Chapter 30

Infrastructure Governance at Sub-National Level:
The Case of Kampala City in Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Although infrastructure-dependent services are increasingly provided through subnationalised forms of authority, the current discourse largely focuses on financing challenges at national to regional scales. This macro outlook of infrastructure governance assumes that, once central government agencies have drawn partnerships with intergovernmental counterparts, followed by financing to subnational agencies, municipal authorities will be in a position to implement projects that respond to the differing needs of urban residents. This obscures the multi-layered nature of infrastructure governance at municipal level intercepted by gender differences in end-user needs across urban sectors. The chapter presents the challenges faced by Kampala city in Uganda, in the context of not only formalized infrastructure governance, but also non-statist forms of authority and informal practices that give center stage to the agency of men relative to women in altering local service provision dynamics to the benefit of their needs and expectations.

DEFINING THE INFRASTRUCTURE-CITY GOVERNANCE NEXUS

Infrastructure – more specifically transport, sanitation, water, and recreation facilities – is essential to all realms of livability and sustainable city management. This chapter focuses on the conceptual elements that characterize the relationship between infrastructure and governance, in the context of subnationalized forms of authority, particularly municipal agencies, whose ideological orientation and mandate is to implement projects with oversight and financing from central government agencies. The chapter views governance as the institutions, mechanisms, and processes, within and outside government

structures, through which economic, political, and administrative authority is exercised. This definition builds on literature arguing that governance has gone beyond the statist understanding to include forms of authority that make the city work beyond (or sometimes despite) the modern state (Frangoudes, Marugán-Pintos, & Pascual-Fernández, 2008; Fung, 2006; Johnson & Osborne, 2003; Pestoff, Brandsen, & Verschuere, 2013). Indeed, this denotes a transgressive account of governance, in which those who supposedly adhere to laws and policies inadvertently shape the link between policy and public action, by demonstrating alternative solutions to the multiple causes and consequences of deficiencies in infrastructure and service provision. This form of transgressive governance is characterized by efforts that challenge but also complement traditional state-centered forms of policy implementation – such as non-state forms of authority that operate urban service delivery through neighborhood groups, citizen coalitions, associations of informal transport operators, federations of city traders, and associations of waste collectors and drain cleaners citations needed (Engqvist and Lantz 2008). Focusing on the daily practices of these non-state actors within the context of sub-national governance, urban scholars have highlighted the multiple ways in which non-state practices articulate (or not) with formalized norms, regulations, and policy instruments.

For example, access to public space in Bogotá is the result of negotiation and "co-regulation" by the association of operators and government organizations, accompanied by professionalization of informal operators (Heinrichs, Goletz, & Lenz, 2016). In Kibera, Kenya's largest urban slum, youth-based associations empowered citizens to use GPS technology to collect data and plot infrastructure-related challenges, then used the collected information to influence policy and development by advocating for their needs (Graesholm, 2012). In Kampala, Uganda's capital and largest city, Buyana and Lwasa (2011) found that low-income neighborhood groups took the initiative to extract and add value to materials from the waste stream, thereby illustrating the gradual shift from dependency on municipal councils to neighborhood interdependencies in the management of urban waste.

This chapter seeks to draw from these transgressive articulations of governance and their unregulated practices to situate infrastructure governance at the subnational level within informal settings. The emphasis is on how informal practices of transport services, recreation, sanitation, and physical-space use emerge, and their link to women's relative to men's utilization of infrastructure in meeting commercial and domestic needs. Using evidence from Kampala city in Uganda, the chapter analyzes transgressive practices amongst municipal authorities, where city administrators make informal decisions to the benefit of their technical teams and political constituencies, and finally it demonstrates how this shapes the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects.

THE MULTI-LAYERED NATURE OF MUNICIPAL ROLES IN INFRASTRUCTURE GOVERNANCE

The formalized standpoint on infrastructure governance in terms of regulatory reform includes spending and revenue mobilization powers, borrowing restrictions and practices, and the degree of autonomy in project management. While this has gained prominence at global, regional, and national scales, the challenges faced by municipal agencies, especially in medium-sized urban settings, have not been given in-depth attention in cross-country studies and reports. Yet many countries in the developing world also known as global south have increasingly decentralized the responsibility of infrastructure services to municipal agencies, by creating either autonomous or semi-autonomous meso-authorities. These authori-

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