Title: Objectified, Distanced, and Disengaged: The Role of Youth in Kigali's Urban Development

Research Question: How Does the Structural Conceptualization of Youth Affect Their Role in the City: A Study of Kigali, Rwanda

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1. Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing two developments simultaneously: rapid-paced urbanization and a growing youth bulge. Sub-Saharan Africa has an annual urban population growth rate of 4.1% with cities such as Lagos, Nigeria are growing at an immensely quick 5.8% annual rate, whereas the global annual rate is only 2.1% (Center for Strategic Studies 2018). While 2.1% is no small figure, especially as global urbanization has far-reaching impacts on economies, sovereignties, and (in)equalities, it is only half the rate of Sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, as of 2019, 60% of the African population is under 25 years old (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019).

These two developments have important consequences as they interact together. They can either be catastrophic, as urbanization causes urban poverty and injustice and youth bulge becomes overwhelming youth unemployment. However, they can also be positive with urbanization creating employment and opportunity and young people adding creativity and social change. Therefore, the role of young people in cities and the opportunities and constraints facing them is an important area of academic research as it shapes the modern world.

There has been a sizable scholarship on the benefits of youth for urban planning. These benefits are not simply for the young people themselves, but also for urban planners, and indeed the urban population as a whole. For young people, Kathryn Frank (2006) notes that youth participants appreciate having a voice in their cities' affairs and feel more connected to the environment. Others note that young people can develop new skills and learn more about democracy (Driskell 2002; Santo, Ferguson, and Trippel 2010). Larger society also benefits from this as young people acts as resources and support common values (Frank 2006). Additionally, Driskell (2002) argues that other members in the community can overcome their moral panic over young people and build a stronger sense of community. It is also not just a matter about immediate benefits; ethically, young people should have a right to make decisions which affect their livelihoods (Santo, Ferguson, and Trippel 2010).

When young people are consulted on what they want to see in the city, they often want similar things. For example, Driskell (2002), Osbourne et al (2017), and Chawla (2002) all found that the young people they interviewed wanted more public space in their communities. Public space offers young people places to meet their peers and grow socially as well as offering them freedom of movement. However, waves of privatization and gentrification have limited public spaces in the city (Hackworth 2007; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Ghertner 2012).

However, regardless of the benefits of their participation, young people are often times not involved in planning and developing their community. Kathryn Frank (2006) explains four different obstacles to youth participation in urban development. For her, young people are held back by their development, vulnerable, legal, and romantic conceptualizations. The development view of young people highlights the fact they are in a period of transition and questions whether they have the capacity to participate in planning. The vulnerable view sees young people as less powerful than adults and thus questions whether they can make meaningful change. The legal conceptualization of youth notes that are young people are not fully citizens and treats them as still 'in training'. Finally, the romantic view treats young people as having values and potentials distinct from adults, and thus privileges their voice over others which leads to ineffective youth participation.

These four cases are interesting analytically, however the author ignores one more conceptualization that is integral to understanding the obstacles in youth participation in urban planning. Sukarieh and Tannock's (2008) theory of the political economy of young people under neoliberalism notes that young people are used as a means for the economic mode to further itself. In their analysis, they find that the social conception of youth was created for the needs of cheap labour during the waves of industrial capitalism in the 18th and 19th centuries. Youth were constructed as a source of cheap labour, delinquents if they were unable to become employed, and consumers.

This viewpoint that privileged the young workers and penalized the unemployed, as Sukarieh and Tannock (2008, 2011, 2016, 2017) argue, still exists today. Further than this, the market rationale of

today's world recodes space as places of profit: public spaces are seen as sites of entrepreneurialism and public transportation systems are updated as *workers* need them to commute. Young people are unable to participate in urban planning because of the obstacles mentioned by Frank (2006), and they are also unable to use the urban infrastructure designed around them which is deemed to be used for 'entrepreneurial' or 'economic' means they are often not a part of. This further distances them away from society. Furthermore, the 'youth bulge' in recent years has created more policy-framing around young people as a security threat (Sakurieh and Tannock 2017). This security imperative of young people needing to work to limit the 'risk' of radicalism distances young people from society and amplifies the "developmental" (Frank 2006) view of youth.

This research will use a critical political economy theoretical framework to understand the role of young people in urban development in Kigali. The paper argues that because international development agencies, and Rwandan national and local authorities, understand youth as products and producers of the market, they are depoliticized and unable to participate meaningfully in civic society. The notion of the post-political city will also be examined as another critical theory acting in this same way in depoliticizing the space of the city. To this end, this paper provides a textual analysis of major Rwandan national and Kigali local policy papers concerning urbanization and young people as well as interviews with local policymakers and young participants.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Structural Conceptualization of Youth

In the introduction to this paper, I spent some time describing the modern world as one encoded by the market. This has been extensively written on and occurs through a system called neoliberalism. Neoliberalism describes a set of economically- and politically-driven processes that collapse the boundaries between market, public, and political spaces leading to the entry of market logic into everyday life through the values of individualism, privatization, and deregulation (Harvey 1989; Dumenil and Levy 2005; Peck and Tickell 2002). According to Harvey (1989) and Dumenil and Levy (2005), neoliberalism emerged in the 1970s due to the 'stagflation' (Harvey 1989, p. 145) of the American economy with a stagnant output of goods and rising inflation. The result of this was the retreat of the state as the provider of social goods and deregulation so that private capital was prioritized. However, as Dumenil and Levy (2005) argue, this was not simply an economic shift. It also led to a new social order where the ruling wealthy grew more powerful at the expense of the increasingly underserved working class. Increasingly as well, as Peck and Tickell (2002) reveal, urban areas are dense pockets of this neoliberalism as competition forces cities to market themselves and compete for investment. Urbanization was indeed created out of capitalism due to surplus capital, product, and labour (Harvey 2008).

The spaces of neoliberalism enter human relations and shape them to the market. Young people, as discussed in the introduction, often acts as the exploited labour force that is integral for this economy to run. Côté (2014, 2016) even goes as far as to argue that youth represent as a class who is exploited by political and economic elites for their business interests. However, some have critiqued that this view of youth as class ignores divisions between young people such as race and gender (France and Threadgold 2016). Indeed, France and Threadgold (2016) contend that class, and not age, divisions are more important when it comes to capital redistribution. However, Sakurieh and Tannock (2016) argue that literature on the political economy of youth addresses how groups are understood as 'youth' and the importance of 'youth' as a social category. To this end, both Côté and France and Threadgold concern themselves with this concept but take on different frameworks (neo-Marxist or Bourdieusian).

The theory of the structural representation of youth therefore begins at the idea of young people being exploited in this neoliberal system for interests and needs that are not entirely their own (i.e.: business-minded interests), and that the category of 'youth' was socially created for these means.

Sukarieh and Tannock (2008, 2011, 2016) have written extensively on this topic and argue that international development agencies, rather than 'lifting' young people's role in the nation, include

them superficially in development agendas that reproduce neoliberal needs of privatization and economic growth. In their analysis of the World Bank and specifically the 2007 World Development Report, they find that young people are used as tools for national economic growth and are represented as assets or 'ticking time bomb[s]' (Sukarieh and Tannock 2008, 305). Young people are generalized and conflict between life, learning, and education are collapsed. Youth are workers first and then family and community members. With this view, their social needs such as health and education are linked to their economic prosperity and employability.

Bersaglio, Enns, and Kepe (2015) builds on this theoretical framework and includes analysis of UN discourse. Their findings of youth representations in the post-2015 UN development agenda corroborate Sukarieh and Tannock's findings, as they argue that the UN reconstruct youth as a social category to draw them into global development as neoliberal subjects (Bersaglio, Enns, and Kepe 2015, 57). 'Youth' is therefore used in post-2015 UN development discourse as social category to draw young people into the neoliberal framework.

Bersaglio, Enns, and Kepe (2015) outlines three ways young people are conceptualized in UN development: youth as assets, youth as risks, and youth as good citizens in the making. This paper will now to turn the critical lens to these three conceptualizations.

Youth as assets

When young people are seen as assets to development, this often means they are entrepreneurs and hard workers (Bersaglio, Enns, and Kepe 2015). However, through this lens, the responsibility of youth unemployment and poverty is on young people themselves. This conceptualization often falls along the lines of the 'pull yourself up by your bootstraps' ideology as it is the responsibility of the young person to care for themselves via the market**.**

Sakurieh and Tannock (2011) focus on the issue of youth-as-asset in terms of the positive development agenda. This agenda shifts away from negative perceptions of young people to more positive connotations for young people's abilities. However, in doing this, youth are seen in terms of human capital as assets and resources. In arguing that young people are not inherently deviant, the Grant Foundation's 1988 *The Forgotten Half* instead argues that low employability led to the negative traits and perception of young people. Yet this further reproduces young people as neoliberal subjects as employment is seen as 'taming' youth. As Coussée et al 2009 argues, underlying assumptions for positive youth development are negative traits of youth such as vulnerable and deviant.

Thus, while the conceptualization of young people as assets to development is superficially characterized as a positive step in the role of young people, the benefits are offset by the fact that this image reproduces them as neoliberal subjects with deviant tendencies.

Youth as risks

As mentioned in the last section, young people can often be seen negatively as deviants or drifters. In a society where economic growth is intimately linked with political goals, this behavior is seen as risky. As Bersaglio Enns, and Kepe (2015) argue, the conceptualization of young people as risky necessitates UN's own intervention into youth lives. In this view, young people are reproduced as a specifically social category within UN development to justify UN's interventions into their lives.

Neoliberalism produces individualization and standardization in a society which creates risk on an individual level (Kelly 2001). This means that people are responsible for their own risk. This is the flipside of the analysis in the above section on youth as assets. Where youth are seen as assets, they have the responsibility to act and 'lift' themselves to society; where youth are seen as risks, they are dangerous and seen as responsible for their own situation. As young people are in transition from childhood to adulthood, this 'risk' is their future (Kelly 2001). Kelly (2001) uses Foucault's understanding of governmentality to argue that that the practice of government happens through

discourses of youth-at-risk. The governing of young people is done through seeing them as risky, which enables political and business actors to take action if they are at-risk (ex: unemployed).

Young people in the Global South, and specifically in Africa, are trapped in a period called waithood (Honwana 2012). This waithood period happens after graduation of education and until long-term employment where young people are neither considered children nor adults. Per Kelly (2001), youth are seen as risky as they are in a period of 'transition', thus the elongation of this transition during waithood means increased young people are seen as riskier.

However, underpinning the concept of young people as risks is the idea that they are vulnerable (Sakurieh and Tannock 2017). In Sakurieh and Tannock's (2017) analysis, they argue that young people have always been seen to bring an element of security. The inception of 'youth' as a social category can be traced to the 18th and 19th century during industrial capitalism. During this time, there were concerns about managing the vast amount of unsupervised youth in the cities. Thus, the understanding of 'youth' as always included an element of security. In recent years, especially in Africa, this has translated to concerns over the 'youth bulge' in Africa where in many African countries, youth are the predominant age group. With this rise in the number of young people, there is the thought that if they cannot find employment, they can turn to more informal and violent methods of capital production through terrorism (Sakurieh and Tannock 2017).

Therefore, the understanding of young people as risks is inherent to their reproduction as a social category. When international development agencies understand young people as risky, they refer to their unemployment and ability to join terrorist organizations. The new elongation of youth with the period of waithood increases their perceived riskiness. This then justified foreign intervention or stronger legislation on youth.

Youth as good citizens in the making

Finally, young people can also be seen as good citizens in the making. While this echoes similar sentiments towards understanding young people as assets, it continues to reproduce certain forms of young people and citizenships. Bersaglio Bersaglio Enns, and Kepe (2015) contend that the UN, alongside other international development agencies, steers young people towards a form of citizenship that supports, and not disrupts, market economies**.** In this way, good citizens are those who participate in formal politics and bad citizens take part in protests.

However, this has serious consequences on not only the role of young people, but also the political space in countries as neoliberal market economies seek to privatize public spaces and foster a sense of consensus policing (and not politics). If young people are steered towards 'formal politics' that use this consensus, they are becoming depoliticized actors. The next section will explore the distinction between policing and politics and the erosion of formal politics in urban areas under neoliberalism.

2.2 The Post-Political City

The structural theory for conceptualization of young people argue that they are exploited and reproduced to serve the needs of neoliberalism. This has direct impacts on the political nature of not only the space they inhabit, but also for themselves.

For Hannah Arendt, politics happens in public space as it is the active engagement of citizens in the public realm. However, one of the three tenets and outcomes of neoliberal development is privatization of land. Many scholars have noted the privatization of public land through the destruction of slums (Ghertner 2012) or investment in real estate (Hackworth 2007). This privatization of public space can erode politics within the city.

According to the 'post-political city' theory, cities are being depoliticized as the space for politics closes. Here, the work of Ranciere (1998) is important in distinguishing between policing and politics.

Policing, for him, is the hegemonic process that creates social laws such as what is acceptable and what is not. It is the creation of order. Politics, on the other hands, occurs when those who are seen as unequal to their counterparts demand equality and expose the wrongs of the police order.

In this system, 'proper politics is progressively replaced by expert social administration.' (Žižek 2005, 117) Consensus is created through this social administration of policing which, for Ranciere, includes the extension of policing in non-formal places to govern. This consensus depoliticizes people and the city as it prevents conflict and contestation through removing dissent and placing it outside formal politics. Politics is replaced by management.

Davidson and Iveson (2015) note four current urban development agendas that are 'post-political': the city as competitive, global, secure, and sustainable. These agendas have been naturalized, however their underpinnings still reflect this neoliberal system. Infrastructure must be privatized, and land controls be relaxed for the city to become competitive and receive more investment. Certain populations are privileged as they fit into 'global' and 'sustainable' schemes, whereas others such as slum-dwellers, are seen as a threat. These concepts become post political as they are premised on the order of the workplace where the wealthy govern and their interests are seen as 'universal' (Davidson and Iveson 2015, 548).

The dominant neoliberal economic model of developed countries, which emphasizes a free market orientation, is at the expense of social networks (Chawla 2002). As discussed, neoliberalism recodes social space in terms of market needs and people as subjects to this system. Yet, young people disproportionately value social capital in their urban spaces (Knowles-Yanez 2005). Thus, neoliberal urban development which seeks to privatize space and break social networks alienates young people and cannot be said to be governed *for* young people.

The post-political nature of cities necessarily impacts its inhabitants, especially young people. By naturalizing the idea of young people as assets, risks, and potentially good citizens, it creates a consensus of what a young person should be and how they should act. This depoliticizing any other behavior they may exhibit as they are labelled 'deviant' and not an act of political change.

Additionally, if the only real method of real politics is dissensus, as argued by Swyngedouw (2007, 2011) because of the nature of the post-political city, then by discouraging young people from entering informal politics due to the nature of formal citizenship, the UN is limited youth opportunities to act. The 'youth-as-good-citizens' frame thus depoliticizes young people.

If the modern state of urban areas is post-political and governed by neoliberal ideals, young people are the most underserved part of society. They are tangled in two ways: they are restricted in their forms of participation due to the post-political city and they are governed through the three political-economic conceptualizations of their role in nations/cities (assets, risks, good citizens in the making).

This next portion will look specifically at young people specifically in Africa, and particularly in African cities, and how forms of development have been affecting their way of lives.

2.3 Young People in Sub-Saharan Cities

This research does not take place in a vacuum; it is spatially centralized on sub-Saharan Africa, and specifically Rwanda. Because of this, cultural and societal outlooks from African youth must be taken into account. Bame Nsamenang (2002) argues that current African adolescents are struggling to combine their traditional cultures of their area and the ones learned due to globalization.

In African culture, African socialization is seen as cultivation of the individual and a passage for growth between childhood and adulthood (Bame Nsamenang 2002). Adulthood is about taking the roles children were trained for and marrying. However, globalization has changed this. As Honwana (2012) discusses in his book, prolonged unemployment or part-time jobs can mean that young people cannot afford to marry or buy houses. Traditional markers of adulthood are displaced.

In Rwanda, traditional adulthood means marriage, and to do this, men must build a house (Pells, Pontalti, and Williams 2014). However, Rwandan has strict building laws so that houses must be near main roads; this means that building houses is much more expensive than it had been previously. Because of this cost, this has meant more eloping and informal marriage which can lead to other issues such as not being able to report domestic abuse and men leaving women and children behind with no security.

Bame Nsamenang (2002) argues that a lot of African countries do not see young people as resources but instead as issues. However, in Rwandan development policies, it is clear that political elite want young people to play a strong role in national development by lifting economy from subsidence agriculture to knowledge-based economy (Pells, Pontalti, and Williams 2014). In Kinyarwanda, the word 'agaciro' which used to be mean good behaviour is now being deployed to mean self-improvement for national development (Pells, Pontalti, and Williams 2014). To further establish the link between the importance of young people to the Rwandan vision of development, the Ministry of Youth is called the Ministry of Youth and ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

In Rwanda, young people's entry into formal employment is critical for its vision of development. In Finn's (2018) article, he reveals how the government, the Rwandan Patriotic Front headed by Paul Kagame, tries to create a clean vision of Kigali. Rwandan government arrest informal sector workers to establish and maintain the vision of cleanliness.

The housing situation in Kigali also poses an issue for its young constituents. In Rwanda, the government has actively pushed for a real estate boom in Kigali in their Vision 2020 policy. Yet Rwanda is ill-prepared for this transition: its property taxation system is weak, the materials used are imported and expensive, and access to finance is limited due to high interest rates (Goodfellow 2017). Because of these factors, developers look to create high-end housing to make the most profit. However, the average middle-class Rwandan cannot pay to live in such a house. The housing market has largely been privatized so many have to live in informal houses as they cannot afford expensive villas. Rwandan government followed a neoliberal market-driven policy of 'growth-first' before social housing and have excluded a portion of their population.

Thus, this research will use the critical lens of the structural conceptualization of youth and its potential outcome of depoliticizing urban spaces and young people to analyze this case in Kigali, Rwanda.

3. Methods and Methodology

To conduct this research, I will be using two methods: content analysis and individual interviews. The content analysis will be carried out on Rwandan national and Kigali specific policies on urbanization and young people such as 2014 report for the Population and Housing Census and the 2015 National Youth Policy among others. I will hold remote phone and email interviews with young people aged 18-30, as defined by the 2015 National Youth Policy, and with local Kigali policy makers on urban development issues (specifically in areas of public space, transportation, and affordable housing).

These methods will be used with the aim to enable a critical approach that deconstructs the structures and exercise of power behind Kigali urban policy. I will critically analyse the interviews with policymakers in terms of their neoliberal underpinnings. With the methods and goals in mind, I will view the new urban policies of the City of Kigali through the lens of youth.

4. Ethics and Practical Issues

As the research includes a critical approach to the Kigali urban policy, there are some ethical and safety considerations. There will be full consent and transparency for the participants. Rwanda is a society with weariness towards researchers, evidenced by the work of Brandon Finn (2018) and other scholars. This is due to the relatively low freedom of the people to critique the government. With this

in mind, I will be sure to detail how my project does not in any way reflect criticisms towards the Rwandan government but is instead a broader view of urban development.

5. Results and Discussions

5.1 Content Analysis

Privatization in Kigali

The 2013 Kigali Masterplan places large importance on affordable homes and acknowledges the large proportional gap between family villas and smaller homes. However, it refuses to call informal settlements informal, they instead call them 'unplanned'. This, along with the crackdown on informal workers reveals how the government tries to create a clean vision of Kigali (Finn 2018). In the Masterplan, there is also a strong re-development agenda for these 'unplanned settlements' and desire to relocate them away from the city.

Furthermore, the solution for the lack of affordable housing in Kigali is to create private sector led affordable housing provision (Kigali Masterplan 2013). In many instances within the policy plan, private sector-led approaches and private-public partnerships are deemed as the solution, such as with affordable homes but also for social infrastructure and transportation services.

In the 2016 New Urban agenda published after the UN Habitat III conference, there are frequently references the importance of public, green space to livelihood in the urban areas. The UN Habitat has been working closely with Kigali to set standards for city development, thus their normative framework for public spaces is important as it has also influenced Kigali urban development.

When considering public urban environments, the 2016 New Urban Agenda looked at how they would affect business. For example, they focused point 53 on the importance of public green space. However, they have framed this to "facilitate business and public and private investments and livelihood opportunities for all." (UN Habitat 2016) This reveals an economic outlook on green spaces and consequently an economic outlook on those who fill it. In one of the working documents published before the Agenda, importance was similarly placed on the green spaces as it would boost worker productivity ('Spatial Development' Urban Dialogue, 2015). In this way, citizens who frequent public spaces are reframed as workers who benefit from the space for productivity. In this way, the conceptualization of public space sees those who go to the public spaces as economic assets.

Despite this pro-public space rhetoric, Kigali city has also been pushing to increase density in central areas to prevent urban sprawl (Kigali Masterplan 2013). The proposal is for 43% of Kigali City land to be urbanized for the long-term population. This means green spaces are being pushed out of the city centre and into low density residential areas and surrounding hills.

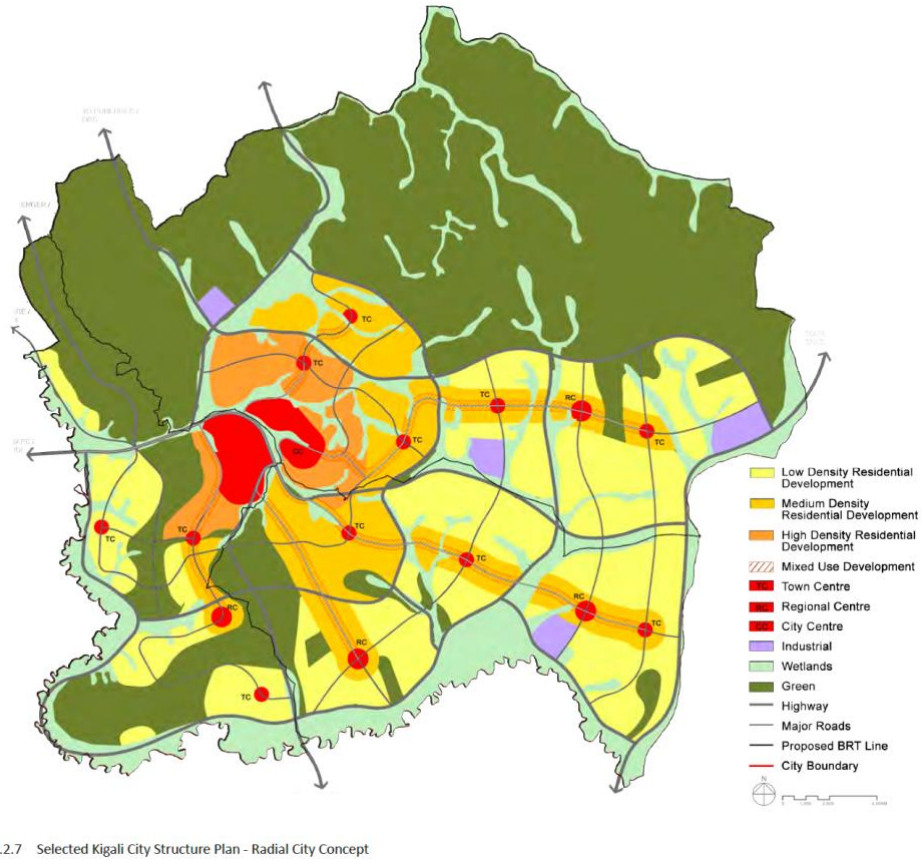

Fig.2.7 Selected Kigali City Structure Plan - Radial City Concept

Figure 1: Kigali City Structure Plan – Radial City Concept (from the 2013 Kigali City Masterplan)

Nonetheless, there is some mention of 'open space' in the 2013 Kigali Masterplan. Whereas in 2013, the percentage of open space in the city was 0.3%, the city government launched an ambitious campaign to bring open space percentage to 12.5%. However, they did not give a date in mind and simply designated it with an X. While it would be a beneficial project for the inhabitants, given the lack of date to hold the city government accountable, it is unlikely that the amount of open space in the city is enlarged to that degree. Even in the key land proposals, public or green space is not explicitly stated. Instead, there is greater emphasis on preserving nature areas like forests and wetlands in the seventh proposal. In the ninth proposal, farming is given more emphasis than public area for the places that are unbuildable. While this may help the economy, it places more importance of economy and business over the livelihoods of the citizens and their health.

Another site of physical infrastructure affected by privatization and a pro-growth led model of development is transportation. In Kigali's 2013 Master Plan, transportation and more importantly *green* transportation is emphatically mentioned. The key propositions in the masterplan to make the city more accessible are firstly to re-arrange the township organization to make the neighborhoods more compact and walkable. The proposal also includes mixed development so there would be less of a need for transportation. Public transportation as presented in the master plan would connect "employment nodes and regional facilities" for a maximum of one-hour travel time (Kigali Masterplan 2013, xiii). The public to private transportation ratio would be 70:30.

Another goal for the Kigali as stated in the Masterplan would be to create more fringe settlements and suburbs for commercial areas. This would make public transportation therefore more important for citizens to get from their homes to work. By re-organizing and developing the city to be mixed development and compact, Kigali residents would likely have more social cohesion as they would spend less time in their car for travelling and more time in their neighbourhood or public transportation (Jackson and McDonald 2005).

Youth in Kigali

In Kigali, young people are usually written about as assets to national development. Equipping young people with skills for the workforce is oft cited in Rwandan policy papers (Rwandan National Youth Policy, 2015; Rwandan Socio-Economic Status of Youth, 2012). Specifically, young people should be nurtured for 'global opportunities' (Rwandan National Youth Policy, 2015, 9). Under the headline of the National Youth Policy reads 'Towards a HAPPi Generation'. According to the report's lexicon, HAPPi stands for Health, Aptitude/Attitude, Patriotism, Productivity, Innovation. These are the core values that the government wants for their youth. Delinquency, per the National Youth Policy, is caused by lack of skills, limited parental guidance, poverty, unemployment, and underemployment, and other causes.

In the introduction to the National Youth Policy, it clearly states that the policies within were influenced by the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN and their normative framework on development has played an important role within Rwandan development and the conceptualization of the role of young people in national and global development. This narrative has trickled down from government policy papers to student-run organization such as AISEC where the AISEC Rwanda page on Facebook posted:

> Are you University student or recent graduate? Good to be, AIESEC in Rwanda in collaboration with AIESEC chapters in East Africa has brought to you One Bus to EA 2019. This campaign comes with a lot of opportunities that contribute to the career development of students and recent graduates,by supporting one of UN sustainable development goals (SDGs). Slots are limited, book yours before though this link: http://bit.ly/OneBus2EA19. (AISEC Rwanda, 2019)

To build the skills for young people for this development objective, the UN has founded a total of thirty One-Stop Youth Centres around Rwanda, with three specifically in Kigali. These centres aim to increase youth employment and empower youth civically (UN Habitat 2016). One of the skill development courses is on volunteerism and civic engagement. One of the interesting aspects to note about these centres is that it encourages youth civic education alongside economic empowerment. The importance of young people, even shown in the 2015 National Youth Policy by having the key policy areas for youth to focus on employment and productivity, reveal how Kigali urban planning and development conceptualize youth as economic assets.

Many young people are left behind in Rwandan macroeconomic development and therefore much seek informal work (Finn 2018). The Kigali government has a strict anti-informality policy and aims to close down one of the largest informal market in the city: Kimironko market. They also arbitrarily arrest informal workers. This has created an issue within the city as many, especially young people, struggle to find formal employment but are actively repressed and even detained due to working informally.

In Kigali's 2013 Masterplan as well as its National Youth Policy, it is clear Rwanda is trying to move towards the technology sector. There's clear rhetoric in the Policy that the direction that the Rwandan government is taking is towards ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and that young people play a large role within that. Specific examples cited within the policies are the focus on increasing digital and ICT awareness and literature and improving ICT facilities (National Youth Policy, 2015; Kigali Masterplan, 2013; National Urbanization Plan, 2015). While the clear direction towards ICT may be good for the economy, it creates an uneven geography in Kigali where there is a digital divide within the city that follows socio-economic lines (Madureira et al 2018). The city centre has the most ICT access and ownership (to WIFI, computers, telephones) whereas the east and south west have the least.

Besides pushing the ICT productivity and economy on young people, Rwanda also boasts of different training programs such as the UN One-Stop Youth Centre as well as the K Lab (or Knowledge Lab) where young people are offered workspaces to create start-ups. Academically, there have been some debates about the actual effectiveness of training programs like these which are skill-based. While some argue that training programs can provide young people the skills they need for the workforce beyond formal education (Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi, 2013), others argue that they limit youth employment by lengthening the period of time between formal education and entrance into the youth force (Furlong 2013). Rather than equip young people with valuable skills, they instead can be counterproductive as young people enter the workforce too late and employers are looking for younger workers.

The link Rwandan government has made between young people and the knowledge economy is evident in the fact that the Rwandan Ministry for Youth is called Ministry for Youth and ICT. This also sheds some light on how youth are *used* in Rwanda as it seems they are almost commodified and seen as economic assets to bolster the ICT sector. By adding youth to the responsibilities of the ICT ministry (or ICT duties to the youth ministry), Rwanda creates a link between youth and commodities for economic growth. Special policy concern was placed on the fact that many young people don't have access to ICT and are not literate with computers (Rwandan National Youth Policy, 2015).

As it pertains to Rwandan youth policy, it is clear that the government looks at youth through human capital discourse and sees worth often in economic terms. This can be seen in the push for the One-Stop Youth Centre and how the push was for employment and getting youth to contribute to economic growth.

In Rwanda, there are six years of primary school, 3 years of lower secondary, 3 years of upper secondary, and four years of higher education (Rob-Balsera 2011). Because there is a split in secondary school, there are two different tracks for secondary education: the 9-year (9YBE) and 12-year (12YBE) program. Additionally, there are boarding schools which are seen as a good education that feeds into the Rwandan Vision 2020 plan for development while the 12YBE which is even as less good and poor return on educational investment (Pells, Pontalti, and Williams 2014). While the government has promoted ‘free education’, in reality there are hidden fees in terms of uniforms, school supplies, and books which are compulsory. This has meant many parents have struggled to keep their children in school. Because education has been marketed as ‘free’, local governments believe the issue is not structural any longer but instead arising from a family-related or cultural-related issue which is simply not the case across the board.

One of the biggest policy issues that Rwanda has identified as a challenge for young people has been the mismatch between education and labor market requirements (Rwandan National Youth Policy 2015). A solution, as mentioned previously, has been extra-curricular training programs. However, because education is viewed through the lens of the market, it has been reframed as a site to build citizens into workers (Ron-Balsera 2011).

From the content analysis of key national and municipal policy documents, young people are framed as economic assets to urban and national development. Issues such as their education and civic participation are placed under market logic as important to economic development. However, the Rwandan government has placed importance on participatory planning in urban development. This can be seen in the Policy Statement 7 of the National Urbanization Plan: ‘make effective participatory planning in urban governance.’ (Rwandan National Urbanization Plan, 2015, 49) The purpose, according to the statement is socially inclusive communities. One of the four stakeholder ministries for this policy statement was the Ministry of Youth and ICT. Thus, young people are envisioned as civically minded citizens and workers.

5.2 Interviews
[Sending interview requests out currently]

6. Conclusions

In the past, there has been the issue of seeing youth as issue, especially with the youth bulge (growing youth population) in Africa and the Middle East. Young people were framed as violent and revolutionary. However, since the late 1980's there has been a push to reframe young people as positive for development (Sukarieh and Tannock 2011). Yet this 'new' view is not so different from before. The negative traits of young people (as irrational and vulnerable) are still there and instead must be tamed with employment and development opportunities. With the positive development outlook, it is the government's responsibility to bring out the economic productivity of young people. In this way, youth are seen through a human capital lens where their importance are as economic assets.

An analysis of literature in these areas have shown the degree to which young people are seen as economic assets to urban development. As such, physical infrastructure is constructed around the importance of its usefulness of the economic productivity of the urban citizens, and young people. Not only this, but civic engagement, employment, and education have also been framed in that way so as to express their importance from an economic outlook. This can be damaging to young people who live in urban area whose social needs only matter when they take part in the market-led economy.

Urban development, through the interests of capital, has been depoliticized. Public space has been privatization and political actors have been seen as deviants. In Kigali, this has translated to informal workers being arrested and green space being pushed out to city corners. While there is a clear interest for more public space, as seen in the Kigali Masterplan with an expected increase of green space, the government has given no projection of when this may happen.

[Awaiting interview responses for more conclusive argument]

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