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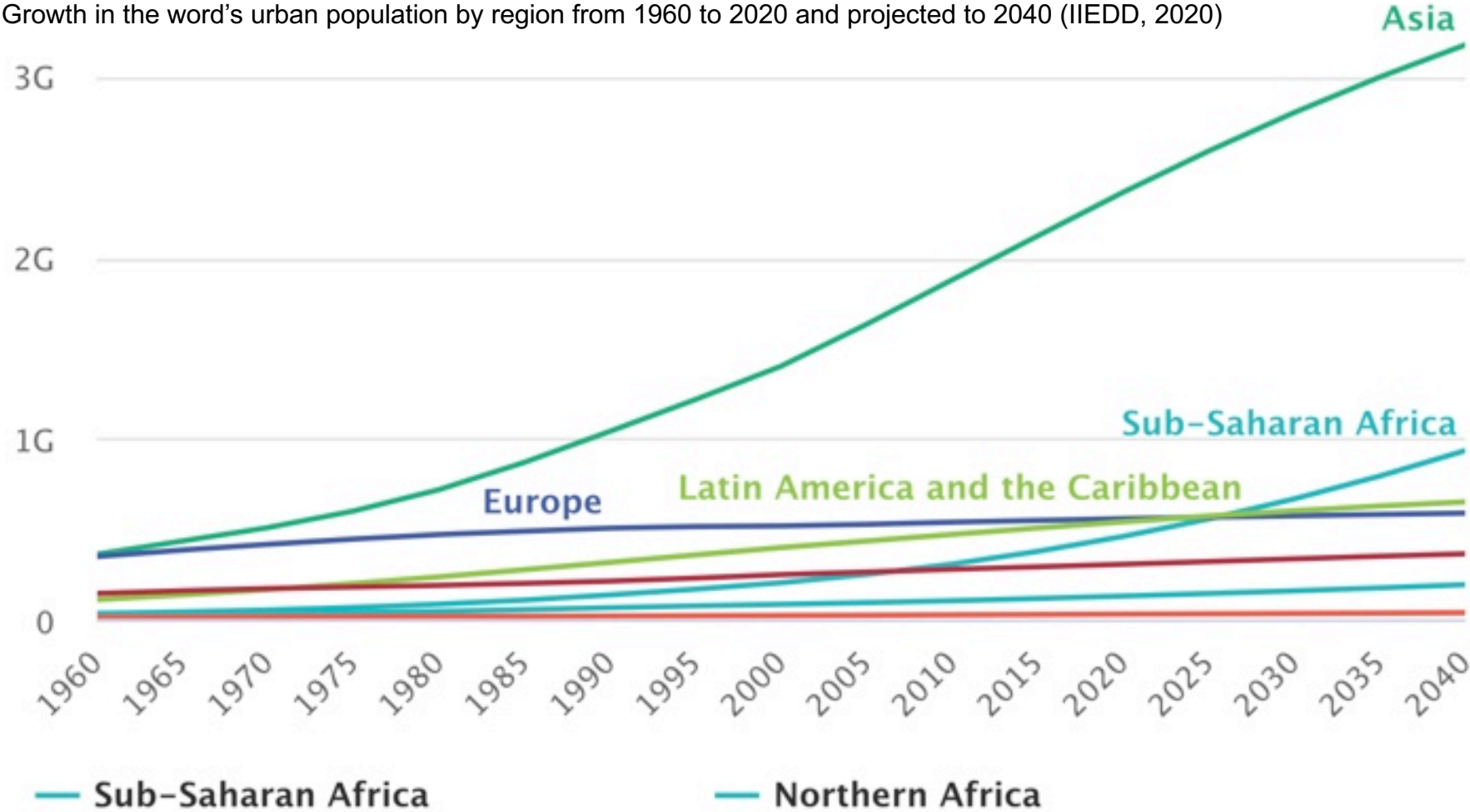SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

ORGANIZING GRASSROOTS INFRASTRUCTURE FOR MORE INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT CITIES: THE (IN)VISIBLE WORK OF ORGANIZATIONAL 'INCOMPLETENESS'

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Growth in the word's urban population by region from 1960 to 2020 and projected to 2040 (IIEDD, 2020)

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AIM

To examine the collective actions of grassroots organisations in creating and governing these infrastructures in the context of informal settlements

THEORY

It builds on organization studies and urban infrastructure literature

METHOD

Informed by the case of resident associations providing critical services and infrastructure in informal settlements in Kisumu, Kenya

KISUMU AND ITS INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Task forces	When created	activities	service coverage
Solid Waste Management Task Force	2009	-Waste Collection -Clean ups	15% - Waste Collection 5% - Clean ups
Sanitation	2009	-Sanitation champions fighting open defecation	20% - Sanitation
Renewable Energy	2009	Promotion of solar lighting and solar cookers.	5%
Urban Agriculture	2009	New technology in farming eg sack gardens.	5%
Housing	2009	Advocacy for improvement of housing	5%
Health	2009	Promotion of community health volunteers to improve health at household levels and prevent maternal deaths	40%

Obunga Resident Association

Grassroots infrastructures are characterized by:

1. **Shaping a partial organization but** creating the illusion of a formal and complete organization
2. **Crafting critical** (and often hidden) material and organisational infrastructures for the subsistence of dormant (and visible) structures; and
3. **Moulding nested** infrastructure that shelters layers of **floating** and autonomous groups

1. Partial organizations creating the illusion of complete organizations

Task forces, formal organization, Obunga RA

- Apparently a 'true organisation' (Brunsson, 2006), but rather responds to the concept of partial organisation (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2011), with the 'minimum sets of elements' (Simone, 2004)
- RA as a legitimate organisational form as it covers a broad territory
- Recruiting existing organisations: boda boda, table banking

"RA are not reliable, never elections…RA are very amorphous" County officer

2. Critical (hidden) infrastructures for the subsistence of dormant (visible) infrastructures

- Fluctuating (dormant) infrastructures, that are quickly articulated when resources arrive
- Operative because of the critical infrastructure, providing the minimum activity to keep the cohesion of this loose organisation
- Members of dormant groups move to other active ones. Knowledge & competences remain in the RA
- Or 'dormant or disappeared' groups are called back if necessary under the RA

Visitor pointing out to a 'dormant' but visible task force, Obunga RA

2. Critical (hidden) infrastructures for the subsistence of dormant (visible) infrastructures

- Critical material infrastructures sustain life in informal settlements: "Water is the mother of others, water is life" "Money matters"

- Providing social and organizational infrastructures: cohesion, sense of belonging, stability and continuity

- Remain invisible for outsiders (Start 1999), to the untrained eye of the foreigner (Hyden, 1983)

Table banking Manyatta

Water CBO Nyalenda

3. Nested (Ostrom, 1990) and floating infrastructure (Melucci, 1996)

Task forces, Obunga
Nested infrastructure

Table banking Manyatta
Floating infrastructure

CONCLUSIONS

1. The hidden power of organizational 'incompleteness'

2. Grassroots infrastructure, through partial organizing (incompleteness), can successfully govern common resources and infrastructures in resource –poor environments

3. Grassroots infrastructure constantly engage in rendering their partial infrastructures visible, mobilizing a wide register of (in)visibility approaches

Invisible	Visible
Partial	Complete
Critical	Dormant
Floating	Nested