Master Plan for Development and Urbanism is drawn up on a scale varying from 1/10,000 to 1/25,000. This document is drawn up for urban communities and for groups of municipalities whose development requires concerted action. It is prescribed by order of the Minister in charge of Town Planning and is carried out under the authority of the urban community or the group in accordance with the prescriptions of general interest previously brought to knowledge by the State. In general, most African cities have this type of scheme. Its implementation must be in accordance with the guidelines of the National Spatial Planning Scheme. In some countries such as Algeria, we speak of the Master Plan for Development and Urbanism [28].

As for the Land Use Plan (LUP), it is an urban planning document which sets out in detail the rights of use of the land and construction in compliance with the provisions of the Master Plan for Development and Urbanism [27]. To this end, [28] shows that it must set for the sector or sectors concerned the urban form, the organization and the building rights to the plot as well as the use of the land. It defines the minimum and maximum

quantity of authorized constructions, the types of authorized constructions and their uses. It must also determine the rules concerning the exterior appearance of buildings, delimit public space, green spaces, locations reserved for public works and installations of general interest as well as the layout and characteristics of traffic routes and must specify the easements, districts, streets, monuments and sites to be protected and finally must locate the agricultural land to be preserved and protected. For example, according to the urban planning and construction code of Burkina Faso, this instrument is an urban planning document which determines the allocation of land according to the main use to be made of it, with regard to its constructability (housing, leisure, activities, natural areas to be protected) [27]. [17] mentions that it is presented as a means of densification of urban space and is part of a sustainable development approach. It is currently being applied in many cities in southern countries.

Concerning the subdivision plan, in town, [29] notes that plots are generally defined by a subdivision plan. It establishes a division of lots of one or more landed properties with a view to the creation of dwellings, industrial and commercial establishments, etc. This instrument integrates and complies with the Land Use Plan (POS) and the Master Plan for Development and Urbanism (SDAU). The scale most often used is 1/1,000 [26].

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The scale most often used is 1/1,000 [26]. Alongside these instruments, the budget should also be taken into account, which is a provisional accounting document distinguishing income and expenditure. The budget of local authorities brings together all public revenue and expenditure for one year. For example, [31] shows that Burkina Faso has adopted the program budget, which is an explanatory document attached to the finance law that specifies the objectives of an institution, the programs that contribute to it and the resources it devotes to it.

There are therefore a multitude of essentially regulatory instruments that help in the governance of cities in Africa. These instruments in their implementation very often call upon urban management tools.

### C. Urban management tools

Urban management tools mainly concern operational urban planning. These include the GIS tool (Geographic Information System) and urban planning operations.

Regarding the Geographic Information System (GIS), with the recent technological revolution in most African countries, the GIS tool is increasingly involved in the governance of large African cities as an urban management tool. . It makes it possible to provide the geographical information necessary for the management of a territory. It also promotes the coordination of a large number of actors. It offers them rich information on the territory and its management, and even possibilities for negotiation or joint decision-making [30]. Nowadays, GIS make it possible to better understand complex urban problems and also to establish the map of land use on which appear water reservoirs and dams, vegetation, habitats, industrial areas and equipment [17]. Finally, from GIS, other urban management information systems can be developed such as the Land Information System which provides a range of geographical information on land and the urban information system.

Nowadays, the GIS tool is essential in the management of African metropolises. However, these economic, technical and logistical requirements limit its use in the management of these cities. A. Ouagadougou for example, this tool is only used at the central level and remains almost non-existent at the district level. However, the authorities would benefit from investing seriously in this tool which is very essential to the urban management of our times. The various actors of urban planning must appropriate it for a very efficient and economical computerized management. In addition, knowledge of this tool must be favored in temples of knowledge such as universities in order to initiate future development actors in its use because it is transversal.

With regard to town planning operations, which are also tools in the management of towns, the purpose of development operations is to organize the maintenance, extension or reception of housing or activities, to carry out collective facilities, to safeguard or enhance the built or unbuilt heritage and natural spaces. Urban restructuring and/or renovation, subdivisions and any other operation affecting urban land (roads and various networks, equipment, land consolidation, etc.) are therefore considered

to be development operations [26], [27]. For each type of operation, there is therefore a well-defined procedure and methods of execution.

Indeed, as shown by [26] and [28], urban restructuring is a set of development actions on spaces built in an anarchic way, degraded or made in old sectors, intended the integration of specific facilities or the improvement of the urban fabric of agglomerations. It can be total or partial. It concerns both viability networks and buildings or groups of buildings. It may include the partial destruction of blocks and a modification of the characteristics of the district by transferring activities of any kind and the decommissioning of buildings for another use. As for urban renewal, as [32] points out, it is a set of measures and development operations which consists of the total or partial demolition of an unhealthy, defective or unsuitable urban sector, for the construction of new buildings. Included in the renovation policy, the restructuring of spontaneous or unsanitary neighborhoods, the construction of housing estates and the development of commercial and administrative areas.

The purpose of restructuring and renovation is to improve the living conditions and safety of populations, with regard to the land situation, the state of buildings, access to homes, green spaces and the environment. On the other hand, they help to strengthen the functionality of the perimeters considered with regard to economic life and collective social and cultural facilities. As for the work subdivision, [17] maintains that it can be defined as the operation resulting in the division of a landed property into lots. The subdivision therefore consists of a subdivision of virgin land into plots with appropriate facilities in terms of infrastructure and collective equipment to accommodate the constructions to be carried out by future occupants. Along the same lines as [17], [26] specifies that housing estates are created on the initiative of the State, decentralized local authorities, or private, natural or legal persons, on their respective properties, and are carried out in compliance with the urban planning documents in force or, failing that, with the general town planning and construction rules. On the other hand, real estate restoration is any operation allowing the enhancement of defective buildings or groups of buildings of architectural or historical interest [26], [27]. With regard to urban consolidation, it is the operation of development which consists, in a given urban perimeter, of grouping together plots of land in order to make them suitable for new types of construction [27].

Overall, in Africa, despite the existence of urban management instruments and tools, it is important to point out that if urban strategies have been adopted to deal with the problems of cities, the fact remains that they have limits both in their development, in substance and in their implementation.

### D. The limits of urban management methods

To control the problems of urban growth and their consequences, urban planning instruments (master urban plans, development and urban planning master plans) have been drawn up like those used in the countries of the North. It is for this reason that [26] specifies that the forecasts are

simulated therein, generally with assumptions of demographic and economic growth. Unfortunately, cities are expanding faster than urban plans predict. Thus, these instruments have proven to be ineffective for two types of reasons. Inadequate means and institutional shortcomings. To this end, it must be specified that not only have the urban plans been copied from those used in the so-called developed countries without taking into account the resources that can be mobilized, the sociological environment, etc. But also, shortcomings such as the lack of qualified technical staff in local communities, a low rate of issuance of official documents, too long and complex land procedures have hampered the realization of these plans in Africa.

For example, the subdivision which is used as the main urban planning operation in African cities has unfortunately been a source of embezzlement and numerous slippages with the major consequences of the chaotic urban sprawl of cities, the premature exhaustion of urban land, the urban fabric is drained of basic urban services and related multifaceted activities and strong social tensions that have [33].

With the advent of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP), urban planning has been replaced by housing estate planning with all the inherent consequences [26]. According to [24], SAPs have made the urban crisis more acute for developing countries. The measures recommended by the SAPs have led to the privatization of public enterprises and financial services, the removal of customs barriers, the liberalization of capital markets, the drastic reduction of social expenditure and public subsidies, the respect of macroeconomic balances, etc. For all of sub-Saharan Africa, 78% of non-agricultural jobs are now in the informal sector.

At the level of decentralization, [34] mention that transfers of responsibilities to the benefit of local authorities can be observed almost everywhere, but they are rarely accompanied by an institutionalized sharing of powers. There is a lack of resources, weaknesses in management and technical know-how, an insufficient maturity of local political life are often presented by the central authorities as an obstacle to the empowerment of municipalities.

This situation is explained by the fact that the development policies of African cities were not clearly defined. They were most often summed up in spontaneous projects and programs whose execution is short-term. This is why [6] considered that these policies have serious problems with their implementation. The primary difficulty common to all Sub-Saharan African countries in the implementation of urban development policies comes down to the lack of financial resources. Also the political will is not very often clearly defined.

Furthermore, [30] adds that in a context of globalization and the creation of a world information society, new technologies are experiencing very rapid growth and are attractive to everyone. However, this technological boom does not provide ready-made solutions to development problems. Information systems in developing countries present a triple constraint in their

implementation. The constraints are first and foremost technical. They are then methodological. Finally, the impact of technologies on the development process remains conditioned by the urban policies that promote them.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study has provided a better understanding of the main actors and methods of urban governance in Africa.

Indeed, the management of large African cities integrates a certain number of actors and means of management. In the past, African cities were mainly managed by the central state. But today, with the process of decentralization underway in almost all African countries, we have the emergence of a network of actors. Decentralization, which aims to bring the citizen closer to the administrator, empowers municipalities downstream in the management of African metropolises. These basic actors are interlinked upstream by the State and its various dismemberments which are the ministerial departments and the directorates. Civil society, which plays the role of counter-power, is also very active in the decentralization process. Also in the context of decentralized cooperation, a network of private sector actors and technical and financial partners appears in the sphere of actors. This world of actors combines their efforts for better governance of African cities. Moreover, who speaks of actors also speaks of instruments and management tools because it is they who develop, adopt and apply them. Thus, several urban policies, instruments and planning tools are implemented in major African cities to meet major urban challenges. However, urban policies are generally sectorial and summary. They remain sketchy, isolated and are proving increasingly ineffective in the face of the scale of the urbanization phenomenon. Overall, in Africa, despite the existence of urban management instruments and tools, it is important to point out that if urban strategies have been adopted to deal with the problems of cities, the fact remains that they currently have limits in terms of spatial governance because African cities are still characterized by strong population growth, which remains out of step with economic development.

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