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Livability and Social Exclusion in African Cities: Reviewing Key Shaping Factors and Intervention Strategies

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Abstract

More people now believe that enhancing a city's liveability will improve the quality of life for city dwellers, especially those from developing countries. African cities suffer severe problems with livability and social exclusion, and resolving these problems requires understanding the main determinants and intervention techniques. Previous researchers have viewed social exclusion and liveability separately, however, their connection in Africa is remarkable. Urban liveability and social exclusivity have been severely impacted across Africa due to rapid urbanisation and many economic, social, and environmental concerns. Using narrative systematic review techniques, this study reviewed previous studies, capturing relevant and current trends and emphasising the adverse effects and possible action plans to lessen social isolation and enhance livability in African cities. It underlines the significance of inclusive and sustainable methods to improve urban dwellers' livability. The study found that the recent COVID-19 pandemic, war, insecurity and insurgency across African cities affect social inclusiveness and livability. The current state of African cities requires more than urban planners and policymakers. There is a need for proactive urban governance, alleviating poverty through empowerment, political stability and the will to bring about liveable cities with social inclusiveness in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: Liveability in African Cities, Social Inclusion, Urbanisation, Social Exclusivity

Introduction

The urban livability concept is the eternal pursuit of an ideal city for people (Zhan et al., 2018). It has persisted in policy discussions for over 50 years, influencing global urban strategy and actions (Mcarthur & Robin, 2019). Liveability refers to the total contribution of the urban surroundings to the resident's quality of life or well-being (Kasim et al., 2021a). It is also described as the human living environment, including natural and built surroundings, societal equality and stability, economic success, educational opportunities, and cultural,

entertainment, and recreational opportunities (Holden & Scerri, 2013). In other words, pleasant, secure, accessible, and supportive of human growth is liveability, that includes components of the house, the surrounding area, and the city that support welfare, economic possibilities, health, and recreation activities {Formatting Citation}. Urban life is confronted with many challenges; foremost among them are social exclusiveness in cities, which are at risk due to persistent crime and violence, social and geographical inequalities, and an absence of economic possibilities for the poor and disadvantaged minorities. The absence or refusal of resources, rights, goods, and amenities, as well as being unable to engage in the typical interactions and activities that are accessible for the majority of individuals in society, are all aspects of the problem known to be social marginalization (A Anyachebelu, 2019).

Conversely, Social inclusion connotes improving participation in society, particularly for disadvantaged people, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice, and respect for rights (UN, 2016). Notwithstanding, these difficulties also serve as the foundation for novel fixes that will make the future more livable, indicating a strong link between livability and social exclusivity, especially in Africa. The functioning of important urban structures and procedures in the towns where individuals live and work determines liveability, and there are several indicators in the literature that measure and evaluate the degree of liveability in African cities (Giap, 2014).

The current African urbanisation contributes immensely to these livability and social exclusion under discourse, and the reasons are not far-fetched. With 1.4 billion individuals (as of 2022), or about 15% of the world's population, the continent of Africa is second in both size and population. According to projections, metropolitan areas will predominate in Africa by 2030 (Kasim et al., 2021b; UN-HAaBITAT, 2009). However, the urbanism experienced in African cities should be positive transformational momentum for job creation, societal, social, and cultural value integration, and improved human settlement design and functioning (UN-HABITAT, 2011). Regrettably, this pattern of urbanisation is termed the "urbanisation of poverty." It has been linked to migration from the hinterland brought on by the lack of adequate job opportunities, famine, crisis/war, political unrest, and environmental destruction (Dodman et al., 2017; Titz & Chiotha, 2019). African urban areas may undergo a growth of slum communities (Arimah, 2001), struggle to accommodate their growing population, fail to create jobs necessary to improve livelihoods, and experience extreme poverty, inequalities, exclusion, and violence, as well as deterioration of the ecosystems (Cobbinah & Darkwah, 2017). Very few African cities are livable, as Figure 1 indicates liveable and slum city views. The primary determinants of urban areas' health, safety, and livability are transportation, land use patterns, demographics, building density, and easy obtaining vital products and services without which physical and mental health suffer.

According to the 2022 global liveability index EIU (2022), the bottom six cities in their rankings are mainly steady. Based on the previous data, Syria's capital, Damascus, has the poorest living circumstances. Tripoli in Libya, Lagos in Nigeria, and Algiers in Algeria are also near the bottom of the list due to their persistently poor performance in all five categories. The lowest rankings of the six cities are attributed to wars, conflicts, and terrorism (EIU, 2022). Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic has mainly influenced the EIU's worldwide liveability ratings during the last two years, with restrictions and social isolation measures impacting scores for culture, education, and healthcare in places worldwide. However, this has returned to normal in the most recent poll as several countries have relaxed their limitations (EIU, 2022).

Figure 1: Liveable and Slum City Views in Africa (Source: The African Exponent)

There is a current concern because Africa's present infrastructure shortcomings make these cities less livable (Echendu & Okafor, 2021). Although, previous studies and literature reviews have focused on liveability and social exclusion separately. For instance, on liveability, Kasim et al (2021b) assessed urban livability in Africa, focusing on the issues and remedies, while Mohit & Iyanda (2016) studied Nigerian Liveability and Low-Income Housing. Also, on social inclusion, Titz & Chiotha (2019); Vidojević (2017) carried out studies on inclusive cities in Africa, examining issues on conceptualising social exclusion in Africa. However, there is a strong relationship between liveability and social exclusion, few studies have explored this correlation. According to Tini & Joshua Light (2020), urban sprawl leads to livability issues in Kaduna City Nigeria, leading to economic crisis, increase in unemployment, and the number of urban poor people, depicting social exclusion in the city. Hence, the Cities may become unliveable if most of their dwellers are socially excluded.

Aim of the Study

This study reviews the existing studies on liveability and social exclusion in African cities, considering the recent global menace of covid 19 impact on the African socioeconomy. It brings to foreplay the similar and different livability and social exclusivity drifts that characterise African cities due to escalating urban upsurge. The review covers the concept of livability, social inclusiveness, the link between the two, and the shaping factors. Also, the effects of wars and insecurity on social exclusivity and livability. This review will increase knowledge of the general state of African cities today and the unique characteristics of Africa. The paper is predicated on the following research question;

- What is the current trend of livability and social exclusion in African cities?
- Is there any relationship between livability and social exclusion in the context of African cities?

Methodology

This paper adopted the systematic literature review techniques, as described in Piper (2013); Schmeisser (2013) and used by (Lu et al., 2018; Marikyan et al., 2019). A systematic literature review is an exhaustive and specific search that is primarily guided by the research question-based search criteria and particular search phrases, and to provide a statement of conclusion that addresses particular problems, the best available evidence is thoroughly evaluated and narratively synthesized (Harris et al., 2014). Narrative synthesis is a method recommended Barry et al (2022), and adopted by other researchers Harrison et al (2021); Nieuwenhuijsen (2020), used particularly where textual and qualitative data are common. The researcher

compiles and evaluates findings from a variety of studies, then focuses on concisely presenting and clarifying the results through written explanations. Previous research papers, as well as international organizations' policy papers, reports, and guidelines on livability and social exclusion, provided the majority of the data for this review paper (ADB, 2022; Dodman et al., 2017; Kasim, 2018; Kasim et al., 2021b; Pieterse, 2015; Thorns, 2002; UN-HAaBITAT, 2009). Contained in the review paper is an overview of COVID-19's effects on livability and social exclusion, as well as its implications (Wahba, 2022). The web search was conducted using a variety of concepts (e.g., livability, social exclusion, inclusion, urbanization, urban growth, slum) related to livability and social exclusivity in Africa. The search was conducted through major electronic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, SAGE Journals Online, Taylor and Francis Online, and UN reports on the World Social Situation and Sustainable Development Goals(Titz & Chiotha, 2019; UN-HAaBITAT, 2009). Data about the livability and social exclusion in African cities from African and foreign organizations reports. The UN post-Covid 19 reports and the UN-HABITAT (UN, 2016; UNEP, 2012). To concentrate on cases that offered pertinent evidence for the topic under study, 74 published materials on livability, social exclusion, the effects of covid 19 and wars on livability and social exclusion were reviewed.

Discussions

Characteristics of African Cities and Their Urbanisation Drifts

Assessing liveability in African cities requires considering the urbanisation trend across African cities. African cities are distinguished for various reasons, including their rapid urban population development, informality as an illegal activity, economy, income disparity, and governance. Take, for instance, the skyrocketing urban population (United Nations, 2009). Africa now has twice as many cities as in 1990, from 3 300 to 7 600, and 500 million more people live there overall. The world's youngest and most dynamic cities in Africa are seeing the fastest urbanisation rates (ECA/AfDB, 2022). Most often, the countries with the biggest economy are those with the most prominent cities. However, most cities in sub-Saharan Africa rely on the federal government and foreign aid, which are often infeasible because their revenue bases are generally modest (McFarlane, 2016; Satterthwaite, 2017). Approximately 294 million people lived in Sub-Saharan Africa's cities in 2010; by 2030, that number is expected to rise to 621 million (Satterthwaite, 2017). The countries of sub-Saharan Africa are among the regions with the most significant annual urban growth rates globally. Current Africa’s population and projection are shown in Figure 2, as rapid urbanisation influences city liveability. According to the UN-Habitat report UN-HAaBITAT (2009), at 3.3% each year, Africa has the most rapid rate of global urban population expansion. Three major cities with populations of at least 10 million people, one from each of the continents except for East and Southern Africa, are at the top of the urban hierarchy: Kinshasa (11,580,000), Lagos (13,120,000), and Cairo (17.7 million).

Urbanisation is a requirement for progress, but rapid and unchecked urbanisation endangers livability and social inclusion (Ogunkan, 2021). However, the procedure of urbanisation in the vast nations in Africa exacerbates several degrading circumstances, including a lack of resources, poverty, inequality, the prevalence of slums and filth, overcrowding, housing congestion, crime and violence, and several other issues (Ogunkan, 2021; Planners, 2020; UNEP, 2012). Urbanisation will probably affect Africa's economic, social, and political landscape in the following decades. But it is essential to realise that urban issues are often caused by poor management, shoddy planning, and a lack of compelling urban policy

Ogunkan (2021), which is primarily a demographic process. In contrast, growth is mostly a function of urban planning and administration, which, if properly controlled, managed, and planned, urban centres can become a driver for growth and play a crucial part in macroeconomic progress (Ogunkan, 2021).

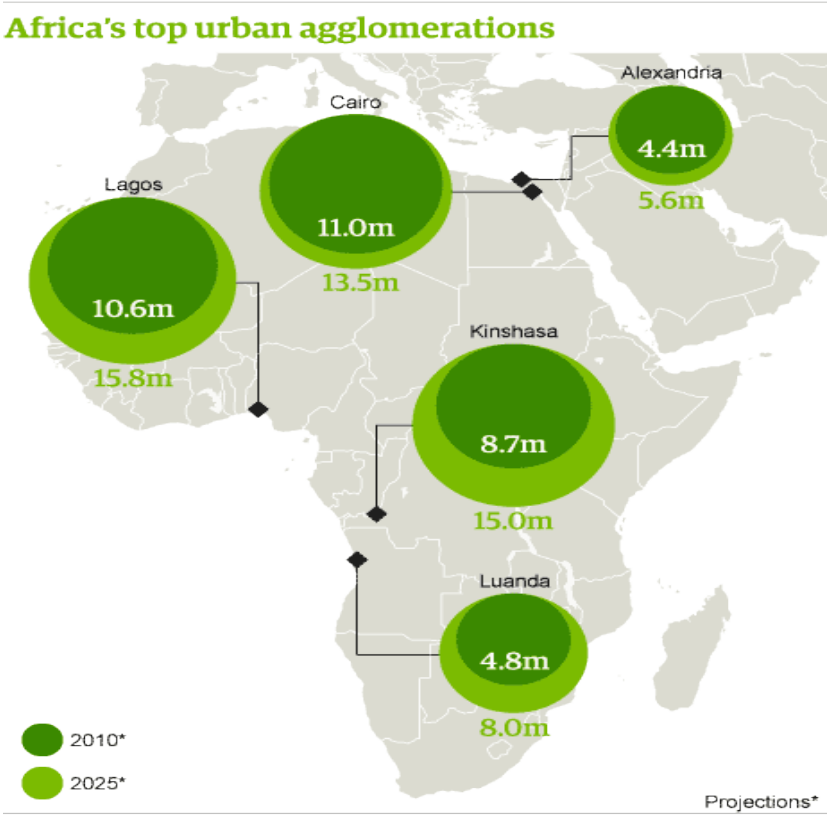

Figure 2: Current Africa's Population and Projection (Guardian News & Media, 2016)

Liveability Concept and Assessment in African Cities

Livability is a versatile and multifaceted definition, rendering it an issue of debate. Though, its meaning could be unambiguous in contextual applications. It is an evolving idea encompassing time and place Kasim et al (2021a) and a collection of relevant, interconnected measures of viability and quality of life on the social, economic, and ecological levels. It alludes to the difficulties people's lifestyles and those of groups face (Kasim et al., 2021a). It is an encompassing phrase that supports social fairness and equity (Mcarthur & Robin, 2019). Livability is a common planning term that erases disputes over urban space (Tolfo & Doucet, 2022). According to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (2015), to support a successful and meaningful human existence, liveable surroundings must consider physical and social well-being requirements. Thus, it includes the tangibly distinct qualities of urban areas enabling them desirable places to live (especially the accessibility to transportation infrastructure) and the intangibly distinctive qualities, like a sense of place, a sense of belonging, and social networks (Kasim et al., 2021b).

Liveability in Africa seems different from the general perspective. Africa makes up about 30.3 million km^2 of the world's total surface area and 20.4% of its landmass, which includes nearby islets. Fifty-five nations make up the region. North, West, East, Central, and Southern Africa are the five handy divisions of the continent (Kasim et al., 2021b). Presenting African cities in their realities and uniqueness is crucial to enable accurate characterisation regarding liveability (Kasim et al., 2021b). Also, there are differences between how liveable

metropolitan areas are in wealthy and minimal to middle-income nations as well (Alderton et al., 2019). Since over 95% of African nations fall into the low-to-middle income category, making this distinction in the definition essential. High-income countries tend to be the focus of liveability definitions and measurement indicators, like "safety, attractiveness, social cohesion and inclusion, and environmental sustainability, with affordably priced and different dwellings connected to jobs, education, public open space, local shops, medical and civic services, and recreation and cultural opportunities, through the use of comfortable mass transit, strolling, and bike infrastructure (Badland et al., 2014). The objectives and environment in Africa, however, offer a different situation. For instance, most urban African residents live in squatter communities and have scant access to sanitary facilities and pure water Smit et al (2011), thus having indicators slightly different from those in high-income nations.

According to the Econometric Intelligence Unit, the liveability assessment quantifies the risks to a person's way of life, which publishes a worldwide annual liveability index. Urban liveability gauges how well or poorly a city or metropolitan region is for living. It evaluates an urban area's stability, health, environment and culture, education, and infrastructural facilities (EIU, 2019). According to research, having a reasonable degree of liveability is favourably related to health consequences and behaviours, enhanced physical exercise and better mental health. Tolfo & Doucet (2022) opined that the locations rated as more livable are also among the most expensive places in Africa to live. Figure 3 shows Lagos city view, and Table 1 shows Lagos, Nigeria, ranked least in Africa with 171, followed by Tripoli at 170. Africa still has a long way to go regarding liveability.

Table 1

Botton ten status of liveability index of African cities (EIU, 2022)

City	location	Rank	Index	Stability	Healthcare	Culture & Environment	Education	Infrastructure
Douala	Cameroon	164	43.3	60.0	25.0	45.6	33.3	42.9
Harare	Zimbabwe	165	40.9	40.0	20.8	51.9	66.7	35.7
Algiers	Algeria	169	37.0	35.0	29.2	45.4	50.0	30.4
Tripoli	Libya	170	34.2	30.0	29.2	33.8	41.7	41.1
Lagos	Nigeria	171	32.2	20.0	20.8	44.9	25.0	46.4

Figure 3: Lagos City- The Least Livable City in Africa (Source: THISDAY Nigeria, 2023).

Social Exclusion in African Cities

As livability is an urban issue, social disparity and exclusion are equally a result of urban drift witnessed in Africa. There exists an interaction between social exclusion, integration, and inclusion which must be put in perspective when discussing urban rise in Africa, as shown in Figure 4. Urbanisation has been blamed for spreading disparity and causing poverty, and there is evidence that city inequality is growing (ADB, 2022). Communities are met with complex challenges when negotiating concepts of social sustainability, such as social inclusion and nurturing a sense of belonging (Kohon, 2018). Creating a geographically coherent, environmentally sustainable, commercially competitive and socially inclusive urban environment confronts most African cities (Cobblah & van der Walt, 2017). According to Nowosielski (2012), social exclusion has emerged as one of the most researched topics in urban studies and exclusion research. The issue is seen as a collection of grave problems that impact the very societal structure of modern cities. Urban exclusion prevents society from developing equally and sustainably. It's crucial to consider if the phenomenon of urban exclusion is adequately specific to enable the creation of unique, efficient strategies to combat it.

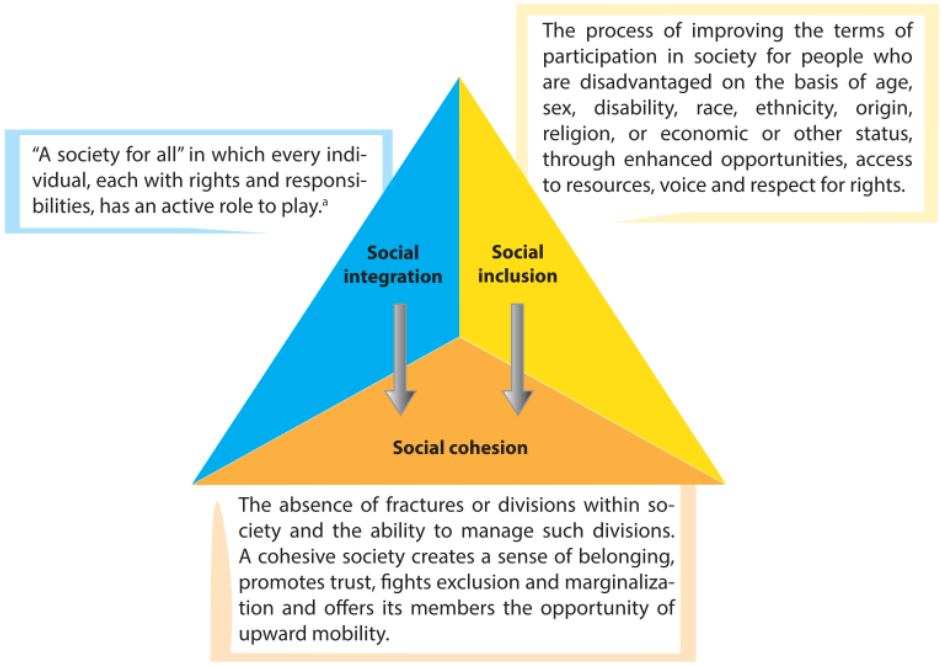

Figure 4: Interaction between Social inclusion, integration, and cohesion concept (UN, 2016)

The ideas of impoverishment, denial, and disadvantage have transcended generations of researchers across the globe and are still attracting research attention to date (Greene et al., 2016; Hayes & Alan, 2007). Max Weber, a German political economist and sociologist in the late 19th and 20th centuries, described exclusion as an attempt by one group to gain an advantage over another group. Exclusion can be social, economical with the tendency of urban dwellers being excluded from basic amenities and services. However, the concept of social exclusion can be associated with being poor. Scholars described the phenomenon as the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities available to most people. Social exclusion is "a complex and multi-dimensional process" as described by the University of Bristol's researcher, a lack of or denial of resources, rights, products, and services, as well as the impossibility of engaging in the typical interpersonal interactions and activities that are available to the majority of individuals in society, irrespective of whether they be in the political, social, cultural, or economic spheres (Hayes & Alan, 2007). The equity and cohesiveness of society as a whole and the quality of life of each individual are impacted (Anyachebelu, 2019).

Relationship between liveability and social exclusion and its Impact on African cities

Based on the previous research reports, social inclusivity and cohesiveness are part of the factors responsible for a livable city and the parameters used in measuring the liveability of cities are not entirely different from those of social inclusion. Social exclusion fosters significantly in unplanned and unlivable cities, which consequently breeds crimes, insecurity, and slum proliferation. According to the African Development Bank Group ADBG (2019), in forming livable cities, social inclusivity must be encouraged with economic possibilities for those who are impoverished and disadvantaged, especially women, minorities, and persons with disabilities. Another study by Iyanda et al (2018), measured livability based on social integration, among others. Social dispersion makes cities less livable Tini & Light (2020), as socially inclusive cities are livable (Badland et al., 2014). One way to tackle livability concerns is to promote social harmony and eradicate spatial inequality (Sheikh & van Ameijde, 2022).

Also, the model by Sheikh & van Ameijde (2022) for livability enables the identification of problems related to social segregation and spatial justice and promotes improvements in livability for the whole community. In essence, connecting everyday life to nature enhances livability and fosters community and social inclusiveness (Sheikh & van Ameijde, 2022).
Notably, livability and social exclusion correlate based on the escalating urban surge in Africa as shown in Figure 4. It is alarming and its influence in African cities is profound. Due to its effect on urban economic growth, many facilities that are expected to accommodate this looming urban growth are lacking, putting the liveability index at the lowest ebb. The cities in the developing world have the least public resources per resident (Victoria A. Beard, Anjali Mahendra, 2016), as shown in Figure 3. However, slack attitude to urban management is fast, leading to the emergence of unintended, less-serviced cities, where diseases linked to inadequate water and hygiene are rampant, access to essential health and education facilities is frequently limited and most jobs are informal and poorly paid, delaying essential municipal services in African cities (UN-HABITAT, 2011).
Similarly, the urban surge has fueled urban divides and social exclusion being experienced. The urban gap represents unfairness and is a sign of an ineffective system. If many individuals are unable to meet their most fundamental necessities while others live in luxury or some groups monopolise riches and juicy privileges leaving others needy and poor UN-HABITAT, (2011), such a society cannot be happy and livable. Moreover, according to a report by Satterthwaite (2017), a significant part of Sub-Saharan Africa's cities are confronted with substantial health challenges connected with declined social amenities and services. Only 33% of urban residents in the entire region had access to piped water in 2015, compared to 43% in 1990 Organization (2015), except for South Africa, where 92% of urban people have access to piped water. Most countries without a significant proportion of urban people who have access to piped water are found in Sub-Saharan Africa, and only 3% of Nigeria's metropolitan residents are connected to underground sewage systems (Nations, 2020).
The rising insurgence and criminality in African cities can be traced to social factors. When cities become unlivable due to slum growth because the dwellers are separated from the city, with higher transportation costs, low earnings, and inadequate housing; these residents lack access to the benefits of living in a city, thus resulting in social exclusion (Hommann & Lall, 2019). This is evident based on the study of Chirisa et al (2016) which found that insecurity thrives in many African cities such as Nairobi, Abuja, Mogadishu, Cape Town, Kinshasa, and Harare. Social exclusion tends to make excluded people poorer, resulting in criminality as a survival strategy. The likelihood that economic differences may lead to social and political unrest increases with the degree of income or consumption inequality in metropolitan settings (McFarlane, 2016; UN-HABITAT, 2011).
Besides, social amenities are an essential indicator of livable cities. However, Up to 70% of city dwellers in Africa do not have access to housing, water and sanitation, energy, and transportation UN-HABITAT (2011), and social inequality within the cities Chirisa et al (2016) thrives. Socioeconomic growth is critical to liveability, as it lessens social exclusivity. Urban poverty and rising unemployment are two effects of the economic crisis, directly impacting the city's livability (Satterthwaite, 2017). The African economy, which has an employment rate ranging from 32.7% (South Africa) to 76.2% (Tanzania) of all workers, is also informal and inadequately compensated (Kasim et al., 2021b). Housing is one of the three most important human needs and critically indicates a city's liveability (Mohit & Iyanda, 2016; UN-HAaBITAT, 2009). The supply of resident falls short of the urbanisation and housing demand rate in Nigeria and yet to be closed by the housing delivery system (Watson and Agbola, 2013). When

people are largely and socially excluded from housing schemes, they find ways to survive in slums/informal settlements. The failure of urban governance in African cities to provide affordable and accessible housing units made low-income populations adopt informal and inexpensive strategies to get housing and land. Most impoverished have few options (Kasim et al., 2021b). There is currently a global agitation to plan, develop and deliver inclusive designs for livable and inclusive cities ADB (2022) and African cities must not be left behind in the current drive.

Essential Elements Shaping Liveability and Social Inclusion in African Cities

Since correlation between livability and social inclusion has been established in the previous section. In African cities, some factors are currently influencing livability and social inclusion. For an adequate and efficient framework for intervention, these salient factors require necessary attention from government and private organisations with oversight responsibility for policy development and implementation. The United Nations forecast shows that Africa's cities will increase by 900 million dwellers between now and 2050, welcoming two-thirds of Africa's population (ECA/AfDB, 2022). Undoubtedly, this urban stretching requires critical planning, managing and financing infrastructure and public services, proactive techniques, enhancing jobs, and encouraging green technology uptake and digitalisation. Cities play a significant role in fostering economic growth and enhancing social inclusion and livability, which must be recognised in national plans for development (Kasim et al., 2021b). Coherent policies are required to ensure locally successful national strategies (Kasim et al., 2021b). Attaining and maintaining livable urban development and socially inclusive cities involves the chance to envision an urban future that may not take the same course as the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the rest of the world. Investing significant expenditures on urban infrastructure is crucial to constructing new, more inclusive and livable models. Some of the factors are elucidated as follows;

Rapid urbanisation: the increased urban population is due to increased sprawling and rural-urban mobility. As discussed, rapid population growth occurs in African cities due to widespread rural-urban migration seeking better prospects. The strain this sudden rush of people places on the existing services and facilities makes it difficult to provide appropriate housing, transportation, and necessities. It will probably be difficult for low-income nations like Africa to meet the rising urban infrastructure and services demand. However, it is possible that if it occurs in a way that increases access to the services that result in more equitable cities, urbanisation might become a driving force for economic growth (Beard et al., 2016). Since there has not been a corresponding socioeconomic growth in Africa as the urban population surges, creating unsafe and unlivable urban areas with high exclusivity of its dwellers is a possibility (Kasim et al., 2021b).

Unofficial Clusters/Slums: The growth of informal settlements, often called slums or shantytowns, significantly contributes to livability challenges and social exclusion. Informal settlements typically lack proper housing, sanitation, and access to basic services, making them vulnerable to poverty, crime, and inadequate living conditions. Four of each of the ten temporary homes in developing countries are now situated in places at risk of landslides, flooding, and other catastrophes, notably in slums and informal settlements (UN-HABITAT, 2016). The lives of an estimated 24 million slum residents in Africa are projected to have been better over the past ten years, accounting for 12% of the global effort to reduce this urban

gap. The number of slum inhabitants (8.7 million) and their percentage (from 20% to 13%) have consistently decreased in North Africa, the only subregion in the developing world. The three most prosperous nations were Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt. But just 5% (or 17 million) fewer people live in slums overall in sub-Saharan Africa's urban population than previously. The sub-region's most prosperous nations were Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, Rwanda, and Guinea, which during the past ten years, have reduced the percentage of slum inhabitants by almost one-fifth. Based on the Sustainable Development Goals Report (Nations, 2020). Due to growth in Northern and sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of the urban population residing in slums increased to 24% in 2018, as shown in Figure 5.

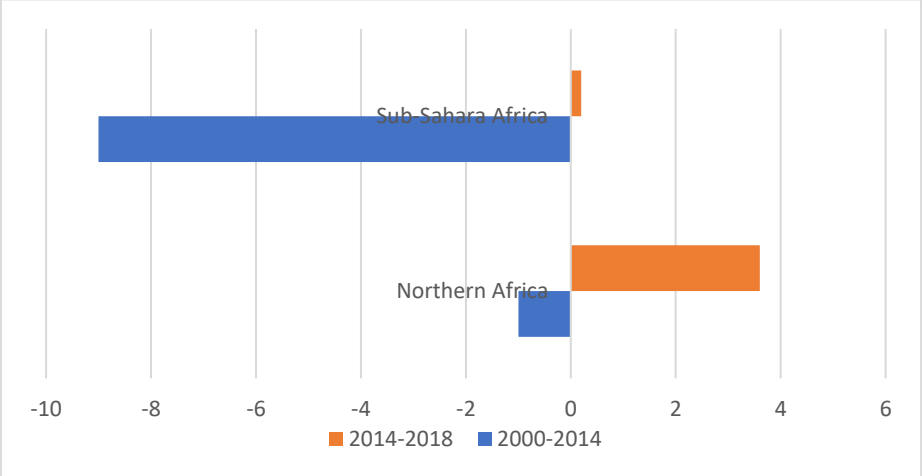

Figure 5: Transformation in the ratio of urban population slum dwellers in African nations(2000-2014), (2014-2018)

Inequality/Poverty and Segregation: African cities often experience high levels of inequality and segregation, with stark disparities in access to resources, services, and opportunities. This can result in marginalised groups being excluded from mainstream society and facing limited access to education, healthcare, employment, and political participation. Few nations have been able to link urbanization with poverty alleviation, as shown in Figure 6, there is a population drift impact and change in the poverty level of some African nations (Hommann & Lall, 2019). Furthermore, Pieterse (2015) opined that one of Africa's cities' most striking differentiating characteristics is the expression of urban structural poverty and systemic exclusion, as well as the predominance of a high degree of informality in social and economic activity. Cities face issues related to housing, infrastructure, and delivering essential services (Titz & Chiotha, 2019). However, a study by de Haan (2017) demonstrates how, as general poverty declines, concerns about rising or continuing disparities and the need for social protection policies that might promote social justice and combat social exclusion become more pertinent to sub-Saharan Africa's urbanization. Also, although they are related, poverty and social exclusion are separate ideas. Social exclusion is both a process and a consequence, whereas poverty is a result. Therefore, poverty and exclusion need not coexist. People are frequently excluded while not necessarily being poor, for example, because of a disability or sexual orientation (UN, 2016).

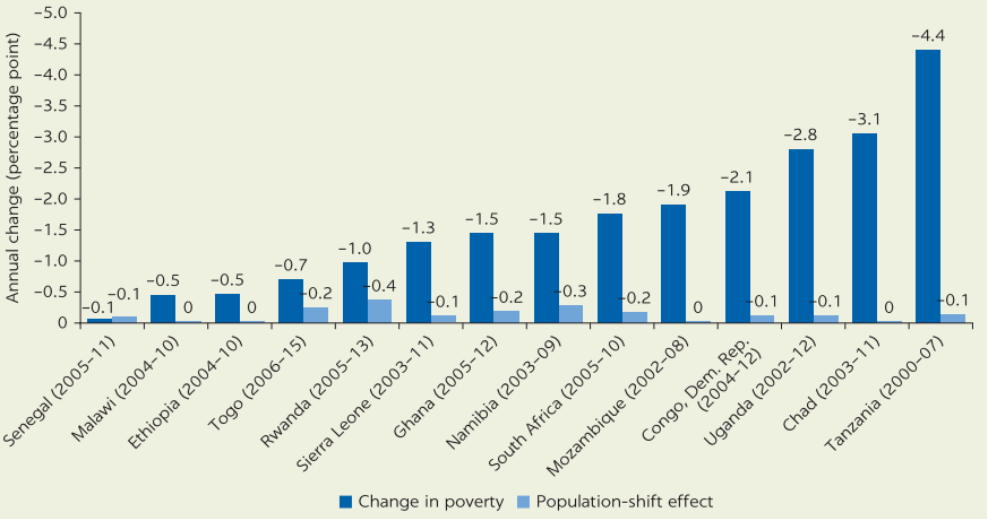

Figure 6: Population drift impact and change in the poverty level of some African nations (Hommann & Lall, 2019)

Weak Urban Governance: "Urban governance" denotes a more flexible interaction between municipalities and their constituents and a more diverse arrangement of actors and stakeholders (ADBG, 2019). Unfortunately, African cities have been characterized by weak and ineffective urban management and administration, allowing social exclusivity to thrive in an unlivable environment. Inefficient urban governance, including limited capacity, corruption, and inadequate urban planning, can impede livability and perpetuate social exclusion. Weak governance hinders the adequate provision of infrastructure, services, and policies for addressing urban challenges. Following a report by the Africa Development Bank, Africa's small and medium cities often face issues with governance, such as weak institutional frameworks, a lack of municipal authority, inadequate legal and regulatory frameworks, a lack of coordination between agencies, duplication of administrative duties, fraud, and an absence of own-source income (ADBG, 2019). Experts attributed the planning issue to a weak and seemingly incompetent African urban planning institution (Ogunkan, 2021). Local government in many African cities that are expected to drive urban transformation is practically redundant regarding urban development, probably due to political reasons.

Access to essential services and infrastructure challenges: Availability and access to basic services, housing, and infrastructures significantly shape African cities' livability, social inclusion and integration. Sub-Saharan African cities increasingly have to deal with urban mobility's planning and development challenges and modes of urban movement in most African nations heavily dependent on money (Sietchiping et al., 2012). There are few transportation choices. Little effort is put into creating various transportation choices or enhancing biking and walking trails (Sietchiping et al., 2012). Public transportation mobility in sub-Saharan cities significantly affects their livability and inhabitants' development goals, especially when combined with traffic congestion, bad administration, and rising living costs (Sietchiping et al., 2012). Corruption, political instability, weak governance and lack of political will of the leaders could be attributed to the deficit (Arimah, 2001; Ekeke et al., 2018). For instance, while cities like Nairobi and Accra only have slightly more than 10% of their land dedicated to streets, cities like Paris, New York, and Tokyo have between 25 and 30% of their land devoted to a network of city streets that promotes multi-modal transportation (AfDB, 2022). A Anyachebelu (2019) examined the possibility of reducing social exclusion of

disadvantaged urban regions via transportation, revealing how crucial mobility could engender social intervention.

Environmental sustainability and resilience: Cobbinah & Darkwah (2017) argue that African urban planning practices and methods should strive to realise sustainable urban development objectives, resulting in metropolitan areas that are spatially linked, profitable for business, socially just, and ecologically sustainable. Given this, geographically built and carefully designed urban areas can offer livable and working environments free from the risky effects of urbanization. Inclusiveness in urban planning may promote sound governance, reform of institutions, and accountability (Cobbinah, 2021).

COVID-19 pandemic: Liveability and social inclusion were severely impacted by the novel COVID-19 virus in the wake of this decade. As cultural institutions were closed, dining options in restaurants were limited, and the local economy suffered; as a result, pandemic limitations altered the livability of many significant centres worldwide (Akanmu et al., 2021). New laws, norms, behaviour modifications, and organisational measures were the initial lines of defence against the pandemic because most of the socioeconomic circumstances before COVID-19 were demonstrated to be unsustainable during the crisis (Kakderi et al., 2021). Although COVID-19 has come and gone, the impact on social inclusiveness and liveability still lingers in African cities. The epidemic also brought about new inequalities, job losses, and unemployment for all industries that could not operate online (Buffel et al., 2021). The global pandemic has reshaped African cities remarkably and worsened livability and social exclusion (Wahba, 2022). The advantages of huge cities, high densities, mass transit, unrestricted individual mobility in cities, and other fundamental concepts of contemporary cities and urban planning are all tested by the COVID-19 epidemic (Kakderi et al., 2021).
Moreover, Akanmu et al (2021), studied the effect of the pandemic on Nigeria's urban areas. The results showed a higher-than-normal increase in crime during the COVID-19 lockdown, with rape, theft, and peace disturbance lowering the liveability index. According to another source (Kakderi et al., 2021), the epidemic caused a rise in social marginalisation in informal communities. Although many municipal problems existed before COVID-19, the epidemic worsened them. However, the political will, execution of specific policies, and low-cost investments in sustainability, liveability, and inclusivity will determine how far African cities can overcome these obstacles (Wahba, 2022). A study by Cobbinah et al (2021), emphasised the need for Africa to strengthen city-region metropolis-regions by integrating city-regional planning for health, economies and food production so that these systems can become pillars of resilience. The institutions of administration, planning, financing, and policy that are in place will determine this.

War and Insecurity: War, insecurity, insurgence and civil unrest have extensively affected urban livelihood and social inclusion or integration. Most African cities are bedevilled with tribal-religious, sometimes politically motivated wars. Insecurity in African cities like Nigeria worsens their liveability, and social integration. The report of UN-HAaBITAT (2009) indicated that social, cultural, and religious values are significant motivators and deterrents of crime and violence. Rapid urbanisation in Africa has resulted in a severe lack of ability for cities to support their residents, who consequently experience anger with social injustice and service delivery. Social injustices leave cities vulnerable to high levels of crime and violence (Chirisa et al., 2016). In North and Central Africa, where terrorist organisations like al-Shabaab and

Boko Haram operate, there is a growing proliferation of terrorism in some African cities, particularly in North and Central African cities (Chirisa et al., 2016; Gartenstein-Ross, 2015). The Arab Spring has caused instability in North Africa, which has led to violent conflict and political upheaval (Gartenstein-Ross, 2015). Chirisa et al (2016) carried out a study on policy and strategic approaches to investigate African urban insecurity, using document analysis and cases from some African cities, including Cape Town, Kinshasa, Harare, Mogadishu, Nairobi, and Abuja, with significant poverty and joblessness rates. Urban insecurity is determined mainly by the placement, arrangement, and structure of these cities' buildings and streets, known as urban design (Chirisa et al., 2016).

According to a report by The Guardian (2023), the case of the Sudan military chief rivalry war turned the cities into a war zone, and civilians were caught in cross-fires. Since a long-simmering power struggle between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) broke into violence on April 15, there have been at least 528 fatalities and 4,599 injuries. Tens of thousands of people have fled across Sudan's borders due to the fighting, plunging Khartoum into an unlivable city with rising social exclusivity. Based on the report (The Guardian, 2023), the region's "humanitarian situation was reaching breaking point," according to UN emergency assistance coordinator Martin Griffiths; aggravating the liveability in Sudan cities and putting others on the borders at risk of worsening livability conditions. Similarly, according to another report by Gesesew et al (2021), the war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia contributed to liveability, majorly to the food shortage and healthcare system, becoming the survival of the fittest. The health system suffered severe harm due to the continuing war in Ethiopia's Tigray region, which began in November 2020. There have been 500,000 civilian fatalities as of March 2022. According to Bekele (2022), Civilians have died during Ethiopia's continuing 19-month conflict due to fighting, starvation, inadequate medical care, and sexual assault committed during hostilities (Gesesew et al., 2021). War and civil unrest have resharpened urban cities pushing livability to the edge. African cities can never experience inclusiveness and liveability in the presence of war that has constantly inhibited social and cultural integration.

Measures to Improve Liveability and Reduce Social Exclusion

This section contains a fundamental and comprehensive approach necessary to be taken by all stakeholders for more livable and socially integrated cities. An inclusive urban area is possible by engendering a procedure of boosting opportunities, utilization of resources, voice, and respect for rights to improve the terms of being part of society, particularly for disadvantaged people (UN, 2016). It is challenging to gauge social exclusion because of its multidimensionality and the absence of consistent data sources across nations and for all social groups most at risk of being left behind. Despite their shortcomings, the available data allow for a helpful examination of important exclusion-related factors. Also, liveability has been measured based on some factors presented above. However, some essential points to improve liveability and social exclusion are given further.

Affordable Housing and Inclusive Urban Development

A long-term urban strategy considering economic and social development and environmental conservation must prioritise providing services and infrastructure. Their amount of access to basic urban services, including land use, housing, water and sanitation, and energy, will determine their standard of life and the degree to which they can prosper and be productive (Beard et al., 2016). There are now neglected large swaths of the urban population in sub-

Saharan Africa. Whenever there are gaps in the delivery of essential urban services, individuals from all socioeconomic levels resort to illegal, unofficial, or uncontrolled self-provisioning, which has substantial individual and social costs and causes inefficiency, environmental degradation, and bad health (UN-HABITAT, 2016). However, Kasim et al. (2021b), recommneded equal, inexpensive, culturally and socially acceptable housing by giving residents of all occupations, genders, ages, disabilities, races, ethnicities and financial standing greater availability of buildable land, regional building supplies and mortgage options. This will help to reduce the cost of housing and transportation overall and encourage healthy living.

The study of Ilesanmi (2012) evaluated the standard of public housing in Lagos State, Nigeria and demonstrated the poor public housing in Lagos State, Nigeria. The effect of low-income housing on liveability was studied by other researchers (Mohit & Iyanda, 2016), who concluded that remote location and affordability affect livability. Also, urban governance must prioritise low-cost housing for their vibrant working class, which Africans have in abundance and provide road networks connecting cities to improve business transactions (Barton et al., 2009).

Accessible and sustainable transportation systems: Urban Transportation service is vital to socio-economic growth. However, many segments of urban dwellers have been excluded due to accessibility. African cities will remain unlivable as transport systems remain inaccessible to people, especially those low and middle-income earners who live in the suburbs. Accessibility is when there is unhindered access to work, education, and social interaction, is geographically accessible, and has good connections between sources and destinations (Anyachebelu, 2019). Given African cities' weak urban transportation infrastructure (UTI), many other nations have attempted to develop their transportation sectors using Singapore as a model (Berg et al., 2017; Ekeke et al., 2018). African cities can undoubtedly learn from Singapore's transport sector. Due to its influence on how cities function, UTI is a valuable resource for cities. The demand for sustainable mobility, which affects economic growth, has been rendered even more urgent by Africa's urbanization and population expansion (Chatziioannou & Alvarez-Icaza, 2017).

Reliable, easy-to-use, and reasonably priced public transit increases productivity, inclusivity and liveability while reducing traffic and pollution. Among the principles of liveability recommended by Kasim et al (2021b) are to lower household costs of transportation and offer or urge the utilisation of a variety of transportation options (such as motor vehicles, buses, tricycles, and bicycles) that are safe, dependable, cost-effective, and easily maintained. It is well known that the African transportation system is subpar and plagued by systemic problems (AfDB, 2022). Congestion has become a defining feature of African megacities like Lagos, Nigeria, due to a massive infrastructure deficiency in transportation (Echendu & Okafor, 2021). In Lagos, commuting takes an average of five hours daily, despite the BRT buses provided. Thus, there is a need for metro-cable cars to ease urban mobility. Smart transportation will significantly impact congestion, increasing safety, reducing transfer costs, improving transfer speed, and decreasing pollution (Echendu & Okafor, 2021). Improved urban and transportation planning can result in carbon-neutral, more livable, and healthier communities, primarily through land use changes, the transition from private motorized transport to public and active transportation, and the greening of cities (Nieuwenhuijsen, 2020).

Upgraded Slums and Inexpensive Housing: More housing units are needed to accommodate the city's growing population as the city expands (Mohit & Iyanda, 2016). Granting accessibility to essential services and investing in slum upgrading initiatives can enhance living circumstances in informal settlements. Also, supporting projects for inexpensive housing can assist in addressing low-income individuals' housing requirements. Three essential and interconnected realms of life—the economy, social well-being, and environment—will determine how liveable informal settlements are (Kasim et al., 2021b; Leby & Hashim, 2010). The social well-being of people living in unofficial settlements will be greatly influenced by a framework that ensures social and geographic allocation of financial, natural, and cultural assets is equitable, just, fair and by an open government that encourages individual freedom and opportunity (Kasim et al., 2021b).

Inclusive Urban Planning, **Community Engagement and Design Approach**: Urbanisation have been blamed for spreading inequity and causing poverty, particularly in African cities, and evidence shows that city inequality is growing (ADB, 2022). Mitigating this consequence on liveability and exclusivity requires pragmatic urban planning. In Africa, technocrats who have less inclusive norms, laws, and standards are mainly in charge of planning (Kasim et al., 2021b). However, the community remained one of the stakeholders in urban development, and their engagement will significantly impact urban growth, an all-around inclusive and liveable metropolitan area. Engaging the community in policy, planning, and implementation has long been agitated in urban studies and reports (AfDB, 2022; ECA/AfDB, 2022; PRIA, 2013; Vidojević, 2017). Also, a modification of current planning rules and enforcement processes should be permitted to accommodate whatever the vast majority of people living in unofficial communities can reasonably afford and maintain in their socioeconomic and cultural circumstances while supporting community-centred growth (Kasim et al., 2021b). Many urban planning strategies were not succeeding because they were not inclusive. Inclusive urban planning and design strategy can yield better outcomes in forming a liveable and socially inclusive city. The beliefs of supposedly scientific and trained architects and planners, who frequently had an insufficient grasp of the colonies and countries they planned for, were reflected in African colonial and post-colonial urban planning, which prohibited public engagement and involvement (Cobbinah & Darkwah, 2017). Hence, inclusivity in urban planning procedures and practices is recently been agitated by urban residents and civil society organisations (Echendu, 2023).

Dedication and purpose are required from government parties and other stakeholders who affect infrastructure policies and decisions, experts in urban planning and the built environment (ADB, 2022). Inclusiveness in urban planning refers to community orientation in all its multifaceted scopes, specifically for people living in informal settlements who frequently lack a unified voice (Berdegué & Proctor, 2015). Social exclusion can be lessened by creating inclusive urban design plans that stress fair accessibility to resources, services, and facilities. The possible weakening of political authority makes it challenging to accomplish inclusive urban planning in several ways. According to Watson and Agbola (2013), planning laws were established during the colonial era in numerous nations; it is ill-prepared to handle today's urban issues. Urban dysfunction is made worse by a lack of experts with the training necessary to address urban complexity using progressive, pro-poor strategies (Watson and Agbola, 2013). Urban development in Africa would be more egalitarian and economically productive if inclusive and sustainable planning replaced obsolete, controlling, and punitive methods (Watson and Agbola, 2013).

Social safety nets and poverty alleviation programs/ economic empowerment: Putting initiatives that emphasise economic and social independence can aid in lowering social isolation. This can involve providing underprivileged people access to financial services and creating employment, entrepreneurial help, and skill development. According to Cobbinah and Darkwah (2017), African cities must not be divided along class lines to curb social exclusiveness. European and UK governments switched to a broader strategy focusing on individual and social capacity, engagement, and well-being to reduce poverty and financially address social exclusion (Ghahramanpouri et al., 2013). Governments in Africa can also adopt this strategy to tackle endemic poverty. A study by Kasim et al (2021b), recommends improving informal communities' financial sustainability and energy by creating and facilitating easy access to local job centres, markets, educational institutions, artisanal and entrepreneurial training programs, cultural venues, and other necessities.

Poverty lines should reflect the actual income households must pay for the goods and services necessary to escape poverty. Urban civil society organizations and citizens must collaborate with local, state, and federal governments and international organizations to develop initiatives that can be scaled up with government assistance. Only then will urban poverty be significantly reduced (McFarlane, 2016). However, de Haan (2017), after studying the practice of social protection programmes in the sub-Sahara ascertain if these methods effectively combat socsial exclusion and reflect growing livelihood changes. It was discovered that social inclusion has increased, and the livelihoods of those with low incomes have improved. The study concludes that innovative decentralization from the top and deeper structural changes are needed for revolutionary social security.

Strengthening Urban Governance: Urban governance is the culmination of all the different ways that people and institutions, both public and private, organise and run city affairs. Improved efficient administration of cities may result from improving urban governance through openness, accountability, and capacity creation. All city governments should adhere to the principle of complete involvement of citizens in all aspects of municipal governance, particularly planning, budgeting, and revenue collection (Ogunkan, 2021). This entails encouraging citizen participation, enhancing agency coordination, and implementing measures to combat corruption. It is difficult to fully exploit cities' immense potential for creating healthy living conditions without capable, effective, and accountable municipal governments (Satterthwaite, 2017). To strengthen urban administration is to have good control at all levels in the city. Therefore, at all levels, particularly the local level, the battle for excellent urban governance should be vigorously pursued to enhance African urban management, with men, women and youths participating, which is one of the tenets of effective urban governance (PRIA, 2013). Apart from good and efficient urban administration, planning, decentralization, and lowering inequality are crucial precursors to a liveable, sustainable and socially exclusive city (Ogunkan, 2021).

Sustainable Development: Following sustainable development concepts and goals strictly could enhance social inclusion and create a more livable African city. Fostering green areas, renewable energy, waste management, and resilient infrastructure are examples of how sustainable growth principles can be included in urban planning and infrastructure development to improve livability while tackling social marginalisation. Given that urbanization is a prerequisite for social and economic development, this continuous shift to a global urban society presents a once-in-a-lifetime chance to harness the urbanization

process as a catalyst for sustainable social and economic growth (Ogunkan, 2021). However, uncontrolled urban drift threatens the sustainable development of better livable and inclusive African cities. Cobbinah & Darkwah (2017) advocated that urban planning procedures and methods in Africa ought to work toward achieving the goals of sustainable urban development, which produce geographically united metropolitan areas that are economically feasible, inclusive of all social groups, and environmentally sound. According to Beard & Anjali Mahendra, (2016), an equal city report emphasises the need for equal opportunities as a starting point for sustainable, liveable city development, without which African cities might not be able to attain the improved standard of living, increased economic output, and environmental sustainability that we all desire. For an effective and sustainable urban transformation enriched in economic productivity and a qualitative built environment, there must be equal access to land use, housing, water and sanitation, energy and transportation, as described in Figure 7. A sustainable city based on liveability and inclusivity depends on urban planning, and good administration is crucial, with a planner's thorough understanding of the process and types of urbanization (Ogunkan, 2021).

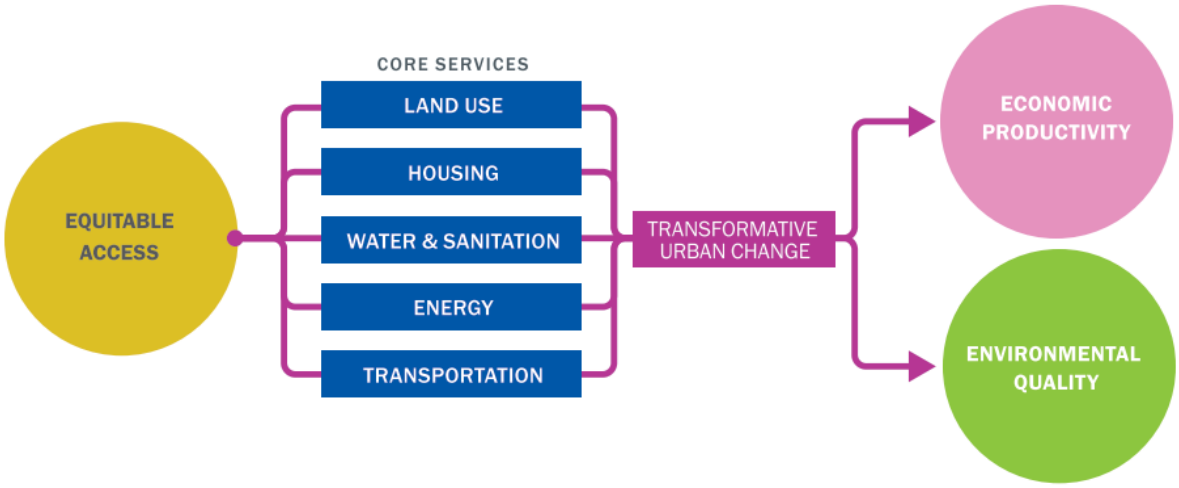

Figure 7: Key Services for equitable access and transformative urban change (Beard & Anjali Mahendra, 2016)

Data-Driven Approaches: To better handle urban concerns, decision-makers and policymakers can benefit from harnessing data and technology. To have solutions that are based on evidence entails gathering and analysing data on numerous urban variables, such as access to services, inequality, and livability. Data obtained from research development are crucial to planning and developing liveable and socially inclusive cities. The concept of smart technology has been trending with emerging research efforts lately. Education, health, transportation, security, safety, energy, and waste management are just a few industries where smart city technology has been successfully used (Echendu & Okafor, 2021; Kutty et al., 2022). The Internet of Things (IoT) and its evolution, as well as a variety of physical networks for efficient activity management, are all part of the basic organizational fabric of the smart city. Thus, every smart city development initiative, from conception to execution, is under the purview of the government (Echendu & Okafor, 2021). Studies show that Africa's existing level of development is a benefit in this case because proactively addressing Africa's urbanization concerns will benefit from the infusion of digital technology into key locations (Echendu & Okafor, 2021). African countries are urged to use digital technology to address fundamental development concerns while establishing safeguards to protect citizens' privacy

and security. "Smart cities" are leveraging the potential of smartphones, cameras, and sensors to enable more open, responsible, and transparent governance by putting "a layer of digital intelligence over a cityscape" to gather streams of real-time data (ADBG, 2019).

Policy Frameworks and Implications for Promoting Liveable and Inclusive Cities

Policy development is critical to urban transformations in African cities. Reviewing and reforming the present urban planning policy structure is one strategy to lessen livability and social exclusion issues in African cities (Cobbinah & Darkwah, 2017). Enhancing urban liveability must be suitable and responsive to African cities' various settings and objectives. Effective policy responses should be founded on a thorough understanding of the causes driving the various types of informal settlements and the requirement to use some policy tools at once, such as social, economic, and environmental planning. A comprehensive policy that addresses people's livelihoods, such as employment, income, training, and human capital, is also necessary to transform informal settlements into livable communities (Kasim et al., 2021b). Ogunkan (2021) opined that cities' capacity to satisfy urban growth demands and implement initiatives that reduce spatial inequality is constrained by a lack of policy coordination between or within national and local governments. Strengthening the existing policy on low-income housing development, water supply to informal settlements, economic empowerment and infrastructural upgrades are essential. A policy that will formally recognize informal settlements is a crucial component of a suggested strategy to address the problems they bring for equitable growth, which will address land, slum housing, traffic, health, education, companies, businesses, leisure, infrastructure and services, economic activity, and environmental problems (Kasim et al., 2021b).

Government stakeholders who influence infrastructure policies and decisions, professionals in the built environment, service providers and human rights advocates, business actors that financed projects and community stakeholders must include minorities of every kind, women, children, seniors, and people with disabilities (PWDs). Policies on social inclusiveness demand that more gender-specific programs are needed for women to escape poverty, including maternity and childcare benefits, vocational training, women's rights at work protection, and microcredit (Kasim et al., 2021b). Frameworks for inclusive cities include strategies for universal design and valuable recommendations (ADB, 2022). These points are suggested to improve African urban areas' current liveability and inclusiveness conditions.

Conclusion

The review covers the concept, causes and remedies to liveability and social exclusion issues in African cities, including the crucial factors shaping these phenomena and the mitigating intervention. The two research questions have been answered. The comprehensive review revealed the current trend of livability and social exclusion among African cities and the existential relationship between livability and social inclusion in African cities. City's issues are often caused by poor management, shoddy planning, and a lack of compelling urban policy implementation and sustainability. Slack attitude to urban management is fast, leading to the emergence of unplanned, under-serviced cities, shortage of housing, slum development and inaccessible transport systems, where diseases linked to inadequate water and sanitation are rampant. Insecurity prevails, and access to essential health and education facilities is frequently limited, delaying crucial municipal services. On the other hand, social divides thrive in African cities leading to gender inequality, poverty, social exclusion and high crime rates due to the combined physical and social distance between poor and affluent neighbourhoods.

Factors shaping liveability in Africa are interwoven with those fostering social exclusions, like rapid urbanisation with non-corresponding economic growth, growth of slums, urban sprawling, weak urban governance, inequality/poverty, access to essential services and infrastructure challenges, including covid 19, war and insurgence.

However, improving strategies include the provision of affordable housing and, inclusive urban development, fostering green areas and accessible and sustainable transportation systems which is vital to socio-economic growth. Slums/informal settlements should be upgraded and supplemented with low-cost housing units. Mitigating this consequence on liveability and exclusivity requires pragmatic and inclusive urban planning and implementation. Putting initiatives that emphasise economic and social independence can aid in lowering social isolation and improving liveability. To ensure healthy lives, access to education, modern energy, and information, among other things, and to free everyone, every nation, and all parts of society from poverty and hunger, there must be accountable local governments and environmentally friendly urban growth must be implemented. It is essential to remember that every African city has a distinct context and set of problems and that intervention tactics should be customised and localized. One vital strategy is developing peaceful coexistence among city people. The impact of war, insurgence and continued insecurity in these cities on social inclusiveness and liveability cannot be undermined regarding African socio-economic growth. The importance of African cities in the global competition goes beyond their demographic weight and calls into question the total contribution of the urban surroundings to the resident's quality of life or well-being. The stakeholders must have strong will and effort to enhance the human living environment, including natural and constructed environments, financial prosperity, societal steadiness and equality, educational privileges, and cultural, entertainment, and recreational opportunities. Cooperation between the government, civil society organisations, international organisations, and local people is essential to implement efficient changes and build more livable and inclusive African cities.

This study has filled an important gap in urban management research. Understanding the contribution of the nature and spatial patterns of liveability and social exclusion of urban poor is required for implementation, monitoring and evaluating the performance of the physical planning agencies with references to their capacity and readiness to meet the challenges of urban management sustainability of the urban dwellers at minimal cost and time. However, with this study, researchers and policymakers will be able to evolve and adopt sound informed policies like conflict theory, good urban governance and Inclusive theory on sustainable urban development that will minimize social exclusion thereby enhancing the liveability of cities in the country.

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