Integrating food sensitive planning and urban design into urban governance actions

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FACT Food Agency Cape Town

INTEGRATING FOOD SENSITIVE PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN INTO URBAN GOVERNANCE ACTIONS

WORKING PAPER
BERLIN | CAPE TOWN | NAIROBI
OCTOBER 2022

Written by:

Gareth Haysom, Africa Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town.

Jane Battersby, Africa Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town.

Jane Weru, Muungano.

Luke Metelerkamp, TMG Research.

Nomonde Buthelezi, Food Agency Cape Town.

Correct citation:
Haysom, G., Metelerkamp, L., Buthelezi, N., Weru, J. and Battersby, J. 2022. *Integrating food sensitive planning and urban design into urban governance actions.* TMG Working Paper.

ISBN: 978-3-910560-59-8

Acknowledgements:
We wish to thank Stefanie Swanepoel for her extensive editorial support and Nicole Paganini for her input and reviews.

KEY INSIGHTS

1. **Food governance most often sits at the level of national government, and it has a primary focus on production and trade.** National governance processes, however, are often 'blind' to food-related challenges at the urban scale. These national processes are generally ill-equipped to effectively govern the intersection between the urban system and the urban food system. This leads to negative urban food system outcomes – hunger, malnutrition, and rising diet-related non-communicable diseases, such as obesity. In these matters, cities are critical governance actors. While some early efforts are underway to devolve food security mandates from national to local governments, policy lock-ins continue to dictate how food systems are governed. These lock-ins are compounded by outdated framings of food insecurity that are often implicitly framed by a rural production perspective.

2. **Cities clearly *do* have a food mandate, *but* they often don't view themselves as having one**. The argument that cities and towns do not have a food mandate or that it is an unfunded mandate is a red herring that distracts from the overarching obligation on all spheres of government to act on food-related challenges. This is evident through many African country development plans, commitments to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ratification of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which enshrines the Right to Food. Countries, such as South Africa and Kenya, have additional constitutional mandates to proactively govern urban food systems. This misunderstanding results in problematic state responses to food insecurity at a city level. These include the denial of responsibility, the deflection of responsibility and the pursuit of ineffective silver-bullet solutions. All of these can intersect with each other in ways that obscure the state's obligations to support the progressive realisation of the Right to Food.

3. **Three challenges emerge because of the 'invisibility' of the urban mandate to govern food systems.** First, broader planning and governance decisions are made without due consideration of food and nutrition outcomes; second, where actions are taken, most are project oriented, with short timelines and lacking systemic and

transversal engagement; and third, when food and the food system are seen as the responsibility of urban governance actors, their approaches and actions are largely and problematically only aligned to policing, permitting and urban farming. These production-orientated and/or rules-based approaches to governing food in African cities deny city management the opportunity to act strategically in terms of food systems governance.

4. **Orientating urban food systems towards the realisation of Right to Food requires a food sensitive approach to urban planning and design.** Food sensitive planning is needed to resolve the disconnect between the food system and wider urban system. Governance of the food system – whether at the local or national levels – needs to be included in other planning processes related to education, infrastructure, economic development, health and nutrition, justice and so on.

5. **Significant knowledge and strategic thinking are vested at the community scale, outside of government – what we refer to as the activating environment.** Bottom-up processes that elevate the voice and participation (agency) of local actors in the food system are as important to urban food governance as formal policies and are a critical component in food sensitive planning. It is in this context of agency, power and responding to deeper systemic food insecurity challenges that engaging the activating environment around alternative forms of food governance is essential. Articulations of governance will remain largely conceptual, theoretical and distant from the lives of the urban poor unless active engagement in the sites of struggle is part of the governance process.

6. **Politicising urban food issues requires work to destigmatise the shame people feel about their own hunger.** When government fails to act on food-related challenges or fails to put in place the mandates necessary for local governments to act, these obligations get passed to society. But society cannot do this without state support. Therefore, those seeking food system transformation need to re-politicise issues around food and hunger. Frequently, stigma associated with hunger limits the potential to re-politicise hunger. This is a profound injustice, given that their situations, when dealt with individually under a cloud of shame and secrecy, are uncontrollable and unsolvable.

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List of Acronyms

BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CoCT	City of Cape Town
CoP	Community of Practice
CUA	Commune Urbaine d'Antananarivo
FACT	Food Agency Cape Town
FPC	Food Policy Council
GDP	Gross domestic product
HLPE	High Level Panel of Experts
MUFPP	Milan Urban Food Policy Pact
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMAAB	Secretaria Municipal Adjunta de Abastecimento
SPA	Special Planning Area
SSFSS	Stellenbosch Sustainable Food System Strategy
UFF	Urban Food Futures
UN	United Nations
UN-DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

This paper was produced as part of the programme Urban Food Futures, which is a transdisciplinary action-research programme conducted in cooperation with TMG's partners from local governments, academia, and civil society. Our work is centred in Nairobi and Cape Town, where we focus on informal settlements and low-income areas with a high prevalence of hunger and poverty. In Ouagadougou we conduct selected research in the urban and peri-urban area. Our action research approach involves an ongoing process of joint reflection to arrive at a shared knowledge and understanding of challenges faced, possible solutions and future perspectives. A key element in this is the acknowledgement of different forms of knowledge, as well as of the lived experience of the communities with whom we work.

1. INTRODUCTION

Our food system is failing us, particularly the poor, vulnerable and marginalised in society. It is beset with myriad challenges – significant inequality in access to food; widespread food and nutrition insecurity; the effects of biodiversity loss, ecological destruction and climate change; the impact of urbanisation trends; and failures of governance. These challenges are indicative of the polycrisis facing the world – the intersection and interaction of failing economic, environmental and social systems. Global transitional processes and emergent zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19 are exacerbating the polycrisis, with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable groups.

There is much debate about how to respond to these challenges. Some argue that we must increase food production using scientific methods, others that we must change the food regime (control of the means of production) and yet others argue that we must work from the bottom-up in society to enable different forms of engagement and action in the food system.

An interesting lens through which to view the intersection of these food-related challenges is at the urban scale – where the polycrisis manifests in diverse ways and where the urban context informs both the challenges and potential solutions. One emergent solution to solving the food system crisis at the urban scale is through alternative approaches to urban food governance.

1.1 About this report

This report focuses on the different approaches to and positions on urban food governance. It explores scales of governance and concepts of urban food systems and questions their applicability and how other processes impact on them. It also explores the role of societal and community-level agency in disrupting current models of urban food governance and supporting the emergence of more equitable and appropriate ones.

These themes form a key part of the work undertaken by the Urban Food Futures (UFF) project, a transdisciplinary action-research programme conducted in cooperation with TMG and its partners in local governments, academia and civil society. This programme aims to fundamentally rethink urban food systems with a view of identifying, testing and adapting concrete solutions for liveable futures in African cities. The UFF project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and it works closely with the African Centre for Cities, African Population and Health Research Centre, Food Agency Cape Town (FACT), Heinrich Böll Foundation Cape Town, Miramar International Foundation, Muungano wa Wanavijiji and Welthungerhilfe.

UFF works with Muungano wa Wanavijiji in Nairobi, Kenya and with FACT in Cape Town, South Africa conducting action research in slums and low-income areas characterised by high levels of hunger and poverty. It also conducts selected research in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. UFF works in and with communities to explore ways in which to transform urban food systems. Its processes involve co-researchers and participatory knowledge gathering and sharing with community members, supported by reflexivity and an acknowledgement of the validity of all forms of knowledge, including lived experience.

2. WHAT IS URBAN FOOD SYSTEM GOVERNANCE?

2.1 Shifting urban governance approaches

Contemporary urban governance views the city as an entity managed through a top-down structures that pay little attention to peoples' agency, their practical wisdom and existing forms of deep democracy (Appadurai, 2001). This structure is also not always the reality. In the cities of the global South[1], government is often only "the visible tip of the governance iceberg" (Beall, 2001:360).

There is, however, a clear need for urban governance to mean "much more than urban government" (Harvey, 1989:6) and to encompass a far broader set of stakeholders, agents, voices and perspectives. There are shifts happening in traditional urban governance models towards an emphasis on inclusivity, creative governance and pluralistic governance. These are described below.

2.1.1 Good urban governance for inclusivity

United Nations (UN)-Habitat (2002) developed a process – 'Good Urban Governance' – to expand the concept of urban governance in efforts to realise the 'inclusive cityscape'. The 'inclusive city' would ensure the "eradication of poverty through improved urban governance and improving governance as a means to achieve sustainable development" (UN-Habitat, 2002:6). This approach recognises that power exists both within and outside the formal authority of government as it includes the private sector and civil society (UN-Habitat, 2002:13). UN-Habitat (2002:14) describes urban governance as:

> … the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action can be taken. It includes formal institutions as well as informal arrangements and the social capital of citizens.

The approach is critiqued though because it is reliant on a consensus-based model of urban politics, which is seldom present, particularly in contested African urban spaces (Pieterse, 2008). Most African cities stay embedded in traditional hierarchical governmental structures. In addition, the implementation of structural adjustment policies and austerity measures has led to power concentrating away from the city scale to accrue at the national government level. There is a significant challenge in creating opportunities for other voices – such as civil society and the public sector – in this centralised governance arena (Kearns and Paddison, 2000), particularly if the aim is to create bottom-up and contextually specific governance.

2.1.2 Creative change governance

Healey's (2004) investigations into the creative modes of urban governance (or creative governance that views governance and creativity as intertwined phenomena and not oppositional) connects questions of values, norms and ways of acting in the crafting or shaping of collective action. This requires that governments recognise that change is part of the governance process and that transformation processes accept that conflict and instability are 'normal' qualities of local governance (Coaffee and Healey, 2003). Urban governance is therefore less about an attempt to regain control and more about an attempt to regulate difference in urban arenas that are themselves experiencing considerable change (Kearns and Paddison, 2000).

While this approach can be understood as a positive set of incremental governance-informed improvements, it must be acknowledged that change can also be driven by public action that is driven by social disadvantage and blatant injustice (Beall, 2011). Holden (2011) questions whether participants in these processes build a rational consensus beginning from root values and visions or whether they develop a conflictual consensus working from incommensurably diverse life worlds.

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[1] The term global South is used for clarification purposes to locate these cities in political and economic contexts. It is acknowledged though that these types of framing are problematic in that they are broad and not specific, as is also the case with the terms 'developed' versus 'developing' and' first world' versus' third world'.

2.1.3 Pluralistic governance

Notions of urban food governance in which a far wider collection of stakeholders are actively involved in the urban food system has been referred to as pluralistic governance (Koc and Bas, 2012). This often takes the form of multi-stakeholder partnerships driving change in governance.

There are some concerns related to this approach in that it can enable those with a direct responsibility to govern – specifically government/state entities – to avoid that responsibility. Swyngedouw (2005) notes that sometimes these governance processes can de-politicise urgent challenges that are inherently political. This is because participation is sometimes seen as the end goal and consensus is often achieved through the domination of economic and political interests (Moragues-Faus, 2020). If there is a lack of dissenting voices in these processes or these voices have no power, the process cannot be called democratic (Swyngedouw, 2005). Swyngedouw (2005:1991) notes that:

> … arrangements of governance have created new institutions and empowered new actors, while disempowering others … that this shift from 'government' to 'governance' is associated with the consolidation of new technologies of government, on the one hand, and with profound restructuring of the parameters of political democracy on the other, leading to a substantial democratic deficit.

2.2 Governance of urban food systems

Urban food systems are not typically part of contemporary urban governance frameworks. They have been increasingly marginalised as an area of focus, in part, because of governments' view that industrialisation of the food system is a key mechanism for growing production, simplifying distribution and promoting access to food through related global value chains. This view assumes that if sufficient food is produced and if trade is made easier, governments will attain food security for their peoples. This view is, however, embedded in an outdated understanding of food security, one which has its origins in responding to regional famines where hunger was experienced by large groups of a specific society and increased production was used to ameliorate such issues. This view also skews focus and governance to agriculture and rural contexts.

Food governance thus most often sits at the level of national government with a primary focus on production and trade. While definitions of food security have evolved over the past few decades, this has not been absorbed into governance perspectives and policy lock-ins continue to dictate how food systems are governed. National-scale processes, however, are often 'blind' to food-system related challenges at the urban scale and are generally ill-equipped to effectively govern the intersection between the urban and the urban food systems or the dual challenge of rapid urbanisation and negative urban food system outcomes – hunger, malnutrition, wasting, rise in diet-related non-communicable diseases, such as obesity (Frayne, Pendleton, Crush, Acquah, Battersby, Lennard, Bras et al., 2010). It is in these circumstances where people's required food and nutrition needs create a political necessity for their rulers to act. And if leaders, both national and urban, fail to act, this can provide the urban poor with the political leverage to act in their own interest. It is here where the politics of provisions, those moments when it is safe to challenge the state and even actively protest and disrupt wider societal needs, as evidenced in recent food riots, will certainly become far more evident in African cities (Bohstedt, 2014, Hossain and Scott-Villiers, 2017).

2.2.1 Urban food system governance in Africa

African cities are increasingly becoming the sites of struggle. High levels of informality, inequality, joblessness, increasing costs for food and other essential items (including transport) contribute to a growing volatility, which can result in national challenges, as in the case of food riots (Moseley, 2022). Urban areas in Africa are undergoing rapid transition fuelled by natural internal urban population increase and migration (Crush and Frayne, 2011; Chikanda, Crush and Tawodzera, 2020). The urban millennium poses many daunting challenges, not the least of which is how to 'feed' hungry cities and city-regions. The cities of the global South have witnessed major changes in the ways in which food supply is organised (Crush et al., 2020). In the vanguard of this transformation are national and international supermarket companies that are vertically integrating all aspects of the food value chain and incorporating cities into global food supply chains (Caesar and Crush, 2016; Crush et al., 2018; Crush and Young, 2019). Despite these changes, there is a major upsurge in levels and trends of food insecurity in these cities (Micha, Mannar, Afshin, Allemandi, Baker, Battersby et al., 2020). Rates of both undernutrition and obesity are soaring, dietary diversity is declining, and constant hunger is the norm for millions (Micha et al., 2020). Most cities are awash with food; the key issue is not how to grow more food but how to improve access to the food that is already grown and available (Battersby and Crush, 2014; Frayne and McCordic, 2018; Paganini, 2021). In addition, economic growth in many countries is far from inclusive with high unemployment rates and precarious employment and informality the new norm (Chen, 2012). The informal food economy has become a critical livelihood source for many who operate micro-enterprises in markets, on the streets and around transportation hubs. The informal economy is also a critical food source for low-income consumers (Crush, 2016).

Most African cities, however, have no *direct* mandate – or authority – to govern urban food systems, including authority to combat challenges such as food insecurity despite their governance activities intersecting directly with the urban food system (Battersby and Muwowo, 2018). For example, there are direct intersections through approval of development plans (Peyton, Mosely and Battersby, 2015), granting of permits to and collection of licence fees from food market vendors (Sibanda and von Blottnitz, 2018), regulation of the informal food trader sector and management of market and transport infrastructure (Battersby and Muwowo, 2018). In addition, many other urban concerns are directly linked to the broader urban food system, such as health, education, infrastructure, climate change, environmental resilience and the economy.

It is incorrect though to assume an absence of food governance and planning in African cities. The history of control of urban space and urban populations in Africa is inherently linked to the control of food. Research focusing on African colonial town planning shows official interest in controlling disease (by preventing certain kinds of food preparation, supply and trade) (Duminy, 2018), migration and in promoting racial segregation (Duminy, 2018). Such governance approaches remain, and still dictate budget allocations and governance responses.

Far less attention was directed at official responses to urban food challenges in relation to problems such as nutrition, poverty and labour unrest (Clayton and Savage, 1974; Cooper, 1987). Current approaches to food systems are outdated and the bias towards increased rural production to solve urban food insecurity is misguided. The persistent view that African societies are predominantly rural, and that the population comprises mostly small-scale, or subsistence farmers has created a rural bias in food security programming and policy (Battersby and Haysom, 2018). This position is problematic from a policy perspective and dominant global governance positions, such as those articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although SDG 2 (End hunger) places a more extensive focus on food, it is still within a productionist paradigm that views hunger as a consequence of scarcity (Battersby, 2017). Food system interventions at the urban scale tend to focus on development aid and social protection resulting in a situation where food security responses could be described as:

> … narrower 'twin-track' [responses] of (a) direct interventions and social investments to address the immediate needs of the poor and hungry (food aid, social safety nets, and so on) and (b) development programmes to enhance the performance of the productive sectors (especially to promote agriculture and rural development), create employment and increase the value of assets held by the poor.
>
> Committee on World Food Security, 2006 in Crush and Frayne, 2011:529

The result of the rural bias is that while cities clearly do have a food mandate (given the multiple functions cities play in regulating food spaces and processes), they do not view themselves as having it. But cities and the food system have always been connected and it is the relationship between cities and food systems that has enabled some cities to grow and flourish, while others have not (Steel, 2008). Despite imaginations of rural production by smallholder farmers and notions of empowerment through land reform (Walker, 2002; Lahiff, 2008; Vink and Kirsten, 2019), the colonial (in Africa) and apartheid-era processes (in South Africa) of dispossession and the destruction of a black farmer class means that the urban food system has in fact dominated the Anglophone African food landscape since the early 1900s (Bundy, 1972; Wolpe, 1972). Later industrialisation strategies further reinforced this urban food system, which was designed to keep urban wages low by ensuring that cheap staple foods were accessible in urban areas (Wolpe, 1972). As such, despite urban governments claiming the lack of a food mandate, the design, governance and economies of cities have always played an active role in urban food systems and influenced how they function and who they benefit.

There are three challenges that emerge due to the 'invisibility' of the urban mandate to govern food systems. First, governance decisions are made without consideration of food and nutrition outcomes; second, most actions are project oriented, with short timelines and lacking systemic and transversal engagement; and third, when food and the food system are seen as the responsibility of urban governance actors, their approaches and actions are largely and problematically only aligned to policing and permitting. The responsive rules-based approaches to governing food in African cities denies city management the opportunity to act strategically in terms of food systems governance.

City of Cape Town's programmatic linkages to food

The City of Cape Town (CoCT) in South Africa recently conducted an internal audit of all programmes and departments actively engaging in food, nutrition and food systems-related aspects. It identified more than 40 departments and active projects, including those under themes of health and nutrition, poverty alleviation and disaster relief, and economic enablement (CoCT, 2021). Despite this, food security is still a so-called 'unfunded mandate' in the eyes of most local government actors (Battersby, Hayson, Tawodzera, Mclachlan and Crush, 2014).

The argument that cities do not have a mandate or that it is an unfunded one is a red herring that distracts from the overarching obligation on all spheres of government to act on food-related challenges. This is evident through many African country development plans that note hunger and malnutrition as key challenges, through African states' commitment to attaining the SDGs and their commitment to supporting the Right to

Food through ratification of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (which includes the right to an adequate standard of living) and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which enshrines the Right to Food. Countries such as South Africa and Kenya, in which UFF operates, have constitutional mandates to proactively govern urban food systems.

Kenya's mandate to support the Right to Food

Article 43 of Kenya's Constitution notes that all spheres of government have a constitutional and civic duty to achieve the Right to Food. Kenya's National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2011) seeks to ensure that "all Kenyans, throughout their life-cycle enjoy at all times safe food in sufficient quantity and quality to satisfy their nutritional needs for optimal health" (Government of Kenya, 2011). Unfortunately, chronic food insecurity is a daily reality for more than 10 million Kenyans (Kimani-Murage, Holding, Fotso, Madisa, Kahurani and Zulu, 2011; Kimani-Murage, Schofield, Wekesah, Mohamed, Mberu, Ettarh, et al., 2014; Mutoro, Garcia, Kimani-Murage and Wright, 2022).

A 2018 survey of 1 434 households in Nairobi across 23 randomly selected administrative locations found that nearly a third (29%) are categorised as food secure, 13% mildly food insecure, 33% moderately food insecure and 25% severely food insecure. Cumulatively, more than half (58%) experienced food insecurity (Owuor, 2018). About 12% of households lack the diversity of diet considered to be a pre-condition for good health (Owour, 2018).

South Africa's mandate to support the Right to Food

In South Africa, the Right to Food and Nutrition is enshrined in sections 27.1b and 28.1c of the Constitution. This obliges all state entities to ensure the progressive realisation of the Right to Food (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution obliges local government, including of urban areas, to uphold this right. These constitutional mandates are not, however, supported by policy or budget allocations (Battersby et al., 2014). The National Policy of Food and Nutrition Security (2014) unfortunately is orientated towards rural production (Ndimande, 2015). Almost 50% of South Africans were categorised as food insecure prior to the advent of COVID-19 in 2021 (Pereira, 2014).

A 2018 survey of 2 500 households in Cape Town across high-income (10%), medium-income (20%) and low-income (70%) areas showed that 45% of households were food secure and 36% were severely food insecure (Crush et al. 2018). Further, 43% of households had poor nutritional outcomes, with a further 20% characterised by extremely poor nutrition. Battersby (2017) notes that most poor households rely on multiple food access options, despite the proliferation of supermarkets in the city. This points to income levels being a key determinant of access to food.

When government fails to act on food-related challenges or fails to put in place the mandates necessary for urban governments to act, the obligation passes to society. And in this space, those seeking change need to re-politicise issues around food and hunger, that were de-politicised through historical processes, including dispossession from land aligned to economic policies and strategies applied through earlier industrialisation phases. Only recently have questions started to emerge about the implications of food system challenges for cities (Roberts, 2008; Winne, 2009; Rocha and Lessa, 2009). Highlighting faults within the urban food system implies deeper systemic difficulties with the wider food system, specifically how food systems intersect with urban systems.

Besides the urgent need for governance stakeholders to act at the level at which the challenges are manifesting as outlined above, governance responses require a deliberate activation of different actors and scales of action. The state does not hold absolute franchise over food system actions. Equally, the state does not hold all urban food system knowledge. Significant knowledge and strategic thinking, as well as legitimacy, is vested at the community scale – what we refer to as the activating environment (see Figure 2). Bottom-up processes that draw on actors and processes that elevate voice and participation (agency) are as important to urban food governance as policies. At the same time, urban governments need to act with other spheres of government to reclaim governance authority over urban food systems and engage with challenges in a way that aligns to political and policy mandates.

The High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on Food Security and Nutrition has noted the need for democratic processes that enact input, voice and participation in governance from the urban majority. The inclusion of agency and wider sustainability as dimensions of food security are essential (Clapp, Moseley, Burlingame and Termine, 2021). Urban food governance actions that engage the physical, material and relational properties of urban place and space are urgently required. In this context governance is about more than just policies, but also active processes and agents shaping the nature of development and enactment of these processes, as sites of complex socio-spatial and material relations that engage both food and urban system needs.

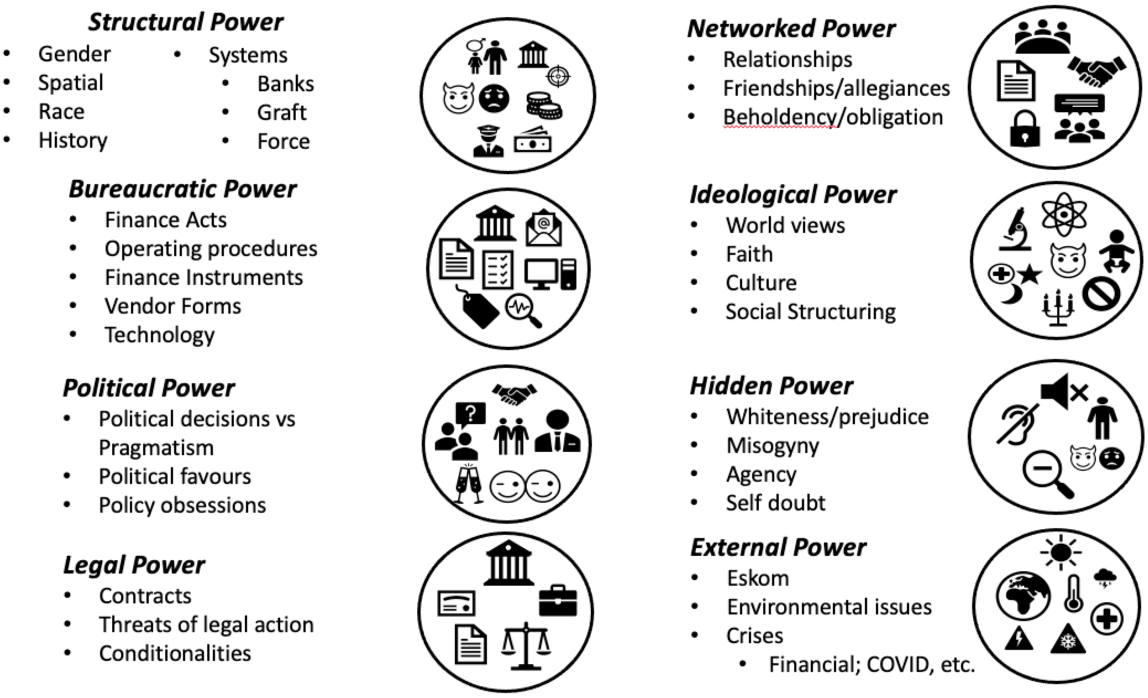
Participants at FACT workshops noted that the South African government had failed the litmus test for an effective response to COVID-19 because it was not inclusive. One participant noted that:

> *During that time a lot of organisations and government departments got together and started discussions and provided what they thought were solutions to our food crises.* ***What they forgot was to invite us, we were not offered a seat at the table – a lot of conversations and dialogue was happening about and around us but without us.***
>
> *(FACT workshop participant, 2020, Cape Town)*

It is important to note that governance and policy are not the same thing, although they can affect each other. Urban food governance encompasses the processes and actions that engage the physical, material and relational properties of urban place and space. Governance is in this sense more 'alive' than policies, it encompasses active processes and agents engaged in shaping the nature of development and enactment of these processes and it is a site of complex socio-spatial and material relations (Jessop, Brenner and Jones, 2008). For this reason, agency, power and policy intersect to determine the nature and form of urban food governance.

3. EXPLORING THE ROLE OF POWER AND AGENCY IN URBAN FOOD SYSTEM GOVERNANCE

Appropriate and effective food systems governance is clearly a primary vehicle through which to address the challenges found in African urban food systems. It also, however, offers a way in which to chart new ways of engagement, structuring and operationalising alternative food futures. People's ability to participate, however, is shaped by the factors of power and agency. All actors exert some form of agency and some form of power and, by the same token, can knowingly or unknowingly constrain others' agency and disempower them. These factors require further interrogation in urban food system governance spaces.



Structural Power

- Gender
- Spatial
- Race
- History
- Systems
    - Banks
    - Graft
    - Force

Bureaucratic Power

- Finance Acts
- Operating procedures
- Finance Instruments
- Vendor Forms
- Technology

Political Power

- Political decisions vs Pragmatism
- Political favours
- Policy obsessions

Legal Power

- Contracts
- Threats of legal action
- Conditionalities

Networked Power

- Relationships
- Friendships/allegiances
- Beholdency/obligation

Ideological Power

- World views
- Faith
- Culture
- Social Structuring

Hidden Power

- Whiteness/prejudice
- Misogyny
- Agency
- Self doubt

External Power

- Eskom
- Environmental issues
- Crises
    - Financial; COVID, etc.

Figure 1: Different manifestations of power

3.1 The factor of power

Power is central to many schools of thought on governance. It is embedded in contemporary discussions on 'whiteness' (Posel, 1999; Goudge, 2003), indigenous rights (Ryser, 2012) and other discourses relating to inequity. It is also a theme in longer-standing writings and engagements, such as those by Lukes, Bourdieu, Barnes and Foucault (see Rafanell and Gorringe, 2010).

UFF seeks to engage the factor of power by naming different types and forms of power to enable the 'seeing' of power and to provide a lens through which the different types can be observed. Figure 1 illustrates a generalised categorisation of types and forms of power.

The eight types of power identified in Figure 1 are elaborated on below.

- Structural power sits within society and includes deep-seated power issues, such as gender, spatial design of physical places that can disempower, race, history and system structure. It also includes how force is exercised to drive specific systems.
- Bureaucratic power reflects a set of processes that include finance acts, contracts, operating procedures, finance

instruments, requests for vendor forms and technology. These are things that can exclude or make people feel less powerful because they disempower and disenfranchise. At times, bureaucrats can assert different kinds of power to shield themselves as actors but blame other structures for their inability to act.

- **Political power** captures how politics plays out, how it is asserted and how political power 'lands' in other processes. Examples include how political decisions are linked to political party mandates and how these might contradict pragmatic and necessary decisions.
- **Legal power** – tools or instruments such as contracts, threats of legal action, the imposition of conditionalities, are all components of more legally orientated form of power.

The next set of power structures is often less clear, but perhaps even more important when considering power.

- **Network power** includes aspects such as relationships, friendships, allegiances, beholdency and obligation. These aspects of power form part of a broader network that might assert power because of that network. Such manifestations of power are often less clear and are often not well understood and can be asserted unknowingly.
- **Ideological power** might include differing worldviews, faiths, cultures or social structuring. This form of power is often deeply embedded in a person's identity, who they might be and how they see themselves in the world.
- **Hidden power** – actors might assert a certain kind of power that manifests, for assorted reasons, in what is described as hidden power. Hidden power is even more challenging and includes things like 'Whiteness', racism, prejudice and misogyny, as well as 'maleness'. The converse of hidden power is self-doubt and silencing. One can be intimidated by power and not want to enter that space – not engaging can also be a form of power in this instance as can deliberate withdrawal and self-silencing. Power is not then just about assertions but also about how it is used in different ways.
- **External power** reflects challenges beyond one's control or challenges with which one cannot necessarily actively engage. Examples are COVID-19, economic downturns, power scarcity, floods and droughts and climate change.

It can sometimes be difficult to name which power is at play when it intersects and overlays with other types. Reflexive skills and an ability to detect nuance are needed to untangle power 'threads', which can require confronting those wielding the power. And this, in turn, could escalate these dynamics unless the those wielding the power are emotionally mature and reflexive enough to acknowledge what they are doing. It is not often possible for those being acted on in this way to engage in confrontation and they should not be expected to do this. When structures, organisations and individuals assert disproportionate power, other processes are needed to level the playing field. A potential mechanism for countering power is through proactive governance processes that neutralise the assertion of power in direct or preferably more subtle and generative ways.

3.2 The factor of agency

It is common in African cities to find enclave developments for the rich that sometimes even capture critical services at subsidised rates while most of the urban population struggle to access services. Inclusivity in this context is a pipe dream for many. This 'splintering' has been deepened through economic policies coupled with exposure to ecological and wider structural challenges. Earlier Keynesian principles of inclusion and now more neoliberal privatised urban forms have resulted in the state pulling back from its obligations to mediate, control and police. This means that the state plays a far less significant role than society in shaping the urban form. But it is people's ability to participate in processes that shape the urban form that determines whether the food system, for example, is just and equitable. Current policy and political processes disregard the role of the poor as agents in describing and addressing the dimensions of their degraded living environments (Pieterse and van Donk, 2013).

Pieterse suggests that rebuilding is facilitated through "agonistic politics" (Pieterse, 2006:289) or through the creation of "*homebru* strategies that emerge and flourish in a context of radical democratic politics that stretch across formal–informal, concrete–symbolic and consensual–conflictual binaries" (Pieterse, 2006:300). In short, communities enact collective agency to bring about change. Examples can be found in the slums of Mumbai, India where groups came together to achieve their respective goals using a strategy of 'show-and-tell' (Taylor, 1992) to make visible their needs and demands (Appadurai, 2002). Appadurai (2002) describes this local form of agency as 'deep democracy', which aligns with Pieterse's notion of phronesis or the ability, desire and processes to realise good and effective action in complex and unfolding circumstances.

Processes and actions such as this can be broadly described as agency. Agency is perhaps an overused term and one often used without the necessary nuanced context and framing. It is not simply voice or the ability to choose, as it can be enabled or constrained by the factor of power. Acting in an agentic manner is also part of a deeply thought-out process. In the recent re-framing of the wider definition of food security (HLPE, 2020), agency is inserted as one of six dimensions of food security. It is described as being "the capacity of individuals or groups to make their own decisions about what foods they eat, what foods they produce, how that food is produced, processed and distributed within food systems, and their ability to engage in processes that shape food system policies and governance" (HLPE, 2020:8). The HLPE (2020:8) rightly point out that agency goes "beyond access to material resources in that it includes empowerment – the ability of people to take actions that help improve their own wellbeing, as well as their ability to engage in society in ways that influence the broader context, including their exercise of voice in shaping policies". In their wider framing of agency, the HLPE notes how power and context intersect with governance, that "most agency is situated, meaning that it is constrained by local power dynamics, wealth disparities, gender norms, and governance structures" (HLPE, 2020:8).

Questions of agency have been the subject of much debate. Central to their argument is that current perspectives of agency do not provide insight into how agency "interpenetrates with and impacts upon the temporal relational context of action" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:1012) – actors live simultaneously in the past, future and present. Agency is inherently social and relational (Emirbayer, 1997) and consists of three key elements: iteration, projectivity and practical evaluation. Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 970) define agency as:

> *… the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments – the temporal-relational context of action – which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations.*

The above position suggests that agency is also contingent on context and place, where the sites in which agency is being exercised are themselves also temporal as well as relational fields. Since social actors are embedded in place, while also reflecting on and projecting a future – oriented toward the past, the future, and the present at any given moment – agency and the sites of struggle are directly connected through pragmatic and strategic decision-making processes (Emirbayer and Mische 1998:963-964).

The utility of this framing is that it elevates the notion of agency well beyond that of freedom of choice in respect of food. This reflects agency as iterative engagement processes of constant sensing and testing where decision making, and not choice, is influenced by contingent and emergent actions and processes, many of which are unrelated to food decisions.

FACT's work illustrates how agency incorporates the elements of everydayness, constant sensing and testing, collective understanding and action, and contextuality.

Case study: Building agency through the Food Agency Cape Town organisation

FACT is a community-led organisation through which members "use food to unpack food injustices, advocate for food agency in Cape Town and surrounds, and to connect communities" (FACT, 2022:1). Members include urban farmers and community kitchen heads. FACT is a partner in the UFF programme. It has hosted a series of community dialogues to destigmatise hunger, identify common challenges and collaboratively come up with solutions. FACT also undertook a Food Agency study, interviewing 1 824 people, which identified the need to bring more people together to share their stories.

Food committees in other places in the world have shown the potential of these types of cross-sectoral platforms to engage local food system actors in dialogue, plan specific interventions to improve local system governance, and develop community-based models for democratic food systems governance.

FACT works to measure agency, understand it on an individual and collective scale, and enhance it. There are challenges around measuring agency as stigma, shame and historical normalisation of food poverty have served to de-politicise food insecurity and hunger and simultaneously situate blame at the level of the individual or household. In the communities in which FACT works, this individual is often the mother or grandmother. FACT's work in different communities also highlights the importance of context in matters of agency. Food committees in some areas focus on technical work and training and others use food as a vehicle to talk about intersectionality, while others focus on building small entrepreneurial structures. It is these contextual flavours that make a great city-wide platform of committees fostering local food system change through community-led processes in organised engagement on a local level.

FACT's approach to addressing food injustices is activated through various activities:

- Production of a podcast series called *Uphakantoni*, which aims to reach a variety of audiences in communities, including persons with special needs or disabilities.
- A Kitchen Retreat to create visions for community kitchens and look at how to not only feed the hungry but also communities holistically, while building self-sustainable and resilient communities.
- Production of *Isiswenye*, a short film that displays a household's food insecurity during COVID -19 and challenges faced by food growers.
- Kitchen Exchanges to facilitate cross learning and enable better understanding of the other forms of work undertaken by the kitchens and around the kitchens, as well as to identify the needs of the communities and provide insights to how kitchens work in their existing communities.
- Food Dialogues to enable better understanding of governance and policy challenges, as well as the logics of the state.

The dialogues are envisioned as spaces where actors can self-organise into informal coalitions capable of identifying key challenges, priorities, opportunities, and action plans for more democratic and localised food systems. And further that they would be able to implement these in principled and collaborative ways. Through the co-learning and organising structure of the food committees, local actors will be better positioned to respond effectively to obstacles, gaps, and opportunities in the production and distribution of food and to build durable democratic models for planning local food systems. These, in turn, will lead to improved food access and dietary diversity and greater inclusion in economic activity for local actors and end users. The dialogues were reiterated in a series of 'dinner parties' at which food and information was shared with research/storytelling 'dishes' served as appetisers and as a way to stimulate discussion.

These interventions have supported the emergence of stronger senses of individual and community-level agency. Some key takeaway statements from the dialogues and dinner parties were: "United as a community we have the power to impact change by influencing shifts on the strict (top down and imposed) policies that restrict and limit us from flourishing, especially as marginalised groups" and "The limiting government policies need 'community's agency' as a collective for them to change, reflect and shape the life we all want."

Agency gets people thinking about their autonomy and leads them to ask themselves questions about what it means to define their power. Food agency takes the concept of individual agency a step further recognising the power that local actors have when they build a strong voice as a combined group active in the food sector.

It is in this context of agency, power and responding to deeper systemic food insecurity and direct hunger challenges that engaging around alternative forms of food governance is essential. Articulations of governance will remain largely conceptual, theoretical and distant unless active engagement in the sites of struggle is part of any governance process.

4. THE POTENTIAL OF ALTERNATIVE FOOD SYSTEM GOVERNANCE MODELS

There is an international trend of attempts to decentralise food governance, a trend that sees cities – government, society or both – taking back control of their food systems (MacRae and Donahue, 2013; Ilieva, 2016; Raja, Morgan and Hall, 2017). Increasingly these processes are seeking ways to expand urban governance mandates, at times even seeking change beyond the urban food system (Schiff, 2008; Moragues-Faus and Morgan, 2015; Harper, Shattuck, Holt-Giménez, Alkon and Lambrick, 2009). These emerging trends are however, largely confined to certain global North countries (Haysom, 2015; Sonnino, 2019).

Many concepts of alternative forms of food system governance originate in the global North and have at times been framed as pluralistic processes (Koc and Bas, 2012) in that they actively embrace plurality, voice and diversity. While implementation may vary in focus and operating structures, these urban food governance structures can be broadly conceptualised as Food Policy Councils (FPCs). Governance within this framing seeks to engage actors and processes across both state and non-state actors and is characterised by varying degrees of either state or civil society control (MacRae and Donahue, 2013). These FPCs are viewed as vehicles to democratise the food system (Winne, 2009) and often as a tool to liberate urban consumers from increasingly globalised food systems (McMichael, 2005). North American examples demonstrate a diversity of governance positions from structures officially embedded in city government to those operating independently of city processes. Most fall between these. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Food for Cities initiative and Framework for the Urban Food Agenda, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) and their aligned processes, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, C40 and more have been active in this space. The UN-Habitat New Urban Agenda actively sought to insert food into urban governance processes (UN-Habitat, 2016). Each carry a specific operational and philosophical view of where urban food system challenges lie, the urban governance approaches needed, and where best to intervene. The interventions have raised the profile of urban food policies and practices and resulted in cities adopting food policy actions.

Emergent alternative approaches often focus on spatially bound relations between consumers (mostly urbanites) and the food market (Wiskerke, 2009). They can take many forms. Some are characterised by a middle-class idealism of sustainability and eco-friendliness (McCullough, Pingali and Stamoulis, 2008; Roberts, 2008; Belo, 2009; Patel and McMichael, 2009; Guthman, 2011; Clapp and Helleiner, 2012). Some are hybrid forms involving the state and civil society to varying degrees; a review of 176 alternative food networks in the United States notes that more than two-thirds had some form of link to government (Haysom, 2014). All the alternative approaches, however, create space for the emergence of a range of food governance processes.

While the conception of urban food governance in the global North is relational in nature, it may not be applicable to or even possible in the context of countries in the global South, particularly African urban areas. There are various reasons for this, including that:

- Engaging the African state can be challenging and there is an evident lack of state focus on urban food systems. Local-level governments often claim that they have no mandate, and no responsibility, to govern food systems or ensure food security. This is often because of the framing of the food system within a production paradigm – and thus a rural challenge.

- No African city is the same and so context-specific approaches are needed and these need to be inclusive and capture a multitude of voices, including of those who have been disempowered and marginalised from governance spaces.
- African governments face myriad pressing developmental and economic challenges, and so look for uniform and quick solutions to pressing problems. But the pathways to finding inclusive and appropriate urban food governance approaches need to be incrementally explored with consensus built between a wide diversity of stakeholders. 'Coalitions of the willing' are needed. This means that this can be a slow and time-intensive process for the state.

In addition, these examples of alternative approaches from the global North align to a particularly Northern vision of food system change. What the food insecure in cities in the global South aspire to is an ability to engage with the food system. Their food system engagement is less about engagement for change, but rather around enabling access to spaces for engagement. Bearing in mind that these spaces may not be open or may be constricted by exertion of different types of power and agency. In these spaces for engagement, needs also often differ significantly from those evident in Northern processes. For many in African cities, the issues are first and foremost about access to nutritious affordable food, rather than the sustainability-oriented priorities of the North.

4.1 Factors to consider in the adoption of alternative approaches in the global South

A key consideration in this change process is in fact the nature of urbanisation itself. The urban transition in Africa differs greatly from that which took place in the global North. It is also very different to urbanisation processes in South America and parts of Asia. This means that additional factors have to be considered in the adoption and implementation of alternative food system models. Five are of significant importance: the current state of food insecurity; use and strength of existing solidary and community networks; the gendered nature of food and nutrition insecurity and of responses; the democratic nature of spaces for urban food governance engagement; and the nature of the state. These are outlined below.

4.1.1 State of food insecurity in African cities

The levels of food and nutritional insecurity in African cities are alarming and require urgent action.

As noted earlier in this report, African cities have a long history of governance and planning of and for the food system. These processes determined the wider food system that is evident across southern and eastern Africa and is particularly evident in, although not exclusive, to countries with an Anglophone colonial legacy. This laid the foundation for a consolidation of downstream food system changes, across almost all value chains, facilitated by structural changes within African food systems. These changes stemmed from the combination of colonial and later industrial policy and then structural adjustment enabled/driven and state-enabled, large-scale (white or corporate, or both) farmer support structures. These deliberate apartheid and colonial dispossession and spatial management processes supported an accelerated transition to an industrial food system. Today, this means that most Africans (both urban and rural) are fed by large consolidated corporate entities (Greenberg, 2016).

A particular governance trajectory has enabled private-sector dominance of current food systems. This trajectory stems from state actions taken to ensure a supply of cheap labour, including dispossession of land and farming rights through associated laws and taxes (Bundy, 1972) and a restructuring of the agricultural economy to privilege a particular class of farmer (Wolpe, 1972). These foundations were amplified by structural adjustment programmes (Maxwell, 1999) across the continent that then oiled the transition to the liberalised food system of today (Greenberg, 2017). Despite the significant role that the urban consumer plays in the food system, food system governance typically remains focused on the production of key staple crops in the rural areas. And these crops are typically not local or indigenous crops, but global commodity crops (rice, maize, soy, coffee). Aligned to this process has been the marginalisation of traditional foods – from fields, from tables and shop shelves. This consolidation of diet has critical governance implications in that it serves to not only pacify consumers, but de-politicises the notion of a just food system. Needs are reduced to the level of access to key staples and not much else. When these staples are in short supply or their prices increase dramatically, this has drastic political consequences, as seen in the Arab Spring uprisings. The 2008 food crisis was seen as a pivotal moment for change, but it resulted in further consolidation and a retreat to high-input agriculture, dominated by input companies and liberalised national food systems (Land and Barling, 2012). Single challenges can, however, provoke and prompt change. The challenges that arose from COVID-19-related lockdowns highlighted the significant limitations and vulnerabilities of current food governance approaches.

To effectively engage with food system challenges in African cities, governance actors need to move beyond the food system and work at the intersections spanning other connected systems. In the urban context this means not just the food and urban systems, but also health, infrastructure and extending beyond the urban management domain, social services – including education, social services and support, economic and, importantly, social systems (including community, families, culture, reciprocal support structures, etc.). Understanding these intersections is essential. As drivers and consequences of food insecurity differ in each context, we need multiple approaches – and we do not have the luxury to prototype and trial these over time. This means that we need to engage all possible pathways to shifting the system in different contexts.

4.1.2 Use and strength of existing networks

The formal and informal markets are the most important sources of food for the urban poor, but the market does not work adequately. Many are dependent on alternative sources of food (Battersby, 2012a). Community kitchens and food access hubs are essential food access points and have grown in importance during the COVID-19 lockdowns (Paganini and Mwangi, 2021). School feeding programmes play a vital role in delivering nutrition to children, particularly those still in Early Childhood Development centres (Devereux, Hochfeld, Karriem, Mensah, Morahanye, Mismango et al., 2018; Wairimu, 2022). This means that we need to understand how food is accessed through non-retail options, how these networks operate, what drives them, and how power and reciprocity play out within them. In addition, alternative sources of food include sharing meals and borrowing from neighbours (Battersby, 2012a), which has implications for the erosion of social networks, which are subject to notions of fair exchange and reciprocity. Studies find that often people choose to rely on welfare than on eroding social networks (Duncan, 2021).

There is also a stigma associated with hunger. This is a profound injustice, given that these situations, when dealt with individually under a cloud of shame and secrecy, are uncontrollable and unsolvable. FACT's work in Cape Town communities finds that while participants in their workshops focus their energies on coping strategies that addressed their personal capacity to access food (planting food, selling food or making use of marine resources), these solutions do not address the systemic nature of the problem. FACT's work enabled people to start talking about the ‘shame’ of hunger, which means that it is also often a ‘hidden’ burden, carried on one’s own.

> *I don’t feel comfortable to go next door and show my shame of hunger, my pride kicks in, yet everyone is suffering from the same thing. Why is it like that? HIV was a stigma, but today people are wearing positive t-shirts. Why not the same with hunger?*
>
> *(Participant, FACT workshop 2020, Cape Town)*

A note on non-retail networks in Cape Town

Non-retail networks form a core part of a food access strategy for poor households. The proportion of the Cape Town African Food Security Network research sample population of 2007 (see Battersby, 2011) that acquired food from neighbours and other households by sharing meals was 45%, those eating food provided by others was 34%, and those borrowing food was 29% (Battersby, 2012a). Sharing and borrowing food masks the extent of food insecurity among the urban poor and obscures the failings of urban food systems (Maxwell, 1999).

These non-retail networks span generational, household, street, neighbourhood and community scales. They may be deliberately created support networks or simply a collection of relationships built over time and in solidarity with one another within a specific community where support is offered at different times, in different ways and at different scales. There is often in the latter an expectation of reciprocal responses.

They are an essential food security component even though they might not actively engage with city officials. These networks are, however, contingent on multiple factors, including the stability of the wider system. While these networks are to be celebrated, they have often emerged as a result of both a failed food system and a failed state – in other words, a failed social compact. And, sometimes when they are deliberately formed, they can also serve to further dispossess communities most affected by hunger and poverty of a real voice. It is key that that power in these processes must be located at the level of the community, and not sit with benefactors, donors, development agencies or technical advisors. Communities must articulate their needs themselves. Community action networks (many of which emerged or were strengthened in COVID-19) present the potential for different groups to come together to combat specific challenges and to build solidary and community voice when personal, neighbourhood and community agency are deliberately encouraged.

4.1.3 Gendered nature of food insecurity and responses to it

Men and women experience and respond to food insecurity differently. The Indian seed-saving culture provides a good example of social capital networks. In India, seeds were traditionally saved by the women in the community. Men often controlled the sale and exchange of surplus food. With the introduction of hybrid and genetically modified seeds that needed to be bought (often through debt), seeds shifted from being the domain of women networks in the community to the domain of men, significantly undermining generations of social capital. Similar gendered challenges pertaining to social capital were investigated in Lusaka, Zambia, where both gendered and generational social capital were essential food and nutrition security components, and equally under threat when men intervened and disrupted these networks (Davies, 2015; Davies 2016). Similar disenfranchisement is evident in many food system interactions in Cape Town and Nairobi. As an example, fathers may choose to buy formula milk as part of their obligation to a child instead of giving money directly to the mother. This leaves the responsibility of providing for the wider household on the new mother, who may then need to stop breastfeeding to return to work. This simple example reflects multiple gender-oriented expectations, roles and assumed adequacies.

These all have a direct impact on nutrition and food security.

4.1.4 Democratic nature of spaces for engagement on urban food governance

African cities stay embedded in traditional hierarchical governmental structures. The challenge faced is how opportunities for other voices – such as communities, civil society and even the private sector – can be created in this context (Kearns and Paddison, 2000). These new spaces of engagement must be deliberately created to foster inclusivity and plurality. This means that considerations of the factors of power and agency are essential. Governance structures that emerge from open discussion and debate point a way forward to a practical resolution that meets the needs of communities – at their site of struggle – and often originate from contested but ultimately collaborative processes in which voice and agency are evident.

These are critical considerations because when such spaces are convened by actors that lack a sensitivity to power and challenges of gender and inequality, there is a real risk of shutting out the voices of those that most need to be heard. Similarly, when funders or donors set the 'rules' of engagement, power shifts further away from those invited to these spaces as beneficiaries. The latter is evident in many African cities where openness and transparency are claimed, but not practised. There are many ways in which key stakeholder groups can be excluded. Who is invited to participate, the time of the meeting, the language in which discussions are held (English is not the first language of many but most often used as a 'common' language and the jargon often used in the food system space does not translate well into other languages), costs of attending (transport or data costs if online) and the format of the engagement (whether it deliberately creates an environment that attempts to 'neutralise' power, including patriarchal power that often stops women from actively engaging in discussion. In addition, participation in FPCs is typically voluntary and reliant on people having the time and resources necessary to actively engage. This often excludes the urban poor. A further layer is a disregard for cultural norms and practices, such as opening and closing prayers for example.

4.1.5 The nature of the state

Given the central role that government plays in moderating (through policies, strategies, budgeting and regulating) all aspects of life, 'the state matters' in food system engagements. But urban spaces in Africa are often disputed spaces, spaces where politics, histories and conflict over scarce resources often silence voice and agency. This means that a diversity of context-appropriate, multi-scalar urban food governance approaches are needed. And they need to engage in often tense political settings.

Cities in Africa are often seen by national governments as the stronghold of opposition parties with relative independence in trade and related processes (Pieterse and Parnell, 2014). Local governance activity that could appear to be doing the work of national government therefore poses a threat to these actors, who could 'retaliate' by constraining funding. It is often donors with specific mandates and deliverables that enter these contested governance spaces. They do not pose a threat to national governance power. But their mandates and deliverables do not always align with the needs of convened community networks. Finally, it is important to bear in mind that African states face many challenges beyond the food system. Without excusing them from their obligations, these challenges do often limit states' ability to formulate and implement appropriate policy responses.

Case study: Muungano Alliance and Special Planning Areas in Nairobi, Kenya

Nairobi is a dynamic city that generates a fifth of the country's GDP and is one of the fastest-growing cities in Africa with a population of just under 5 million people. Such rapid population growth far outpaces the rate of planned urban development. Much of the population finds themselves in underserved informal urban settlements. In 2017, the County Government of Nairobi declared sections of the Mukuru informal settlements belt a Special Planning Area (SPA). This declaration marked the culmination of years of work by Muungano Alliance and other grassroots organisations. The SPA planning process sought to formulate an integrated development plan that addressed the challenges faced by residents of Mukuru around land tenure, access to basic services and justice. The plan would form the basis for an inclusive slum upgrading project.

A participatory planning approach was followed to ensure the centrality of the community to the planning process. It was also multidisciplinary in nature and drew on specialised expertise from relevant fields into the planning process. Care was also taken to design plans cognisant of the space reality in Mukuru and so minimise displacements. The project's multidisciplinary nature is what led to the onboarding of more than 40 organisations. These included the County Government of Nairobi, Mukuru community-based organizations, as well as an action research partnership supported by the International Development Research Centre involving the Muungano Alliance, Katiba Institute and the universities of Strathmore, California Berkeley and Nairobi.

The consultative process gave residents a platform to express their needs and expectations, which fed into urban planning experts designing relevant solutions. Households were organised into neighbourhood association models to establish Community Consultative Forums organised around eight themes (including health services, sanitation and energy) that mirrored country government departments. These consortiums developed workplans alongside ongoing community mobilisation. An iterative process ensured that community voices were constantly injected into planning and implementation processes. In March 2020, a final plan was presented to the Government of Nairobi.

As of November 2021, more than 25 kilometres of tarmac has been laid easing movement around Mukuru, several boreholes sunk to enable access to water, about 1 000 households provided with flush toilets connected to simplified sewer systems and three new 24-hour hospitals built. Future development includes 13 000 new housing units and 13 public schools. There has been a significant reduction in residents' poverty penalty originating from cartels' monopoly over access to basic services. Previously, residents paid up to 172% of the standard rate of water; today, each household saves about $10 by buying water from government-provided pre-paid dispensers. Similar savings have been made through enhanced access to clean toilets instead of having to use expensive pit latrine access.

The declaration of a SPA has set an important precedent in that it is a recognition from local government that conventional planning processes cannot adequately address slums' complex challenges and that communities' input is a critical success factor. It is an institutional framework that can be used as a template in other parts of Kenya and beyond for the large-scale participatory upgrading of informal settlements. Muungano Alliance notes that there are aspects that can be improved on or conceptually developed further. These include better articulation of challenges around solid waste management, the long-term sustainability of using SPAs as a response to slums, and an enhanced focus on youth and on food-sensitive planning.

4.2 Further considerations related to state responses to food insecurity

In addition, there are four problematic components to state responses to food insecurity. These are deflection, denial, blame and silver bullets. All four can intersect with each other in ways that obscure the state's obligations to support the realisation of the Right to Food. These responses are described briefly below:

- **Deflection of responsibility:** This is evident when local governments deny having a food security or system mandate, and when different spheres of governments deflect the responsibility to other tiers of government or departments. The result is that nothing happens. Deflection is often amplified in times of crisis; a good example is South Africa's slow response to the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant significantly enhanced food insecurity. All three tiers of government attempted to deflect their responsibility for action.
- **Denial of responsibility:** Denial manifests in similar ways to deflection and sometimes combines with it to create a toxic mix. Denial has more of a technical nature linked to how the state and associated data collection agencies build 'truths' about a situation. The use of statistics and percentages are often used to deny reasons to respond. For example, food security figures are reported in proportions rather than net figures, which downplays the extent of the issue. The 2009 joint report by OxfamGB, Concern Worldwide and CARE International argues that the "common use of percentage rates over absolute numbers is greatly distorting when used for urban slums, as this masks the higher numbers... affected in such densely populated settings" (OxfamGB et al., 2009:14). A further example of denial is when the state and other actors, such as beverage companies promoting sugar-rich drinks, deny being complicit in negative food system outcomes, or worse, they deny having a responsibility to address these challenges.
- **The blame game:** Blame is used as a tactic to avoid active engagement in challenges. A good example is that of traditional nutrition studies that blame poor mothers for making bad food choices and the aligned policy response is then education and awareness raising. This type of policy response is evident in both South Africa and Kenya that label diet-related non-communicable diseases as 'lifestyle diseases', which demonstrates extreme ignorance of the actual lived reality of many and their daily struggles and responses to extreme poverty and food insecurity. There is sometimes an assumption made by the state and well-meaning nongovernmental organisations that the poor are idle, lack ingenuity, are waiting for saving and that they believe that ideas from elsewhere can resolve their plight. This results in top-down implementation of food projects that do not speak to the needs of the community.
- **Silver bullet solutions:** These assume that external actors have the answers and that those in the specific contexts of struggle do not, which denies communities' agency. These solutions are often imposed on communities in time-bound and budget-defined projects. This then further disables community participation and agency, and often raises expectations, which are then disregarded.

All four components reflect a deeply challenging state in which local knowledge, bottom-up innovation and agency are disregarded.

5. EMERGING URBAN FOOD GOVERNANCE APPROACHES AND WIDER GOVERNANCE CASE STUDIES

The case studies below illustrate the varied alternative approaches to food system governance in countries of the global South and highlight both challenges and opportunities within them.

5.1 Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Urban food governance trends in South America show a different trajectory to those of the North American examples. A key difference is the direct role played by city governments in these processes. Belo Horizonte is a town located in southern Brazil that in 2010 was home to more than 2,5 million in the city and more than 5 million in its greater metropolitan area (Gerster-Bentaya et al., 2011). In the 1990s, 18% of the city's children below five years of age suffered some degree of malnutrition (Rocha and Lessa, 2009). It has played a key role in the development of the wider Brazilian *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) strategy developed within a new policy framework adopted by the Lula government when it came to power in Brazil in 2003. When the Workers' Party was elected as Belo Horizonte's city government in 1993, it actively sought ways to endorse and guarantee the right to food. They established the Secretariat for Food Policy and Supply (*Secretaria Municipal Adjunta de Abastecimento*—SMAAB). SMAAB engaged with the food challenge along three programmatic lines (Rocha and Lessa, 2009):

- Policies geared to help poor families and individuals at risk by supplementing their food supply.
- Bringing food to areas previously neglected by commercial outlets by engaging private sector.
- Attempting to grow food production and supply through subsidised food sales, food and nutrition assistance, supply and regulation of food markets, support to urban agriculture, education for food consumption, and job and income generation.

The city focused on building partnerships and created a Municipal Council for Food Security, in which civil society was invited to participate. It also effectively channelled state funds to the city-led projects and programmes. At no time has the Belo Horizonte food and nutrition support programme cost the city more than 2% of its operating budget (Göpel, 2009). The work done on food systems in Belo Horizonte has guided state and subsequently national policies, because of its success and ability to deliver on development imperatives (Rocha, 2013). This is evident in the formation of the Zero Hunger strategy across Brazil (Rocha, 2013). This initiative can be characterised as a 'builder' movement that has emerged from municipal government approaches, rather than entrepreneurial responses to an unjust and unsustainable food system (Rocha and Lessa, 2009).

As in the FPC model in North America, leadership played a key role in the success of this initiative. The mayor and the first director of SMAAB are credited for playing vital roles in 25strategizing, driving and motivating the process, as well as giving it legitimacy by using knowledge, research and monitoring to inform strategy and ensure accountability by testing the outcomes (Rocha and Lessa, 2009; Rocha, 2013). Unlike the FPC model, SMAAB viewed food insecurity as a result of market failures and so its programmes and initiatives did not follow conventional logic. SMAAB actively sought to counter social exclusion, enhance social justice and mitigate poverty and inequality (Rocha and Lessa, 2009). There was therefore a focus on shifting perspectives of pro-poor food actions, including through 'popular restaurants' where quality, nutritious and largely traditional food is served in an environment designed to engender respect, avoid stigma and enhance participation. The processes followed also contributed to building of trust in the city, particularly in a context of high levels of corruption and poor service, and to the establishment of successful partnerships between stakeholders.

There have been challenges. Food policy has not yet been mainstreamed into city functions on a permanent basis. And changes in city administration often jeopardise the existence of SMAAB and continuation of its programmes. SMAAB staff spend a lot of time re-arguing the case for an integrated food policy for the city (Rocha and Lessa, 2009). It must also be noted that city-led initiatives will remain top-down in nature in those cities characterised by limited civil society engagement in the food system. And, even in cities with active civil society organisations, vested interests, power and influence can and often do play a role in how processes unfold. This must act as a caution against the imposition of models from elsewhere into the highly contextualised and diverse African cityscape. The extent to which this has been dismantled by the current government is yet to be fully understood but self-reported hunger in Brazil was around 4% of people facing severe food insecurity in 2014 under the *Fome Zero* strategy but in 2022 just less than half of Brazilian households (41.3%) were food secure (Personal Communication, Renato Maluf, 2022).[2]

5.2 Cape Town, South Africa

Successive surveys find that there are high levels of food insecurity in Cape Town. Until recently, the governance of food in the city has either been assumed to be the mandate of national and provincial government spheres or, indirectly, delegated to the private sector. Different processes have, however, developed. In the early 2000s, city officials, after engaging with Toronto FPC staff and on realising a local need, started an internal city-level development of an Urban Agriculture Policy, which was adopted in 2007 (CoCT, 2007). The impetus for the development of this strategy was threefold. First, it was to provide a legislative framework in which various grower groups could gain a measure of policy protection; second, the policy formed part of an economic development strategy aimed at capacitating small-scale producers; and third, it was to channel social and agricultural development services through a mandated city department. This formed the foundation of a collection of processes, led by the Urban Agriculture Unit, through engagement with some growing groups and urban food system researchers that precipitated an important change in food system engagement at the urban scale. Processes evolved slowly, despite at times openly hostile views of urban food governance from certain politicians (Olver, 2019). CoCT is a member of a number of international networks, including ICLEI Africa, MUFPP, 100 Resilient Cities and the C40 network. The then city mayor was signatory to these processes.

A severe drought between 2016 and 2019 prompted proactive responses from several sectors, led by the city's resilience department and aligned with the development of the CoCT Resilience Strategy (published in 2019 after many engagement processes). Improving the food system was noted as a flagship action under the Health and Wellbeing focus area. Although work on this commenced much earlier (with the repurposing of the provincial strategic working group on food and wellness in 2014), the provincial government had been active in developing a food and nutrition strategy, which culminated in a draft Household Food and Nutrition Strategic Framework in 2016 (Provincial Government of the Western Cape, 2016) resulting in the final Nourish to Flourish Strategy in 2018.

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[2] These figures were provided by the leader of the survey carried out in 2022 and are yet to be published in the public domain.

Both the city and provincial strategies re-energised food system actions across the city and sparked the formation of working groups. At the city-scale, the Food Working Group comprised a diversity of actors, but it was by invitation only and at the provincial scale comprising senior budget holders in diverse provincial government departments. Alongside this, a Western Cape Food Systems Community of Practice (CoP) was formed. Convened by the Centre of Excellence in Food Security at the University of the Western Cape, the CoP was set up as an open space for the sharing of multiple perspectives and viewpoints on the food system. In addition, the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership convened a Western Cape Food Forum made up of mostly civil society organisations.

These food governance structures emerging through the CoP and in the working groups reflect an emerging process in which urban food is put on the agenda and in which different food system actors are provided with a voice. There are emerging indications that this work is slowly being integrated into policy, albeit at times indirectly. However, until such time as this is explicitly a policy direction it remains vulnerable to changing political priorities and perceived needs. It must also be noted that these processes were to varying degrees exclusionary, and the voices of the those facing high levels of food and nutritional insecurity were not always included or enabled. Structural impediments to attendance included location and meeting times. In discussing if these emerging processes represented some form of alternative urban food governance, it was noted by the CoP that as the South African government has an obligation to ensure the realisation of the Right to Food, that more effort must be made to hold it accountable before setting up alternative pluralistic governance structures.

5.3 Stellenbosch, South Africa

The winelands town of Stellenbosch, in the Western Cape of South Africa, provides an example of potential governance pitfalls that emerging local governance bodies may encounter when trying to implement food governance approaches. In 2010, a collection of researchers and food system activists developed a local food system strategy for the town of Stellenbosch. The funding for this work had a distinct local, green, sustainable and food security orientation. At face value, these are all viable and laudable aspirations, contained in many similar North American and some European city-level food strategies. After a period of research, consultation and network development, the Stellenbosch Sustainable Food System Strategy (SSFSS) was formally adopted in 2011 by the town's mayoral committee, the highest decision-making body in the town. The plan, as of 2020, has not yet implemented.

The Stellenbosch case demonstrates that government approval of a strategy does not equate to implementation. Given that the town had no formal food policy mandate and, as a result, no budget, Stellenbosch officials had assumed that the strategy would be implemented by civil society actors, enabled through their endorsement. On formal approval of the plan, the civil society cluster, one that had been enthusiastic about the plan, withdrew their support. This was a strategic response to a wider political skirmish taking place at the time. There was concern that the strategy would be used to dictate how food relief and the local social protection and feeding scheme landscape would be governed. The civic groups' withdrawal meant that claims of representivity in the plan were lost. Two factors require further consideration. The 'local is best' vision of the SSFSS imagined the conversion of much of the vineyards to food production, which would often demand higher water use, even if farmed in a sustainable manner. While laudable and while the sustainability considerations could have mitigated some challenges, this would have exposed the town to several stressors undermining resilience, a factor that became abundantly clear during the Western Cape drought, which began in earnest in 2017 and lasted until 2019. Second, while the civic groups withdrew their support for the plan, they did not reject the plan itself. Due to the recent increased levels of food insecurity and COVID-19, the civics have again convened around the plan, adopting a more cautious approach, using the plan as a guide to convene a wider grouping of food system actors, with the ultimate goal of developing a new plan, but avoiding the pitfalls of the SSFSS.

5.4 Antananarivo, Madagascar

Madagascar is affected acutely by stunting and undernutrition. Levels of hunger are classified as 'alarming' and its capital city, Antananarivo, is experiencing a progressive increase in chronic malnutrition, largely attributed to conditions of extreme poverty (Action Against Hunger, 2019). The Commune Urbaine d'Antananarivo (CUA) set up the Urban Agriculture in Antananarivo programme in 2011. With the support of the French Cooperation (Ile-de-France), the CUA sought to install and promote the use of micro-vegetable gardens in vulnerable city districts to improve food and nutritional security and to create income-generating activities through vegetable production (Andrianarisoa, Ferrari, Currie and Coetzee, 2019). It needed external stakeholders to scale up the initiative and so in 2014 it established a city-led, multi-stakeholder platform. From this platform, the Antananarivo FPC evolved with a wider focus than production to encompass the whole food system. It was largely driven by the Deputy Mayor and included more than 20 stakeholders involved in urban agriculture within city boundaries – including institutional actors, international organisations, civil society organisations and the private sector (Andrianarisoa et al., 2019).

In 2016, the CUA signed the MUFPP and developed a strategic vision for the city. A Food Policy Office was created within the 1st Deputy Mayor's office. The Deputy Mayor noted that their food policy approach was one of 'policy as practice' in which relationships were the driving force of food systems action. Some suggestions for the FPC's action plan were:

- Creating an inventory of the current territorial food system using city-region boundaries.
- Building an open database to track the MUFPP's six working areas.
- Hosting a workshop with key food system stakeholders to identify priority interventions.
- Drafting a working food policy guideline document to present to potential partners.

Governance considerations have evolved and, while the city still plays the lead convening role, a hybrid form of governance is emerging.

5.5 Arusha, Tanzania

Arusha in Tanzania is primarily dependent on food produced outside of its administrative borders. The poor quality of road infrastructure, markets, transportation and other supply chain systems pose major challenges to the city's food security, especially for ensuring the safety and nutritional quality of food that is brought into the city. To demonstrate political commitment to improved food security for Arusha, the city signed the MUFPP in 2014.

Activities to support wider urban food system outcomes were and remain high on the list of priorities, though implementation is slow due to high capital costs and the inevitable delays associated with planning processes. Nevertheless, the Arusha City Council has focused on social interventions, improving revenue collection to support market function, and supporting the participation of vulnerable groups in food system activities. The council has built strong relationships with multiple actors working towards shaping a sustainable food system and has requested support in developing an urban food policy. In the collaborative processes of framing a policy process with Arusha, facilitated through ICLEI-Africa, the concept of a FPC remains central. A set of values for the Arusha food system has been conceptualised, including that the food system is:

- Safe: citizens should be confident that their food is safe from pesticide and chemical contamination.
- Nourishing: no citizen should experience malnutrition in any form and all children should receive appropriate first 1 000-day nutrition and quality food thereafter.
- Economic: food production and processing providing opportunities for improved employment, particularly for youth.
- Inclusive: the food system should ensure that all vulnerable populations are supported so that they have access to good quality food.
- Improved food system outcomes through partnering given the nature of the food system, which crosses multiple functional and political boundaries, partnering with multiple actors across boundaries through a shared vision is essential.

Urban spaces in Africa remain disputed spaces, spaces where politics, histories and contestation over scarce resources often silence voice and agency. Given the diversity of urban typologies across Africa, diverse and context-appropriate urban food governance approaches are needed. And city-scale urban food systems governance actions in African cities are limited. The emergent nature of this work is most evident in the 2019 Niamey declaration, emerging under the auspices of the MUFPP, although only 20 cities are signatories. The preamble of the declaration states that:

> *Delegates recognize that, in order to adopt policies to ensure access to safe and quality food while reducing climate change's risks, there is an urgent need to strengthen local governance of food systems, in particular to facilitate collaboration between different municipal departments and agencies; to increase stakeholders' participation; to develop a disaster risk reduction strategy ...*
>
> (MUFPP and MUFPP Afrique, 2019:1)

In each case study, governments have been either leading or actively supporting food policy engagement and processes, often without a clear mandate. Their role in clarifying food system actions, beyond a specific issue, is notable. A scan of the literature on urban food system governance shows that there is limited civic activity aimed at challenging current urban food system actions, and, where there is, it may not be effectively connected to other stakeholder groups, with initiatives undertaken in isolation. There is also a real risk that the state is engaging civic groups in a selective manner – those aligned to state structures and power configurations gain access, but those outside these circles are either disregarded, or perhaps not seen? This represents a different trend to that seen in the urban food governance approaches emerging in certain regions of the global North, specifically the emergence of pluralistic FPCs. A further trend seen in three of the African case studies was the central role that networks or external actors, often in a supporting role, played in this process. Here organisations such as the MUFPP, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, the RUAF Global Partnership on Sustainable Urban Agriculture and Food Systems and the ICLEI network, all played a role in either convening or supporting existing processes. Further review of and critical reflection on the power of these external actors to drive on-the-ground action, beyond consultation, in the context of scarce local resources is needed.

In some European countries, city governments play a greater role in urban food governance, similar to the processes described in the Belo Horizonte case. This offers an interesting challenge. Given the predominant Anglophone histories of African countries, many alliances and partnerships with the global North are supported by a shared language and colonial history. The role played by the MUFPP is an example of how different approaches to urban food governance can facilitate change. In countries such as Spain, the MUFPP has also been influential but more in support of local food movements, rather than city governments. Given the absence of local food movements in Africa, perhaps the city-led approach is most appropriate route to take at this time?

While the Belo Horizonte case is very different as it was embedded in a far more robust and longer running set of social and political processes linked to the rise of the Lula Government, the implementation and funding of a national Zero Hunger strategy and existence of a robust civil society, provide a sense of how urban food governance can be activated. The African urban food governance processes reviewed here started from what could be deemed non-strategic entry points, from which the city would go through a 'learning journey' that slowly revealed the wider interlinkages within and with food system elements. These small beginnings in Belo Horizonte were essential in laying a foundation for later more engaged and strategically innovative food work. Urban agriculture projects or responses to single crises can lead to far more integrated systemic processes. Any starting point is potentially productive. How these are scaled up remains a question, however, but in these case studies, external actors have played productive and generative roles.

Actors in the urban food governance space in Africa, and in the countries of the global South more generally, need to reflect on what actions are required to respond to wider food-system changes, challenges and negative outcomes. Northern-style pluralistic urban food-governance structures are inappropriate and would not result in the necessary change in urban food-system outcomes. In Africa, particular attention needs to be paid to the relationship between cities, the food system and those in power, particularly the state. Smit (2016:84) stresses that "the governance of urban food systems in Africa is complex, with a range of governance actors with competing agendas", and that "we need to better understand existing urban governance processes and the competing interests of urban governance actors in order to be able to collaboratively design interventions to improve urban food security in Africa" (Smit, 2016:85). These sentiments reflect the complexity and challenges faced by African cities. African cities are at a particular development juncture as the continent is increasingly urbanised and expected to become predominantly urban in the next 15 years (UN-DESA, 2018). As Pieterse, Parnell and Haysom (2018:151) succinctly state:

> *Africa is undergoing an internal city-centric reworking that mirrors the urban transformations of the continent and the world. This scalar recalibration assumes greater urgency for Africa because the urban transition of the next few decades will be formative of future developmental opportunities on the continent.*

6. TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF ALTERNATIVE URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE

As Africa urbanises, cities and towns become critical sites of development, but also places where development challenges become increasingly evident. African cities and towns are increasingly places where negative urban food system-related outcomes – such as food insecurity, hunger, escalations in non-communicable diseases and persistent wasting – combine and intersect with the urban environment. The urban food system connects to and is supported by the wider urban system – infrastructure, transport, water and sanitation, economic activities, formal and informal retail areas, as well as vital social services.

This intersection of the food system with other city systems and challenges was clearly illustrated through FACT's dialogue work. While the discussions and overarching rationale of the dialogues was to discuss hunger and food security, the conversations were diverse and spanned challenges related to youth unemployment, poor city planning and gender challenges, specifically gender-based violence, among others. This not only shows the connections between systems, but also shows the usefulness of food as a lens to engage and start conversations on diverse urban challenges.

Historically the connections between the urban food system and the function and form of urban areas were understood. Cities such as Rome or London emerged in concert with the various different food system processes such as ports and markets. In the industrial era food system functions have traditionally been seen as the mandate of other spheres of government (Battersby and Watson, 2019). Expecting city managers and policymakers to engage with food, food security, hunger and even urban food system questions has been met by considerable resistance. It has been argued in multiple fora – directly by executive mayors, but also in policies and strategic planning documents – that cities and towns have 'no food mandate'. Most food systems change processes either focus on single sites of struggle (the activating environment) through, for example, urban agriculture projects, or on the authorising environment (high-level networks driven by city leadership actors). There is little engagement between the two environments. See Figure 2 for an illustration of these two environments.

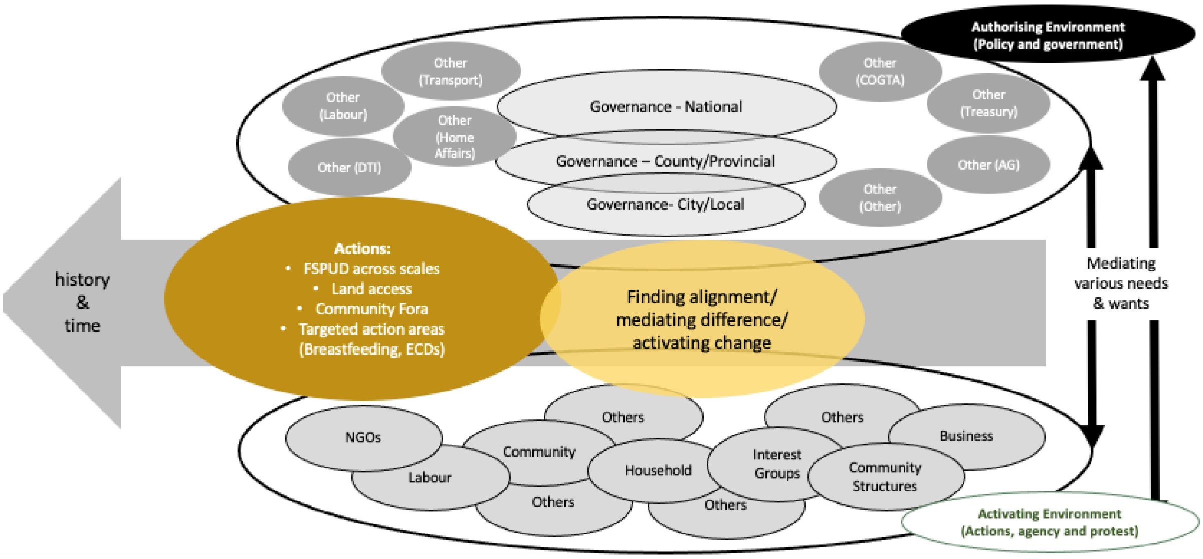
Authorising Environment
(Policy and government)
Other (Transport)
Other (Labour)
Other (Home Affairs)
Other (DTI)
Governance - National
Governance – County/Provincial
Governance- City/Local
Other (COGTA)
Other (Treasury)
Other (AG)
Other (Other)
history & time
Actions:
FSPUD across scales
Land access
Community Fora
Targeted action areas (Breastfeeding, ECDs)
Finding alignment/ mediating difference/ activating change
Mediating various needs & wants
NGOs
Labour
Community
Others
Others
Household
Others
Interest Groups
Others
Community Structures
Business
Activating Environment
(Actions, agency and protest)

Figure 2: Draft stylised governance model - engaging the activating and authorising environment

The existing political economy of the state and civic actions often constrains the ability of either environment to engage systematically or in ways that are generative. A key need is for all food system actors is that the activating and authorising environments need to be perceived as equal in governance processes. Currently, engagement is typically confined to interactions between single representatives from both. There is a key role for mediators enabling alignment between these two environments to drive and enable change. This requires specific skills and can come at a cost. Possibly external donors and development initiatives could focus on this mediation gap. When the needs, wants and practices of the two environments are not attended to, a third environment emerges – the disrupting environment – comprised of external actors and vested interests, and sites of system capture emerge.

Orientating urban food systems towards the realisation of the Right to Food means also resolving the disconnect between the food system and wider urban system. Governance of the food system – whether at the local or national levels – therefore needs to be included in other planning processes related to infrastructure, economy, healthy and justice. Urban food governance in African cities needs a different form of pragmatism and politics. Roberts (2001:4) suggested that “more than with any other of our biological needs, the choices we make around food affect the shape, style, pulse, smell, look, feel, health, economy, street life and infrastructure of the city”.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is no time to waste. We need to urgently find diverse ways of combatting hunger and malnutrition at the urban scale in Africa. UFF's work through its partners organisations has highlighted the need for particular factors to be considered in charting a pathway towards equitable urban food systems capable of supporting the realisation of the Right to Food. The following recommendations originate from an extensive desktop literature review and the on-the-groundwork of FACT and Muusango. They are relevant to policymakers and those working at community levels with the intent to transform the food system.

6.1 Decolonise urban governance foci, particularly that related to food

African city managers and politicians have a mandate to recraft the governance regimes and operational activities of their cities. In most African cities, however, planning regimes are effectively hangovers of colonial planning and governance (Watson, 2014). Pothukuchi's (2000) warning that food system governance and planning is not benign and can have negative outcomes is all too evident in African and other cities in the global South. One clear example of this is the perpetuation of punitive approaches to informality (Skinner and Haysom, 2016). This means that governance frameworks often have to be interrogated to understand who they serve and why, and then reorientated as necessary.

Methodological tool: Muungano Alliance's participatory planning approach

Muungano and other grassroot organisations' work in Nairobi's SPA process illustrates the cumulative effects that arise from coordination between the activating environment (the community mobilisation and organisation into collectives and forums) and the authorising environment (the departments and authorities tasked with developing the integrated development plan). They deployed a participatory planning approach that made sure that the voices of the people – those most affected by current conditions and planned interventions – remained central to design and planning processes. This was done by organising households into community forums organised around thematic areas, which fed information into 'sister' government consortiums. The result of this immense piece of work is a shift in urban slum upgrading protocols and a process for undertaking these types of upgrades elsewhere in Africa.

6.2 Consciously adopt the mandate for governing urban food systems

As shown in this report, city government already plays a key role in regulating and supporting the urban food system. This mandate may be invisible or underfunded but the obligation to realise the Right to Food is laid at the door of African states, and in some of them, it is a constitutional obligation. Above this, as cities become fuller, and resources more stretched, the potential for flashpoints related to food scarcity and hunger are likely to become more prevalent. Cities need to take responsibility – and find ways to navigate power relations with national governments if needed – to proactively plan for the future. The state also needs to remain involved. They cannot deny or deflect their responsibility onto external actors/donors or even communities.

6.3 Actively and deliberately build and acknowledge community-level agency (and knowledge)

Top down, 'silver bullet' solutions based on incomplete knowledge and understanding of what is happening on the ground fail. It is those who bear the brunt of the failing food system generally, and the urban system specifically, that are best equipped to identify what is needed. This means not only making sure that the voices of marginalised groups are present in discussions about the food system, but also that they are supported in spaces where vested power interests may lie. This report has provided various examples of how this can be achieved. FACT's mapping work with communities and households is a good example of how to build agency and gain relevant data for planning purposes.

Methodological tool: FACT's food mapping

Food is often an unseen part of everyday urban life. If it is seen, it is often simply accepted as part of a wider set of challenges. Food mapping seeks to elevate and celebrate this food systems knowledge through a set of processes that allow for community-scale knowledge to emerge through engagement in place and space, but at the same time through narratives and active conversations and discussion with fellow community members. These activities are curated through a process of mapping the household, the place of food preparation and the wider food environment. This mapping is done with due appreciation for language and literacy challenges. In the past, even young children have participated in such processes, with their guardians, but have offered a very different view and narrative of the food system. Instead of maps, high resolution aerial photographs are used. Instead of signs, icons are used to depict different community infrastructure and food retail types.

These tools have in the past served to open the conversations, make the process accessible and equalise the sense of knowledge and, in so doing, deepen the process. This process also enables the capturing of rich narratives. The process sees small groups assigned to tables. Groups consist of no more than eight attendees and should ideally be in groups whose food system experiences are somewhat similar – groups of women, young men, youth, etc. Each group is assigned a facilitator, someone who can understand the language that used, but also the nuance and subtleties of that language, the slang, the jargon, etc. These facilitators are effectively observers but have a key role in questioning certain 'normalisations'. Normalisations are terms, processes and actions that are considered normal in a community but play a key role in food system outcomes. Examples of these may be fetching water from a standpipe, managing waste in the wider neighbourhood, navigating gangsters on the way home and paying for an extra seat in a taxi when returning from a monthly shop at a local supermarket. Asking questions about these and seeking further explanation is key to **understanding the unseen ways in which a food system is influenced and directed because** of specific physical and structural planning. The second action is that table facilitators later draft a record of the table conversations and a summary of the discussions and emergent food system knowledge garnered from the process. These documents are drafted in a report style but capture highlights and key learnings. These types of workshops seek to work from the community scale to show how a progressive approach to planning could offer as yet unrealised opportunities to provide for a more equitable and health-providing urban food system.

6.4 Actively deploying food-sensitive planning

Food-specific planning refers to planning and governance that works from direct food, nutrition and health outcomes. This enacts deliberate and direct planning and governance actions that are primarily food oriented. Areas where a food specific approach should be applied (but has not been in the past) would include the approval of shopping malls with supermarket anchor tenants, regulation of food markets (where food access and food security is a key consideration and not just policing of permits), regulations and planning to regulate urban agriculture (where tenure is enhanced and protected and where growers are connected to markets), regulation of food processing facilities, abattoirs and distribution centres, to ensure that operating costs are kept low (through city-level support) to avoid transfer of costs to the food insecure, to name but a few. This type of planning is often viewed as being somewhat easier than food sensitive planning as mandates and authority are often clear or known. Food-sensitive planning is key to making change on the ground, where it counts. On its own, though, food sensitive planning is not enough. It needs to be supported through the adoption of food sensitive principles and action steps. Apart from asking the critical questions "what would the food system impact be of this decision" as a key food sensitive approach other considerations need to also drive food sensitive planning. For example, any planning activity that is food orientated or has a food system intersection should actively pursue a pro-poor and anti-hunger approach. In African cities where formal employment is limited, food system-aligned livelihoods –how they can be created or supported and how to ensure they are not endangered through the implementation of food projects/initiatives or planning – is essential. It is in this type of approach that mapping the food system, recording food access challenges and opportunities and conducting food systems audit workshops could provide useful data for planning and serve simultaneously to build community agency. These mechanisms also provide a space for communities to talk to each other about their challenges related to the food and broader urban spaces. This allows community-scale knowledge to emerge through engagement in place and space.

Methodological tool: FACT Dialogues

Dialogues are spaces created to share views, knowledge sharing, learning from one another, and equally, a platform to tackle the challenges that confront communities. Dialogues also offer a space within which community members can offer care and support to one another, alongside broader communication of diverse views, which come through in dialectic collective. This collective is essential as it also serves as a moderator, with equal responsibility to guard against personal agendas and external influences. Dialogues are generative and immersive and allow for a deep dive into community and wider systemic strengths and challenges, they are long-term, ongoing processes. Through the dialogue process, change can be imagined, and options 'updated' as a result of shared discussions and knowledge. Dialogues give voice to those who are under-represented and are unable to find a space for their voice. Importantly, also building on the notion of voice, dialogues are also spaces where participants can engage in a language comfortable to them, use words that are understood, can see how the building of collective and individual knowledge happens, who it comes from, how it is made, and they can tap into indigenous and cultural knowledge. These processes, first investigating and understanding one's own communities and later processes to celebrate already existing knowledge and voice, enable the actualisation of agency.

8. CONCLUSION

Engaging questions of governance and how governance intersects with food systems change is essential. This is increasingly urgent in the African context given that urban governance is at a tipping point. Africa's demographic transition means that there is a unique opportunity to rewrite the rules, where past rules, often those drafted by colonial structures and positionalities, are being exploded open and are in no way suitable to the rapidly transitioning urban Africa.

A key part of this is that for the urban majority, relying on African leaders to innovate and shift to pro-poor oriented governance will not happen. It is only recently that the faith that leaders will 'do the right thing' has been challenged. This has been illustrated in many actions challenging the state, including those where food was central to the challenge, such as in the case of the Arab Spring.

The depoliticization of food-related issues has over decades also been enabled through the food system, through a system of slow violence that when combined with state bureaucracy has normalised poverty and hunger. Urban challenges, such as hunger and food insecurity, are now not viewed as political, and hunger and poverty are often suffered in silence, but also encountered in accretive and incipient ways. This slow violence and the occlusion of poverty is one of the main threats to democracy.

The need for local government to engage with food systems more actively and deliberately is clear. The 2019 Niamey Declaration, which unfortunately only 20 cities have signed, notes in its preamble (MUFPP and MUFPP Africa, 2019:1):

> *Delegates recognize that, in order to adopt policies to ensure access to safe and quality food while reducing climate change's risks, there is an urgent need to strengthen local governance of food systems, in particular to facilitate collaboration between different municipal departments and agencies; to increase stakeholders' participation; to develop a disaster risk reduction strategy ...*

Local governments are involved in food systems, mostly without a clear mandate or strategic plan. Sometimes engagement is exclusive and does not factor in power and agency. In essence, often these processes are not pluralistic and food system work is often undertaken by networks or external actors without support from the state. It is also clear that the emergent urban food governance structures of the global North are not appropriate for countries of the global South because of vastly different contexts. This includes ability and capacity to actively engage in structures, such as these based on power and agency dynamics, and sometimes tense political contexts with competing agendas.

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TMG Research

TMG- Think Tank for Sustainability
TMG Research gGmbH
EUREF-Campus
6-9 10829 Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 30 92 10 74 07 00
Email: info@tmg-thinktank.com
Website: www.tmg-thinktank.com

This publication was made possible with the financial support by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) .

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