

Governing the Just Urban Transition and reflecting on Off-grid Cities



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Just Urban Transition



Ensuring that a sustainability transition in cities is also socially just

- Cities face the real challenge of realigning development trajectories towards environmental sustainability, while reducing poverty and inequality: transitioning to just sustainability.
- While a crucial objective, building environmentally sustainable and socially just societies is neither simple nor straightforward.
- Tensions can arise between justice and sustainability, as well as between various forms and interpretations of justice (e.g. procedural & distributional justice)
- Without cities shifting current trajectories, South Africa will not achieve a just transition

Elements of Social Justice

Distributive justice

Equitable outcomes are reached

Procedural justice

Decision-making and conflict-resolution processes are fair

Justice of recognition

Everyone is treated fairly and without discrimination regardless of their identity, values or associations

Restorative justice

Past injustices are addressed

A key challenge is balancing fair processes with equitable outcomes

A Just Urban Transition

- Inclusive Development: Equitable distribution of resources and benefits.
- Participation: Active involvement of communities and relevant actors.
- Beyond Energy: Encompasses all urban infrastructures.

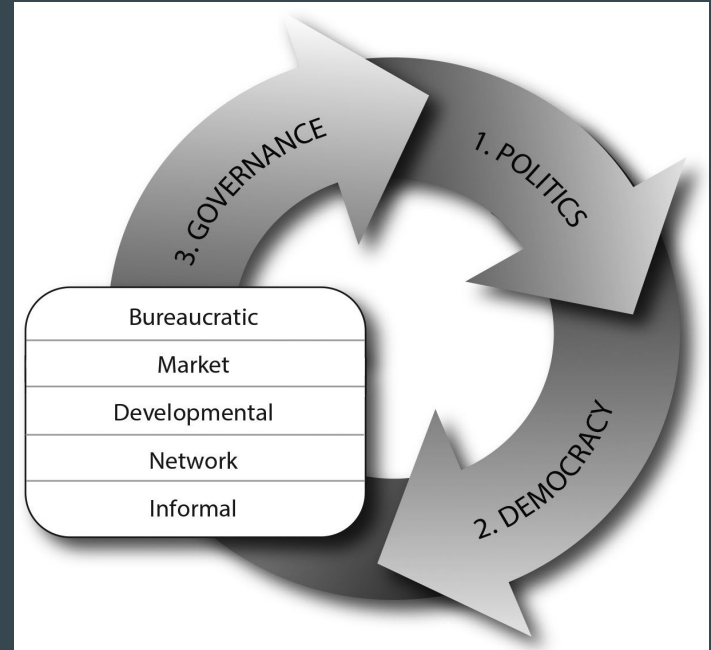
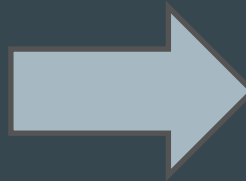
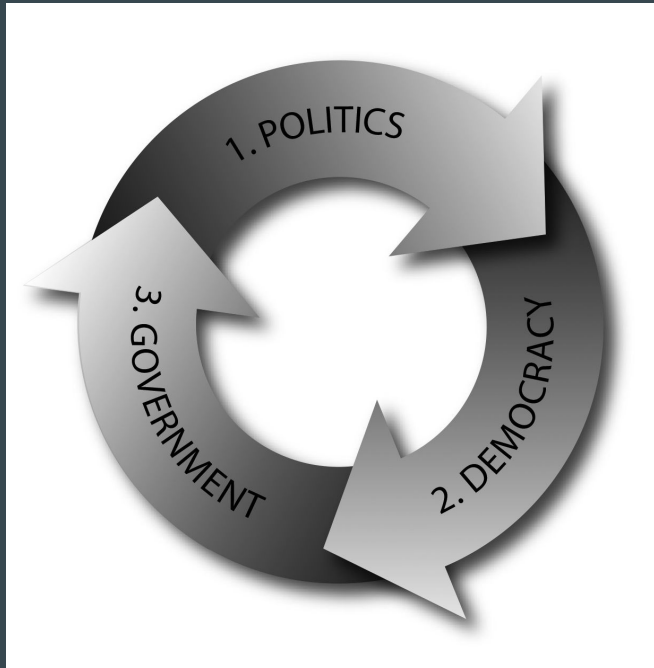
What are the governance considerations for a JUT?.....

Framing Governance for JUT

Local Government
is central to
implementing a
JUT but...

- Urban change is shaped by a multitude of actors and logics, often with conflicting motivations
 - Necessary to map out state and non-state actors and institutions that have influence over a JUT including local government, the private sector, community leaders, and individual residents
 - South African cities are highly diverse in terms of settlement type, economic development and political leadership.
 - Formal and informal systems: Integration of both is crucial for effective governance

Framing Governance for JUT



Models of democratic rule (Anciano & Piper, 2019)

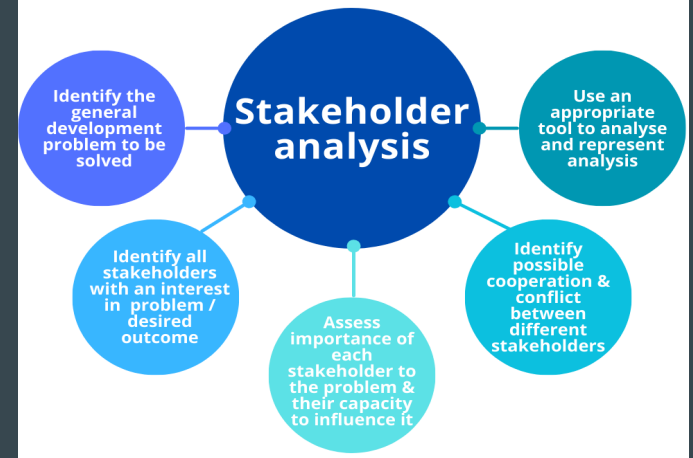
Challenges for local governance

- **Exclusion:** Urban poor often excluded from decision-making.
- **Elite Influence:** Wealthy groups can capture democratic processes.
- **Non-State Actors:** Increasing role in urban governance complicates state authority.

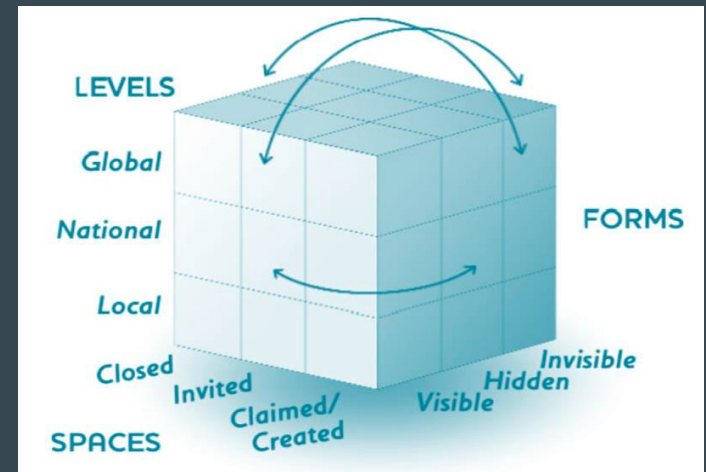


Governance Models

- Three phases where models can inform urban governance across a range of stakeholders.
 1. stakeholder analysis (with a reflection on power)
 2. analysing the problem and identifying solutions; and
 3. monitoring and reflection
- Phases are iterative



Stakeholder analysis and its 5 component parts.



The power cube (Gaventa, 2005)

Problem analysis and solution identification

Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (Andrews, Pritchett & Woolcock, 2012)

Addressing specific problems in a local context

- identify and understand underlying problems
- define problems locally
- use “5-why technique”

Create environments that enable decision-making, and encourage experimentation and positive deviance

Continuous, active and hands-on learning

- Real-world experimentation
- Continuous testing and trying out solutions
- Incorporate lessons back into the design of potential solutions.

Active stakeholders involvement & collaboration

- Collaboration between stakeholders to ensure that the reforms are viable, implementable, politically supportable, and relevant to the specific context.
- Bridge “the agents with power to those with ideas”

Governing a Just Transition



Concluding thoughts

- Success of JUT depends on inclusive and participatory governance.
- Important (and illuminating) to understand where and how justice and sustainability do not align, and what trade-offs need to be made - critical for these to be tackled directly and proactively
- Important acknowledgement that multiple players are involved in a just transition
- There is a need to rethink governance and who is leading what transitions and to what end?



Concluding thoughts



- Embrace the reality of hybrid governance
- Devolve some power to communities
- Experiment on a small scale
- Constantly reflect on who holds power
- Accept diversity and conflict will arise and can be mediated

Thank you

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