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Luanda's Slums: An overview based on poverty and gentrification

(Posth.)

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Abstract

Slum redevelopment is occurring at a rapid pace in many African cities. This paper examines the urban development of contemporary Luanda, the capital of Angola. Central to this examination is an analysis of the city's slums according to Foucault's concept of governmentality. The focus is on the chaotic urban development that has resulted from the civil war and on the effects of poverty and gentrification in many of Luanda's slums. The policy of violence towards slum population adopted by the municipality appears to define a technology of domination, the subjection of the individual to the formation of the state. However, with the high earnings obtained from oil production, the country clearly has the resources needed to fund investments in electricity and utility systems. The continuing persistence of slums and a housing policy based on neglect signifies a form of governmentality, adopted as a means of government coercion and a way of dominating the poor population. The paper closes with a set of policy implications for action.

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyse Luanda's recent urban development. Foucault's concept of governmentality (Foucault 1991) is fully employed in the analysis. Slums are a major urban development feature in Luanda. They have resulted from the chaotic urban development associated with the disorganization that followed the Angolan civil war. Luanda's slums are characterized simultaneously by poverty and gentrification tendencies. The city is also experiencing an increase in housing prices, arising from the affluence generated by oil production, and by its uncontrolled urban development. Urban gentrification involves population migration since the poor residents of transitional neighbourhoods are either displaced by market forces or undergo enforced displacement by the municipal authorities (Borsdorf, Hidalgo & Sánchez 2007; Ascensão 2018; Lees 2019). The continued persistence of Luanda's slums is analysed with the concept of governmentality (Foucault 1991), since displacement results from public policies actively promoted by the government (Werlin 1999).

Earlier research on African urbanization included the work of P. Jenkins (2000a) and P. Jenkins, P. Robson & A. Cain (2002) on Maputo and Luanda, respectively. Since some of the slums analysed in our paper developed only from the mid-2000s onwards, this study extends the research in those earlier papers by focusing specifically on Luanda's contemporary slums (Lopes 2000; Bettencourt 2011). Prior research on African cities includes an examination of Maputo – Mozambique before and after independence; A. Arecchi (1985), who analysed Dakar; and M. Tiepolo (1996), who analysed Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo. P. Jenkins (2000) has written a thorough profile of Maputo, and P. Jenkins & P. Wilkinson (2002) have compared Maputo with Cape Town, mostly in the context of a contemporary globalized economy. J. Oppenheimer & I. Raposo (2007) have analysed the suburbs of Luanda and Maputo, looking at resident families and the growth of the city since colonial times. Finally, A. Kent & H. Ikgopoleng (2011) analysed Gaborone in Botswana.

Relatively more recent research carried out specifically on African cities includes the work of G. Myers (2011), who presented an alternative view to that usually found in the literature, offering a complex, nuanced and, above all, hopeful representation of African urban environments; and that of M. Agunbiade, A. Rajabifard & R. Bennett (2013), who have analysed the different modes of housing production in Lagos, Nigeria (see also: Mallo & Danjuma 2016). A sample of published work on slums elsewhere in the world includes: (1) H. Taubenböck & N. Kraft (2013), who have studied slums in the city of Mumbai, India,

through the use of remotely sensed data; (2) J. Minnery et al. (2013), who analysed three South Asian cities, namely Bandung, Indonesia, Quezon, Philippines, and Hanoi, Vietnam by focusing on slum upgrading, security tenure, governance and institutional arrangements, as well as public participation to ensure slum upgrading; (3) H. Magidimisha & L. Chipungu (2011), who focused on slums in Zimbabwe; and (4) C. Klaufus (2000), who analysed dwelling representation in a slum settlement in Riobamba, Ecuador.

The research methods comprised literature reviews, desk-research on urban development patterns and the impacts of the civil war on the relocation of migrants from the various provinces to the country's capital, and an inventory of recent urban slums in Luanda. The present research has four main motivations. Firstly, Luanda has undergone major urban transformations since P. Jenkins, P. Robson & A. Cain's (2002) foundational analysis of urban development in the city was written. The 1976–2002 civil war in Angola has resulted in very chaotic urban growth and an increase in the number of urban slums (Bettencourt 2011; Cain 2013). Secondly, after the civil war, many people left the provinces and moved to the capital, thus increasing the size and extension of the city's slum areas. These war refugees organized themselves on an ethnic basis, and so the city's slums also reflect these ethnic divisions. Unemployment, the lack of education, and the lack of a municipal housing policy – given the pre-eminence of market forces – has resulted in growing urban poverty concerns (Amaral 1983; McFarlane 2012). Furthermore, many slums are located in the middle of the city, so that there are frequent episodes of poor people being expelled from their slum dwellings to enable the construction of high-income housing, corporate buildings and shopping malls, thereby giving rise to gentrification processes. Recently, the city's municipal authorities started urban redevelopments in the Bay of Luanda, the city's most emblematic asset, but there are practically no signs of any investment in the city's slums. All these major changes taking place in Luanda motivated us to conduct this research.

Contextual setting

E. Pietersen (2013, 2014) has recognized that Africa is currently experiencing a transitional crisis as a result of the continent's integration in the global economy and a widespread uncertainty about how to manage trade-offs between the three pillars of the sustainability edifice: Economic growth, environmental preservation, and human well-being. The doubling of the population to an estimated 2.19 billion people by 2050, the youthful nature of the population, a very low percentage of wage-earning

jobs (about 28%) and the 63% of people currently trapped in vulnerable employment, all help to reframe the 'right to the city' debate in the western world as the 'right to dignity' in the African continent. Situated on the west coast of Africa, above Namibia and below the Republic of the Congo, Angola is a leading African country in terms of natural resources. After gaining independence from Portuguese colonial rule in 1975, and of a long civil war lasting 27 years (1975–2002), the country has been rebuilding its economy, mostly via oil extraction and agricultural production. However, the chaotic development of the capital city Luanda, with high levels of poverty among some urban slum populations (Neuwirth 2005), frequent allegations of corrupt practices by politicians, the country's incapacity to develop its non-tradable and industrial sectors, the control of the media by unscrupulous politicians, and the widespread persecution of journalists, all point to the fact that Angola is confronted with what's commonly referred to as 'the resource curse' (Matti 2010).

Luanda is the centre of power and reflects all the dynamics of Angola as a country. The city is characterized by its majestic coastline, which is the hallmark of the city's image (Rodrigues 2016), and by its urban and peri-urban slums. The persistent presence and continuing growth of Luanda's slums, and the absence of a coherent housing policy despite the wealth in resources that the country has, is explained in this paper by the concept of governmentality (Foucault 1991). Luanda has a dualistic structure, determined physically, socially and economically by its slums and the rich parts of the city (Adger 2000). However, the separation of the two halves of this hybrid city is not immediately clear, since the slums are mainly located in the centre of the city. Therefore, Luanda is characterized by a high number of slums scattered all around the inner city.

Luanda's development after the civil war resulted in a very disorganized growth. Around half a million people were living in Angola's capital in 1975 when the colonial Portuguese moved out. Nowadays, with many people forced to move to the city to escape the country's 27-year civil war, 10 million inhabitants now jostle for space and about 7 million of these live in informal slum settlements with little to no documentation or land tenure (Bettencourt 2011), which signifies that approximately 70% of Luanda's population still live in slums. Certain neighbourhoods of Luanda are very expensive, resembling some of the world's most expensive cities, yet the poverty level is high and an estimated two-thirds of the people survive on very meagre incomes. Since 2002, the government has been enforcing evictions, while the demolition of poor areas to make way for shopping centres

and gated condominiums for Angola's elite has also been a recurrent theme (Gastrow 2017). A high number of slums is currently still situated in the centre of the city. This is a specific and distinctive characteristic of Luanda in the context of other African cities, where slums are usually located on the outskirts.

Theoretical background

The theoretical background of the present research is based on the notion of a slum defined as an inappropriate, informal settlement, illegally developed without ownership of the land or without the payment of rent, and with missing infrastructure (Vaz & Berenstein 2004; Taubenböck & Kraff 2013). Our theoretical background also takes into account the concept of governmentality, which refers to the structured mentalities, practices, rationalities and techniques through which people or systems get governed (Foucault 1991; Mayhew 2015). Governmentality applies questions of government, politics, organization and administration to the space of bodies, lives and selves (Dean 2010; Massey 2013) and brings together interests in the micro and macrophysics of power (Lemke 2002).

Governmentality is simultaneously internal and external to the state, since it is the tactics of government which make it possible to continually define and redefine what is within the competence of the state and what is not, what is public and what is private. Particularly relevant for the present analysis is the distinctive characteristic of governmentality as an analysis of practices designed to form, lead and govern citizens' behaviour, identifying the ways in which governments formulate housing policy, discovering how it is problematized and what techniques are used to manage and direct the populace (Crampton & Elden 2007). Governmentality signifies that there is no such thing as a 'pure' or 'anarchic' economy that can avoid being 'regulated' or 'civilized' by a political reaction of society, assuming that there is no market that remains independent of the state, and that an economy is always a political economy.

The 'art of government' is not limited to the field of politics as an area that is separate from the economy; instead the constitution of a conceptually and practically distinguished space, governed by autonomous laws and a proper rationality is itself an element of an 'economic' government (Lemke 2002). The state ought to be understood in terms of its survival and its limits are determined by the general tactics of governmentality. Therefore, the absence of a specific housing policy (involving the improvement of the slums through the supply of water, electricity and adequate sanitation) can be considered in itself a form of governmentality (Baptista 2015),

seeking to perpetuate the wealth accumulation of the country's leadership and to restrict the possibilities for action by the low-income population.

Luanda's slums and their rationalities

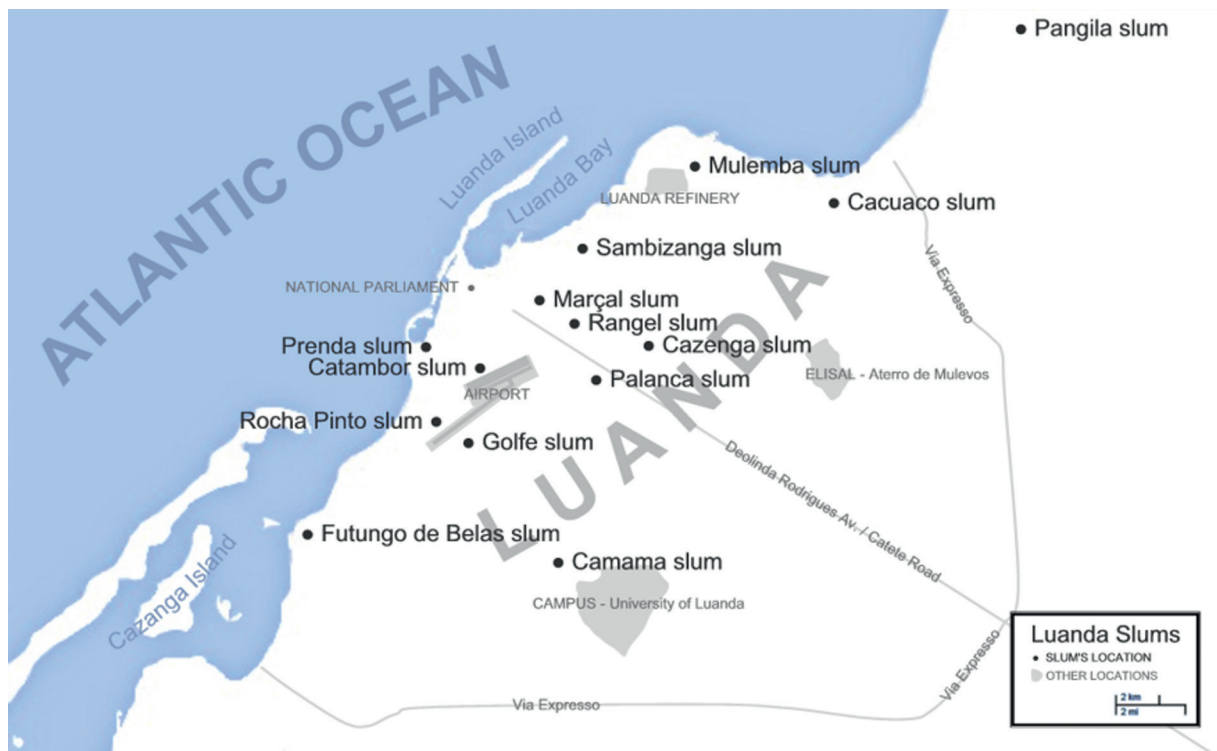
Figure 1 shows the location of some of the most extensive slums in the city of Luanda. Table 1 identifies several quantitative indicators of Luanda's slums. Those statistics reveal that there are 65 slums inhabited by 7,265,850 persons and 1,816,463 families, with an average of 4 people per family and an average density of 661.054 people/km². Around 55% of the houses in the slums have electricity but only 12.4% have water. Therefore, water availability is a major developmental issue. In fact, the prompt and reliable supply of electricity and water is a major city management issue throughout the whole city, with hotels and large buildings having their own electricity generators and water tanks, usually replenished by water trucks paid for directly by the buildings' owners. About 57% of the houses in the slum areas are built of cement, 15% are built of wood, and the rest are brick constructions. Institutional gentrification started mostly in 2001 and has continued since then. Three slums (i.e. Irak, Bagdad and Bom Chapau – also known as Fubu) were demolished in 2006, with approximately 3,000

units being eliminated to allow for the construction of new city buildings. The displaced population was housed in Kilamba Kiaxi.

In order to understand the construction, persistence, governmentalities and rationalities of Angola's slums, it is necessary to analyse the history of their governance arrangements. The first three slums (i.e. Sambizanga, Mota & Marçal) appeared during the colonial period, fed by a racially segregated population. After the country's independence in 1975 and during the civil war period, the number of slums grew (i.e. Lixeira, Rangel, Caputo, Catambor, Prenda, Calemba and Samba Pequena), followed more recently by Cazenga, Cemitério Novo, and Golfe. The most newly established slums include Palanca, Petrangol and Mulemba. Therefore, slums have become a continuous form of enabling housing to the city's poor population. The racially segregated population of colonial times has now turned into a wealth-segregated population. With resources controlled by politicians, who aim to accumulate wealth for themselves, these slum populations are completely disregarded.

It is practically impossible to detect any public policy designed to improve the poor people's living conditions. The migrant populations coming to the city were mostly the poor rural inhabitants fleeing the civil war. As

FIGURE 1
Location of some of the most extensive slums in the city of Luanda
Source: own study



mentioned before, they tended to organized themselves along ethnic lines. The chaotic urban development associated with the disorganization that followed the end of the war condemned this population to survive mostly on its own. Therefore, there was a high level of poverty, with a low level of education and health due to severe sanitation problems. Since 2002, a process of gentrification has been taking place, so that those neighbourhoods where ethnic minorities had previously established themselves are now being taken over by rich individuals, who have since settled in the area and displaced the original inhabitants (Visser 2002; Cahill 2010; Borsdorf & Hidalgo 2013). Dwellers were forced to move out by the municipal authorities. With the slums being located in the centre of the city, displacement and forced relocation appears almost necessary to develop new housing projects, even though the displaced poor population is subjected to an abuse of administrative power.

There are many instances of poor populations being forcibly expelled by the police in order to build new houses for well to do individuals (*Amnesty International* 2007). The racial segregation of the population resulting from colonization has been replaced by a form of segregation based on poverty-induced policies, this being the preferred means of domination adopted by politicians. To a certain extent, this represents a continuity between the colonial and post-colonial housing policies in Luanda.

During the colonial period, Angolans were confined to the belt around the city, without any clear plan for its expansion, the provision of sanitation facilities or the building of proper roads. This pattern was based on the notion that mass labour force living close to the colonial elite (but not actually within their environment) could easily cover situations relating to the provision of domestic staff, city cleaning, and menial employment. These housing dynamics persisted into the post-colonial period and became even more aggravated for those who were extremely poor and did not have any education, and for those who did not have access to houses or flats.

The civil war between People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) led to a sharp increase in migration from other parts of the country to Luanda, a movement that people perceived as offering them greater security (Kirby & Ward 1991). Since then, situations of three or four families sharing an area of no more than 15 m² have become commonplace, with each family having its own house built from sheets of corrugated iron or wood, and with all of them sharing the same bathroom facilities in the backyard. Sanitation is highly problematic in this neglected area of the city (Jenkins 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b). From 1987

onwards, the Angolan government adopted a market orientation, which worsened the housing situation inside the city. However, since then, the state has reduced its interest in managing houses and allocating them to private citizens. At the end of the civil war, away from the city centre but still within the city limits, families started to improve their houses without following any municipal plan, resulting in the appearance of the slums that typically characterize African cities. The municipal authorities did not have either the capacity or a coherent planning policy that they could utilize to attempt to control the city's expansion. This resulted in a situation where people occupied areas that had been bought from someone else without any public registration, and only after this did the municipal authorities follow up with legal aspects, such as the clear delimitation of housing footprints (Lees 2011).

Informal settlements in Luanda have taken on a form that goes far beyond factors like poverty and education. It is also a matter of politics, reflecting the lack of an adequate public policy. Although there exists land use law, the common practice seems to be what some authors have referred to as land speculation carried out by those who are politically well connected. Land is sold informally. Considering that the current minimum monthly wage in agriculture is 11,854 *Kuanzas*, this results in an international monthly wage of US\$123, which means that only wealthy people can buy land for urbanization, while those without money are excluded and have to squabble over small scraps of un-infructured land. Population growth has not been accompanied by a corresponding housing production, thus generating a harsh housing shortage. Currently, the housing supply is mostly aimed at the medium/high segments of the market, with an average price of US\$2,500 per square meter (*Vida Imobiliária* 2012). Nevertheless, there are a few projects in place for the redevelopment of districts managed by the municipal authorities with the cooperation of some external partners. The gentrification process appears to be enforced by the municipality. The problem of refuse disposal throughout the whole of Luanda can be used as a proxy for measuring the institutional capacity of the municipal authorities, with the press denouncing several cases of corruption involving refuse collection companies (Njoh & Akiwumi 2011). Therefore, there is barely any public management of slums designed to house the poor population, which likely has been purposefully neglected by the political power. Although Luanda's slums have strong social networks, strong community ties and reciprocity systems (Cummings 2011), the neglectful political system tends to characterize the housing development process.

TABLE 1
Characteristics of Luanda's Slums
Source: *Instituto Nacional de Estatística* (2012)

No. of obs.	Slum's name	Period	Population	Families	Population Density	Houses with electricity %	Houses with water %	Cement constructions %	Wood, palm, others %	Gentrification (year: amount of families displaced)
Golfe district										
1	Calemba	Independence	3,000	750	33.445	10	1	30	40	
2	Havemos de Voltar	Very Recent	3,000	750	142.180	65	20	80	10	
3	Avó Cumbe	Very Recent	2,000	500			2	21	94	
4	Camama	Very Recent	879,000	219,750	1924.256	20	3	75	20	
5	Cemitério Novo	Recent	65,100	16,275	85.873	15	15	40	20	
Ilha do Cabo District										
6	Praia do Bispo	Colonial	10,000	2,500	12.671	60	30	60	20	
7	Bº Mutamba	Very Recent	3,000	750	119.048	30	1	60	30	
8	Bairro Operário	Independence	3,000	750	33.482	60	15	70	10	
9	Chicala	Independence	3,000	750	66.225	70	20	80	15	
10	Mussulo	Colonial	25,000	6,250	42.258	75	20	60	20	
Ingombota District										
11	Curtume	Very Recent	2,000	500	35.587	20	1	15	80	
12	Malumuca	Very Recent	58,500	14,625	1039.076	60	10	60	20	
14	Boavista	Very Recent	1,000	250	3.397	55	3	60	30	2001: 4000
Kilamba Kiaxi District										
15	Panguila	Very Recent	456,000	114,000	1399.632	60	20	55	40	
16	Madeira	Very Recent	3,000	750	24.752	45	5	55	25	
17	Frescura	Very Recent	2,000	500	161.290	10	1	55	35	
18	Ana Ngola	Independence	3,000	750	46.802	40	1	60	20	2012:40
19	Caputo	Independence	4,000	1,000	93.458	30	1	45	55	
20	Mulemba	Very Recent	3,000	750	104.895	20	5	40	50	

No. of obs.	Slum's name	Period	Population	Families	Population Density	Houses with electricity %	Houses with water %	Cement constructions %	Wood, palm, others %	Gentrification (year: amount of families displaced)
21	Vila Estoril	Independence	5,000	1,250	50.916	50	10	65	10	
22	Bananeira	Very Recent	3,000	750	129.870	45	1	60	30	
Maianga district										
23	Catambor	Independence	3,500	875	165.094	75	2	30	60	
Prenda district										
24	Cazenda	Recent	425,000	106,250	11010.363	70	20	40	40	2011: 100
Rangel District										
25	Marçal	Colonial	15,000	3,750	41.794	65	2	60	30	
26	Mota	Colonial	5,230	1,308	20.631	20	5	50	35	
28	Palanca	Very Recent	658,000	164,500	11687.389	60	15	50	30	
29	Bom do Chapeu	Very Recent	50,000	12,500	1424.501	15	2	80	15	
30	Mira Mar de Baixo	Very Recent	7,000	1,750	118.243	50	10	65	10	
Samba district										
31	Kinanga	Very Recent	25,000	6,250	440.141	65	10	75	25	
31	Fubum	Very Recent	8,000	2,000	190.931	60	10	60	30	
32	Terra Nova	Independence	2,000	500	3.521	80	30	75	15	
33	Catiton	Very Recent	6,000	1,500	169.492	50	10	40	40	
34	Cassequel	Independence	2,000	500	5.562	70	30	65	15	
35	Ramiro	Very Recent	52,000	13,000	113.488	55	1	55	20	
36	Bairro Trinta	Very Recent	7,000	1,750	199.430	55	1	55	20	
37	Patrice Lumumba	Independence	8,000	2,000	246.914	80	20	70	10	
Samizanga district										
38	Bairro de Chapa	Very Recent	80,000	20,000	1426.025	5	0.1	20	75	
39	Antenove	Very Recent	6,000	1,500	483.871	10	2	15	75	
40	Cu do Boi	Very Recent	5,000	1,250	155.763	10	2	45	50	
41	Petrangol	Very Recent	789,520	197,380	2066.265	65	12	60	30	
42	Funda	Very Recent	7,000	1,750	12.003	75	10	70	20	
43	Kicolo	Independence	4,000	1,000	325.203	65	5	60	30	
44	Cuca	Colonial	12,000	3,000	290.557	85	25	70	20	

Conclusion: implications and recommendations

The persistence of Luanda's slums, when compared with the process of accumulation of wealth by the political network, exhibits a distinct governmentality process represented by slum development, condemning the population to poverty, and governing citizen's behaviour by maintaining residents in a state of 'un-educated' and 'un-healthy' poverty. This neglected population turns to trade in informal markets in order to survive. The municipal housing policy is oriented towards market forces and towards protecting the rich, resulting in enforced gentrification, which is a distinctive characteristic of housing policy in Africa, particularly when compared with another former Portuguese colony, Mozambique.

With water shortages and only intermittent supplies of electricity and elementary sanitation, the municipality does not bother to oversee the development of slums. This policy of neglect also affects the functioning of the whole city since those problems with the development of utilities are also found in the high-income neighbourhoods, meaning that the city is an integral and unitary system. Therefore, when the slums are located in the centre of the city, housing policies should be generalized to everybody, and not based on income levels. Furthermore, this situation also clearly affects child health (Jorgenson, Rice & Clark 2012). The policy of violence towards slum population adopted by the municipality appears to define a technology of domination, which encapsulates the subjugation of the individual to the formation of the state.

The concept of power as guidance does not exclude consensual forms or a recourse to violence, condemning the poor population to slums; it signifies that coercion is reformulated as a means of government among others: They are 'elements' or 'instruments' rather than the 'foundation' or the 'source' of power relationships (Foucault 1982: 219–222), representing relations between technologies of the self and technologies of domination (Foucault 1988), signifying that the state itself has adopted a strategy of government as a dynamic form and historic stabilization of societal power relations.

Luanda's slums are expected to continue to exist under the present state. The upgrading of slums is

commonly suggested as a sound public policy prescription (Minnery et al. 2013; Shortt & Hammett 2013), and in the context of Luanda it is likely to be the most rational housing policy, since it can attribute property rights to the poor population and allow for municipal investments in electricity, water and adequate sanitation to the whole city, thereby indirectly also serving to improve housing conditions. Furthermore, additional investment in electricity, water and adequate sanitation will be needed city-wide and not just in the slum settlements. With the high earnings obtained from oil extraction, the country does have the resources needed to fund investments in public utilities.

The continuing persistence of slums and a housing policy based on neglect signifies a form of governmentality, adopted as a means of government coercion and a way of dominating the poor population. This process degrades the city's overall quality of life. Finally, it is important to recognize that the tradition of long-term slum upgrading has also been considered a mixed public policy matter that needs to be researched further. In the immediate term, tactical urbanism interventions such as those featured in 'Uneven Growth – Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities' (Gadanhó 2014) are likely to address rapid and urban transformations across the globe, and especially in the African continent.

Acknowledgment

I found out about Professor Carlos Barros' (1954–2017) passing from a note on the ISEG's website dated February 20, 2017. When I visited him in June 2016, his health was frail and his outlook nothing compared to the person I had met initially more than a decade earlier in the context of researching the impact of the EURO2004 European Soccer Championship. About eight months before his death, Professor Barros had asked me to submit this paper for publication. Financial support was provided from FCT's national funds (*Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia*). This article is part of the Strategic Project: PESt-OE/EGE/UI0436/2014. I have only edited it lightly for content, style and references. May Professor Barros' research be studied deeply and for many decades to come.

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