A new vision of Africa's urbanisation

By David Benazeraf OECD Sahel and West Africa Club

Africa has the fastest urban growth rate in the world. The urbanisation rate will reach 60% by 2050 from 50% today. Most of Africa's population growth will be absorbed by cities. This offers great opportunities for innovation, policy change and the structural transformation of African economies. However, urbanisation also creates challenges for African citizens, businesses and governments.

Africa's urban population grew from 27 million in 1950 (618 agglomerations) to 567 million in 2015 (7 600 agglomerations). For example, Kenya had more urban dwellers in 2015 than the whole of Africa in 1950. 50% of Africa's population live in one of the continent's 7 600 urban agglomerations. Urban growth is due to several factors: population growth in existing cities, rural exodus, transformation of rural areas. These factors generates different shapes of urban development. Urban planning and management are essential to development challenges. Understanding urbanisation, its drivers, dynamics and impacts, is key to designing targeted, inclusive and foward-looking policies at the local, national and continental levels.

A standardised methodology

There is no universal or generally accepted definition of cities or urban agglomerations. The word city mostly refers to an administrative unit whose boundaries and legal status are defined by national governments according to varying administrative and/or functional criteria, contexts and objectives. The heterogeneity of the data provided by national statistics presents a problem for comparing and analysing urbanisation across countries. Most definitions are based on administrative, numerical and functional criteria or a combination. In Africa, the most widely used criteria is administrative (25 countries), followed by mixed (15 countries) and numerical (13 countries, ranging from 1 500 to 30 000 inhabitants).

Traditionally, the focus has been put on larger cities as opposed to smaller urban agglomerations. The United Nations "World Urbanisation Prospects" provides population estimates for 221 cities with more than 300 000 inhabitants. Yet, smaller agglomerations with populations between 10 000 and 100 000 inhabitants represent one-third of Africa's overall urban population. Africa's urbanisation expands beyond administrative limits. For example, the built-up area of Maputo and Matola (Mozambique), two separate municipalities, expands beyond administrative limits, including in areas considered as rural.

A single harmonised definition of the urban is necessary to implement development policies appropriately adapted to territorial realities, to measure and compare urban phenomena at different territorial scales and over time. Africapolis is the only international database that systematically includes small urban agglomerations above 10 000 inhabitants. It includes 7 600 African agglomerations, comparable at the continental level. 97% of Africapolis agglomerations have fewer than 300 000 inhabitants.

Africapolis' methodology combines official population data and satellite detection of built-up areas, with a homogeneous definition of urban. The database uses three types of information: the list of localities of a country, the population by locality (census data), and the continuous built-up area (satellite images).

During the first step of the methodology, population data by locality are processed: data collection and harmonisation of available national and local population statistics, disaggregation into local units (points), geo-referencing of the local units. During the second step, satellite images are processed: teledection of built-up areas, delimitation of the perimeter of the agglomerations (polygons); manual verifications, geo-referencing of the polygons. Finally, locality (points) and built-up areas (polygons) are cross-referenced to identify all the agglomerations of more than 10 000 inhabitants in Africa.

Main outcomes

First, very large agglomerations are emerging. For example, the urban agglomeration of Onitsha is expected to reach 25 million inhabitants by 2050, within in a vast urban area of

50 million inhabitants combined with Aba, Uyo and Port Harcourt. This vast continuously built-up agglomeration is formed under the combined effects of growing urban areas, the merging of agglomerations, the absorption of smaller settlements and the densification of rural areas. Onitsha emerged in a vast densely populated area with several historic urban areas. Today, it englobes the cities of Aba, Nnewi, Owerri and Umuahia each with populations of more than 500 000 as well as many smaller ones like Ihiala and Nkwerre, all of which are experiencing their own growth. However, one important condition for the formation of Onitsha has been the very high rural density in the periphery and surrounding areas. This mostly scattered and linear settlement has become so dense as to be considered urban due to the underlying demographic pressure.

Second, intermediary cities play a key role in Africa's urbanisation. There are only few big cities in Africa but many small ones. Africa has 11 urban areas with more than five million inhabitants for a combined population of 95 million people, and it counts 6 740 small urban agglomeration with fewer than 100 000 inhabitants home to 180 million. The focus on larger cities has resulted in skewing the perception of African cities and the understanding of urbanisation dynamics. An important, yet often overlooked, driver of urbanisation in Africa is the continued emergence of urban agglomerations. Since 2000, the number of urban agglomerations between 10 000 and 100 000 inhabitants increased by almost 2 000. Many of the continent's future cities are emerging through the fusion of smaller cities or through population densification in rural areas – trends that are not captured in official statistics and government data, which tend to focus on cities as administrative units with defined boundaries.

Third, with population growth, some rural areas become urban. Population growth is a key driver of the urbanisation process within rural areas. Many of the new « agglomerations » are rural areas which became towns with population growth. The majority of new agglomerations emerge in areas with high rural population densities and in proximity to large metropolitan areas. The natural growth of rural settlements is one important driver in the increase in the number of urban agglomerations. This urbanisation is driven by population growth in rural settlements leading over time to a re-classification from rural to urban, once the threshold of 10 000 inhabitants is reached.

Fourth, urbanisation is shaping transnational clusters of cities, or regions with high-density of urban agglomerations (with a very high number of agglomerations and connections between them). Africapolis identifies six main conurbations/clusters with a high density of agglomerations (North African cluster, Gulf of Guinea cluster, Nile River cluster, Ethiopian Highland cluster, Great Lakes cluster, South African cluster), and 121 smaller ones. For example, the Gulf of Guinea cluster has 3 908 connected urban agglomerations (including Lagos). Agglomerations that are close to one another are more likely to have stronger physical and socio-economic links.

Fifth, border cities play an important role in Africa's regional integration. Africa has ten national capitals that are located at a national border: Bangui (Gambia), Brazzaville (Congo), Bujumbura (Burundi), Gaborone (Botswana), Kinshasa (DRC), Lomé (Togo), Maseru (Lesotho), Mbabane (Eswatini), N'Djamena (Tchad), Porto Novo (Benin). There are 47 border cities at less than ten kilometres and 635 border cities at less than 40 kilometres from another urban agglomeration in a neighbouring country. More than 42 million people (or almost 8% of the total urban population of the continent) live in these agglomerations. In Africa, border regions are often centres of economic activity, but they can also be difficult to administer.

Regional and continental integration are other domains in which Africapolis can concretely impact governance. With the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement about to enter into force, the need for a better understanding of the role of African cities in driving cross-border integration is even more pressing. Border cities are pivotal in regional integration dynamics. Developing transboundary infrastructure (e.g. transportation corridors, dry docks, joint border posts, free trade zones and pipelines), co-planning with neighbouring border cities, minimising marginalisation and fostering cohesion at national level are amongst the multidimensional place-based policies that can be set up to support urban growth and form cross-border urban regions.

Conclusion: Better understanding of Africa's urbanisation

Administrative definitions and statistics do not reflect Africa's real urbanisation. Many of tomorrow's cities are still considered as rural areas. Rural exodus is not the only driver for urban growth. The emergence and development of intermediary cities needs to be accompanied. Understanding urbanisation, its drivers, dynamics and impacts, is key to designing targeted policies at the local, national and continental levels.

Africa's cities and their inhabitants are increasingly reshaping the region's economic, social and political landscape. A large majority of these agglomerations are secondary cities and small towns that act as hubs and catalysts for local and regional production as well as for the transfer of goods, people and information, linking the local and regional economies to the global economy.

As governments continue their efforts towards the vision laid out in the New Urban Agenda and to meet the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 11 to "make cities and human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", Africapolis data and evidence supports cities and governments to make urban areas more inclusive, productive and sustainable, ensuring that future trends are anticipated and acted upon with the most reliable data at hand.

非洲城市化的前景

许多未来的城市目前仍被视为农村地区，而且农村人口迁入城市也不是城市发展的唯一驱动因素，与之相伴的还有中等城市的涌现和发展

文 ｜ 彭旦文（David Benazeraf） 经合组织（OECD）萨赫勒和西非俱乐部　翻译 ｜ 王晓波

非洲国家是世界上城市化发展速度最快的国家。到 2050 年，城市化率将从现在的 50% 上升到 60%。非洲的大多数新增人口都将出现在城市，这为非洲经济的创新、政策调整和结构转型提供了巨大的机遇。不过，城市化也给非洲民众、企业和政府带来了挑战。

非洲的城市人口从 1950 年的 2700万人（618 个城市群）增长到 2015 年的 5.67 亿人（7600 个城市群）。举例来讲，2015 年肯尼亚的城市人口已经超过了 1950 年整个非洲大陆的城市人口。现在非洲 50% 的人口生活在 7600 个城市群里。城市人口的快速增长主要源于这样几个因素：现有城市的人口在不断增长、农村人口迁入城市以及农村的城市化转型。它们引发了城市发展的不同形态。城市规划和管理是其发展进程中遇到的首要挑战。了解城市化及其驱动因素、发展动力和产生的影响是地方、国家和整个非洲大陆在制定有针对性、包容并具有前瞻性政策时的关键。

使用标准化方法来看非洲城市化

对城市和城市群并没有统一或普遍接受的定义。“城市”一词指的是一个行政单位，它的边界和法律地位由国家政府根据不同的行政和职能标准、背景及目标所界定。各国在统计数据方面的异质性给比较和分析它们的城市化状况出了一个难题。不过大多数对城市的定义都基于行政区划、人口数量和功能标准或者它们的组合。在非洲，使用最多的标准是行政区划（25 个国家）；紧随其后的是混合标准（15 个国家）和人口数量（13 个国家，城市居民从 1500 名到 3 万名不等）。

传统上，政府会将重点放在大城市，而不是小城市群。按照联合国“世界城市化展望”的估计，非洲有 221 个城市的居民数量超过了 30 万。不过另一方面，居民在 1 万至 10 万之间的较小聚居区占到了非洲城市总人口的三分之一。现在非洲的城市化进程已经超出了行政范围。比方说，莫桑比克的马普托和马托拉是两个独立的行政区域，但在它们之间的新建成区跨越了它们的行政边界，并且还覆盖了一些附近的农村地区。

对城市做出统一的定义是必要的，因为这样有利于根据地区的实际情况制定和实施适宜的发展政策，同时可以衡量和对比不同地区和不同阶段的城市状况。非洲城邦（Africapolis）是唯一一个系统地包括了所有超过 1 万名居民的小型城市群的国际数据库。它一共包括了 7600 个非洲聚居区，其中 97% 的居住人口都不足 30 万。

非洲城邦数据库的这一方法参考了官方提供的人口数据和对建成区的卫星探测结果，以及对城市的统一定义。数据库使用了三类信息：一个国家各地区的列表、按地区统计的人口（人口普查数据）和不断建设中的建成区（卫星图像）。

该方法的第一步是按地区处理人口数据：收集和统一可获得的国家和地方人口统计数据，将其分解为地方单位（点），并了解这些地方单位的地理属性。第二步是处理卫星图像：对建成区实施远程监控，划分城市群（多边形模块）的边界；人工验证和了解这些城市群的地理属性。最后一步就是将地方单位(点)与建成区（多边形模块）进行互相参照，由此确定非洲所有居住人口超过 1 万的居住区。

几个重要趋势

第一，超大型城市群正在涌现。比

方说，预计到 2050 年，尼日利亚奥尼查的城市群里的居民有望达到 2500 万；而若将阿坝、乌尤和哈科特港整合在一起的话，城市人口则可能能有 5000 万之多。这类超大型城市群不断建成是源于一些因素共同作用的结果，包括城市自身的发展、聚居区的合并、吸纳小型定居点以及农村人口的密集涌入。奥尼查所在的地区属于人口稠密区，而且那里历史上就有好几个城区。现在，它又吸纳了阿坝、内维、奥韦里和乌姆瓦希亚这几个城市，它们各自的人口都超过了 50 万，以及许多较小的城市，比如伊希亚拉和恩克维尔。所有这些城市都处在发展中。奥尼查成为超大城市的另一个重要原因是其周边的农村地区人口密度变得非常大。这些曾经是很分散的定居区，但由于居住人口的骤增，已经被认为是城市了。

第二，中等城市将在非洲的城市化进程中发挥关键作用。非洲只有为数不多的几个大型城市，但却有许多的小城市。非洲有 11 个城市的人口超过了 500 万，它们加起来的人数达到了 9500 万。同时它有 6740 个小城市群，每个城市的居民不到 10 万，全部加在一起共有 1.8 亿人。对大型城市的过度关注导致对非洲城市的认知和对城市化发展的理解出现了偏差。事实上，自 2000 年以来，拥有 1 万至 10 万居民的城市数量增加了近 2000 个。非洲大陆未来的许多城市都将通过小城市的合并和大批农村人口迁入的方式呈现出来——但这一趋势目前并未体现在官方的统计和政府掌握的数据中，因为那些数据只关注了已有明确边界的作为行政单位的既有城市。

第三，随着人口的增长，一些农村地区变成了城市。人口增长是农村地区走向城市化的关键驱动力。许多新的居住区都是因人口增长而由农村变成城镇的，这些农村地区大多人口密度大，同时又靠近大城市。所以这就成了城市群数量大幅增长的一个重要原因。一旦居住地的人口达到 1 万人，渐渐地这些农村定居点就会因人口增长而由农村发展成为城市，实现城市化。

第四，城市化正在形成跨国城市群或者高密度的城市群地区（即大量的城市群紧密地连接在一起）。非洲城邦数据库已经确定了 6 个主要的密度很高的城市集群（即北非集群、几内亚湾集群、尼罗河集群、埃塞俄比亚高地集群、五大湖集群、南非集群）和 121 个规模相对较小的集群。比方说，几内亚湾集群拥有 3908 个彼此相连的城市群（包括拉各斯）。这些紧密相连的集群之间很可能会建立起更加牢固的社会经济联系。

第五，边境城市在非洲区域一体化进程中发挥着重要作用。非洲有十个国家的首都位于其国家边界：班吉（冈比亚）、布拉柴维尔（刚果）、布琼布拉（布隆迪）、哈博罗内（博茨瓦纳）、金沙萨（刚果）、洛美（多哥）、马塞卢（莱索托）、姆巴巴内（斯威士兰）、恩贾梅纳（乍得）、波多诺伏（贝宁）。此外，距离邻国城市群不到 10 公里的边界城市有 47 个，不到 40 公里的边界城市有 635 个。生活在这些边界城市的人口超过了 4200 万（约占非洲城市总人口的 8%）。在非洲，边境地区经常是经济活动的中心，不过，另一方面，管理它们也颇具难度。

非洲的城市化对区域和整个大陆的一体化治理也会产生重要影响。非洲大陆自由贸易区（AFCFTA）协定即将生效，因此，更好地了解非洲城市在推动跨境一体化方面的作用就更加必要和迫切。边境城市是区域一体化的关键所在。发展跨境基础设施（比如运输走廊、干船坞、边境联合哨所、自由贸易区和输油管道等）、与边境的邻国城市共同规划、尽可能减少边缘化现象和加强国家间的凝聚力是各地可以多方位考虑的政策措施，因为它们对城市发展和形成跨境城市区域能够起到积极的促进作用。

结论：更深入了解非洲城市化

行政定义和统计数据并不能真实地反映非洲的城市化进程。许多未来的城市目前仍被视为农村地区，而且农村人口迁入城市也不是城市发展的唯一驱动因素。与之相伴的还有中等城市的涌现和发展。因此，了解城市化及其驱动因素、动力和产生的影响应当成为各级地方、各个国家和整个非洲大陆在制定具体政策时的重要考量。

非洲的城市及其居民正在改写该地区的经济、社会和政治格局。目前，虽然大多数城市仍属于中等城市和小城镇，但作为地方和区域生产以及货物、人员和信息往来的枢纽和催化剂，它们已经把地方和区域经济与全球经济联系在一起了。

现在，各国政府正在为实现新城市议程规划的愿景和可持续发展目标中的第 11 项，即"让城市和人居环境更具包容性、更安全、更灵活和具有可持续性发展的潜力"，进行着不懈的努力。非洲城邦平台获取的数据和事实也支持政府将城市发展得更包容、高效和可持续，因此政府可充分利用这些现有的最可靠的数据制定行动方案，以保证城市化的发展趋势是可掌控的。（编辑：杨海霞）