Keywords: New Towns, planned city, inclusivity, adaptability, sustainability, landscape-based design

Urbanism / (Design as Politics)

Area of Research: African New Towns

Research Summary: Most contemporary African new towns are developed with a single, myopic target: short term financial profit. As a result, they are not ecologically resilient, socially robust, or adaptive over the long term. While contemporary developers begin planning with a cost-benefit analysis, this research proposes to invert that process by taking the existing (physical, social and governance) landscape(s) as a starting point for design thinking. Applying both scalar and temporal understandings of relationships among various urban and natural processes, an analytical framework is used to identify challenges related to new town planning. Illustrative typologies are analyzed within the framework. Using an integrated approach that envisions symbiotic operative landscape infrastructures rather than divorced layers, this research provides a transdisciplinary roadmap for inclusive, sustainable, future African new towns in the form of a series of planning principles with potential for real world application. This set of planning principles will be specific to new towns as an urban form, but general enough to be applied across the varied and diverse African continent.

Research Methodology:

The research employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies including extensive fieldwork, interviews with stakeholders, data analysis, morphological analysis, comparative case studies, and a real-world test site for resulting planning principles.

Key Publications:


Main Question: How can we use the complexity of urban landscape infrastructures to enable more inclusive planning and spatial justice in African new towns?

Deliverables: The results of the research will include a set of planning principles for future African new towns, as well as a real-world pilot project in collaboration with UN-Habitat.

Link(s): www.urbananecdote.org

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