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Developing Density: Diverging Approaches to Urbanization between South Africa and Colombia

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Abstract

This article looks at urbanization in Colombia and South Africa. Though having currently very different levels of urbanization, both countries experienced relatively high rates of urbanization during the last three decades. This article examines the facts and ethical implications related to this process of urbanization. Despite progress with addressing some negative side effects of urbanization (for example, both countries experience currently a decrease in the percentage of urban population living in slums), continued mass urbanization remains a challenge for both countries.

I. Introduction

Despite their different sociopolitical backgrounds and histories, South Africa and Colombia are strikingly similar in several ways, including the recent growth and modernization of their economies. However, perhaps most importantly for understanding the future of governance in these two countries, both have experienced a dramatic increase in their urban population since the 1970s. However, while both have seen growth in their share of urban populace, the conditions which led to such an influx and the respective governments' responses to growth in their cities differ.

Urbanization in both Colombia and South Africa has a violent and tragic history, with Black residents of South Africa having been systematically denied the opportunities in the cities and rural Colombian having been violently evicted from the country's cities in a misguided attempt to build the country's economy. This article examines each country's success at urban governance in the wake of these chaotic restructurings. Further, given the high rates of rural poverty in Colombia and South Africa, this article discusses how governments can handle the dual pressures of meeting the needs of their growing urban populace without neglecting the rest of the country.

This article is structured into six sections: Following this Introduction (Section I), Section II summarizes some of the recent literature on urbanization in both South Africa and Colombia, focusing on how each government has reacted to growing urban populations and how urbanization has changed the social, political, and environmental landscape of the countries. Section III summarizes key socioeconomic indicators for each country, focusing on the trends in GDP per capita, life expectancy, and literacy. Section IV examines the key facts related to urbanization. Section V provides an overview of the ethical origins of both countries' imperatives towards good

urban governance and discusses applicable existing ethical structures before the last section provides some conclusions.

II. Literature Review

Scholars have produced extensive research on sustainable urbanization from social, environmental, and economic perspectives in recent years. Although the literature on modern urbanization focused heavily on the Chinese experience in the early 21st century (Vélez-Henao, 2020), African and South American countries have begun to receive considerable attention, including South Africa and Colombia. Turok and Borel-Saladin (2014) and Matzopoulos et al. (2020) focus on South Africa, while Abello-Colak and Guarneros-Meza (2014) and Vélez-Henao (2020) focus on Colombia. Each scholar examines a different policy sphere, but their combined scope looks at the impacts of urbanization and urban policy on violence, sustainability, and poverty in the two countries.

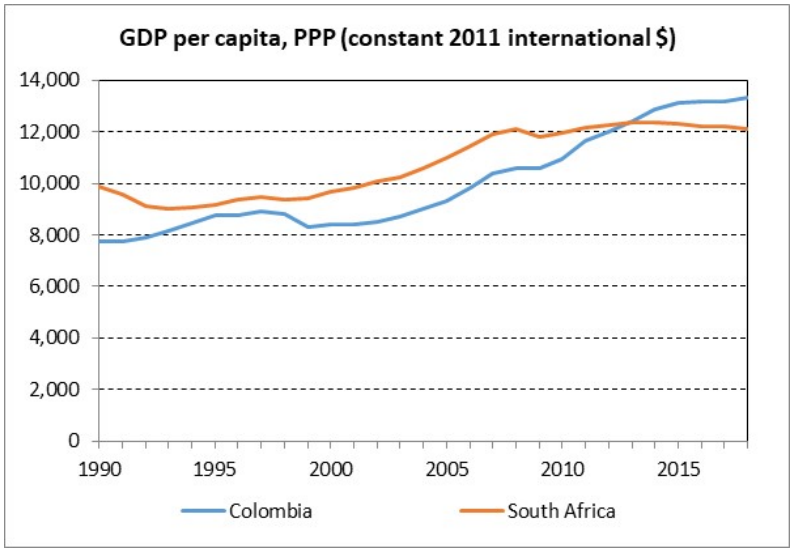
- Turok and Borel-Saladin (2014) describe how, amid rapid post-apartheid urbanization, the South African government succeeded in managing urban infrastructure needs, particularly in regard to clean water. The government's commitment to piped water and flush toilets led to a near-doubling of the proportion of the population with access to these services in South Africa's largest metro areas. However, they find that urbanization has also led to an increase in the population living in shacks, where residents are more vulnerable to environmental hazards.
- Matzopoulos et al. (2020) focus on Cape Town's efforts to reduce urban violence through improved urban environmental design as an alternative to surveillance and broken-windows policing. The environmental changes include the construction of community-oriented facilities and public walkways. Post-apartheid, violence in South African cities remained 40 percent higher than in rural areas, but in the neighborhood with the urban design project, individuals exposed to the facilities experienced just over half of the interpersonal violence as other residents in other areas. The article also notes that homicide rates remain highest in the most impoverished parts of South African cities, and thus violent crime reductions constitute a significant drop in material deprivation for these residents.
- Abello-Colak and Guarneros-Meza (2014) describe the influence of criminal organizations in Colombian cities and how government policy, despite a concerted effort to improve urban social services, has failed to overtake gangs as a major force in residents' lives. They find that a neoliberal rolling-back of social services in the 1980s and 1990s created a vacuum in the prominent city of Medellin, with urban militias providing services and protection from gangs. The article notes that gangs typically thrive with state absence, but that in the impoverished and dense Medellin, despite successful military measures and the introduction of "social urbanism," which lessened violence and improved government relations with particularly impoverished areas, gangs retained influence through informal arrangements with local politicians and by providing work.
- Vélez-Henao (2020) focuses on the impact of rapid urbanization on environmental concerns in Colombia. Since 1960, the proportion of the population living in a major city doubled to 80 percent, forcing increased agricultural industrialization and cross-country goods transportation, putting a strain on ecological resources. Through a statistical analysis referred to as Stochastic Impacts by Regression on Population, Affluence, and Technology (STIRPAT, Vélez-Henao found that urbanization was the primary driver of Colombia's

increased electricity consumption and its contributions to climate change. He recommended that the government undertake sustainability policies for further urban growth.

III. Socio-Economic Background

In Colombia, despite the persistence of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known as FARC, which stands for *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*), which is a destabilizing guerilla group, the country has earned its status as one of South America's most modern economies, with 64.5 percent of Colombian employees working in the service sector in 2019 (compared to only 16.2 percent working in agriculture in the same year). Extreme poverty and malnourishment have also declined, with 3.9 percent of the population earning less than $1.90 per day and 4.8 percent of the population experiencing undernourishment in 2017, compared to 10.4 and 9.5 percent respectively in 2008. South Africa hosts a similarly modernized economy, with 71.7 percent of employees working in the service sector and 5.4 percent in agriculture in 2019. However, its performance on extreme poverty and nourishment metrics falls behind Colombia and has worsened in recent years as 18.9 percent of the population earned less than $1.90 per day in 2014, which is two percent higher than the rate in 2008. Further, 6.2 percent of the population experienced undernourishment in 2017, compared to 4.6 percent in 2008.[1]

Figure 1: GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2011 international $), 1990-2018



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2020).

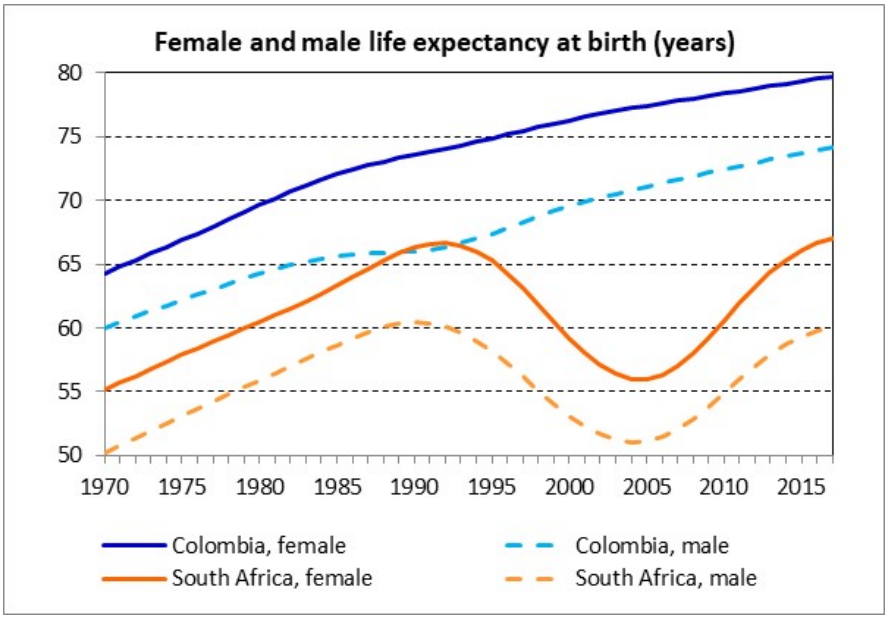
Figure 1 exhibits GDP per capita in 2011 constant international dollars for South Africa and Colombia from 1990 to 2018. Over this period, both countries experienced overall growth, with the strongest growth for both coming between 2000 and 2008. South Africa's GDP per capita grew from $9,900 in 1990 to $12,144 in 2018, which is a cumulative increase of 22.6 percent. The cumulative 22.6 percent growth over 28 years is low, partly due to the economic decline during

[1] The data of this paragraph is coming from World Bank (2020).

the early 1990s and the stagnation during the last ten years. Comparatively, Colombia's GDP per capita has grown much more steadily since 1990 and, notwithstanding a 5.8 percent contraction in 1999, Colombia's economy grew quickly throughout the measured period, with three instances of annualized growth over 5 percent between 2006 and 2011. Although Colombia's 1990 GDP per capita ($7,729) was over $2,000 below South Africa's GDP per capita, Colombia surpassed South Africa's GDP per capita in 2013 and reached $13,321 in 2018, which reflects a cumulative growth rate of 72.3 percent from 1990-2018.

As shown in Figure 2, South Africa and Colombia experienced sharply different life expectancy trajectories though neither country saw any reduction in gender-based disparities in life expectancy. The gap between female and male life expectancy increased slightly from 4.2 percentage points in 1970 to 5.6 percentage points in 2017 for Colombia, and from 4.9 percentage points in 1970 to 6.9 percentage points in 2017 for South Africa. Starting with a total (female and male) life expectancy at birth of 62.1 years in 1970, Colombia's life expectancy increased modestly but consistently over the next five decades, reaching its all-time high of 76.9 years in 2017.[2] In 1970, South Africa's life expectancy stood at 52.6 years and its growth from 1970 to 1990 kept pace with Colombia, reaching a high of 63.3 years in 1991. However, in the 1990s and early 2000s, South Africa's life expectancy at birth dropped precipitously for both men and women due to an HIV/AIDS outbreak that infected a peak of 30 percent of all pregnant women in the country in 2005.[3] South African life expectancy reached its lowest point in 2005, with 51.1 years for men and 55.9 years for women. By 2017, life expectancy for South Africans recovered to its pre-outbreak peak of 63.5 years, 13.4 years below Colombia.

Figure 2: Life Expectancy at Birth, by gender (years), 1990-2017

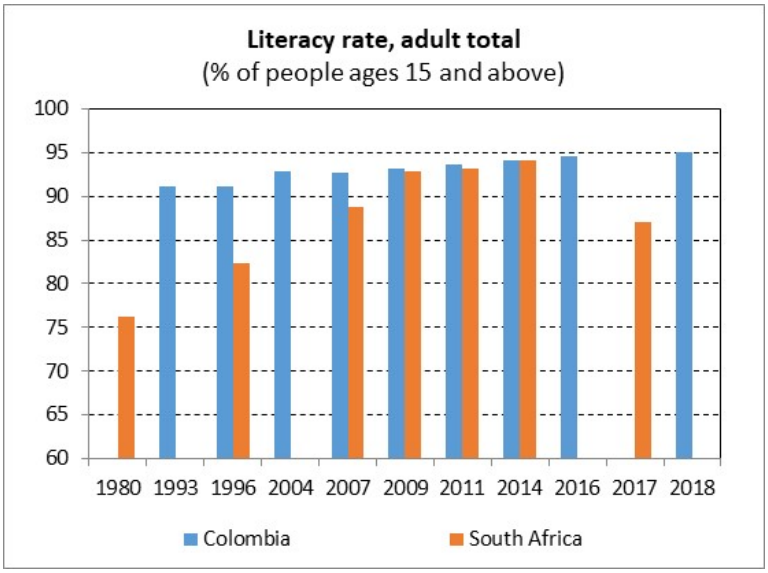


Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2020).

[2] The data for total (female and male) life expectancy is taken from World Bank (2020).
[3] World Bank (2020) and National Department of Health (2008).

As Figure 3 shows, before 2007, South Africa only recorded its literacy rate in 1980 and 1996, making it impossible to assess the impact of the end of South African apartheid on literacy. However, we can identify some trends from the data: First, with exception of 2014, adult literacy rates were always higher in Colombia than in South Africa. Second, while Colombia's literacy rates have improved steadily from 1993 to 2018, they increased by only 4.0 percentage points during this 25-year-period. Third, South Africa's literacy rate has grown much faster from 76.2 percent in 1980 to 94.1 percent in 2014, but it then declined sharply to 87.0 percent in 2017, marking a puzzling decline.

Figure 3: Adult Literacy Rates (% of over 15 years old), all available years



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2020).

The apparent disconnect between life expectancy and GDP per capita in South Africa is one of the most interesting findings from comparing the previous three figures. South Africa's life expectancy plunged at the same time as its economy underwent its strongest growth of the past thirty years. This disparity may be explained by the improvement in literacy post-apartheid, as the increased education represented by the growth in literacy provided new employment opportunities for previously excluded Black South Africans, combined with a lifting of economic embargos after the end of apartheid.

IV. Analysis of Facts

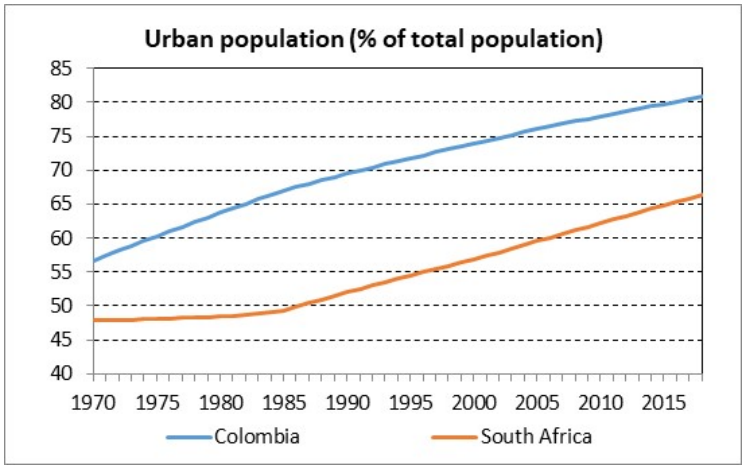
The first sub-section of this fourth section outlines some key facts related to the urban populations of South Africa and Colombia, focusing on the evolution of the urban share of the population, the share of the urban population living in slums, and the share of the urban population living in the largest city. The second sub-section reviews three relevant statistics regarding the urban-rural divide in both countries in terms of poverty, access to safe water, and access to sanitation.

IV.1. Status and Trends of Urbanization in South Africa and Colombia

IV.1.a. Evolution of the Share of Urban Population

As shown in Figure 4, both South Africa and Colombia have experienced strong growth in their share of urban populations over the past fifty years. The data show that in 1970, 56.6 percent of the Colombian population lived in urban areas, while a slim minority (47.8 percent) of the South African population lived in urban populations. This is a difference of 8.8 percentage points between the two countries. During the 1980s, the urbanization gap reached its largest-ever margin between the two countries. In 1985, 67.0 percent of the Colombian population lived in urban areas, compared to only 49.4 of the South African population, a 17.6 percentage points gap. In 2018, which is the last year with such data available, South Africa's urban population reached 66.4 percent, while Colombia's reached 80.8 percent, hence still leaving a considerable gap of 14.4 percentage points between South Africa and Colombia.

Figure 4: Share of Urban Population (percent), 1970-2018



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2020).

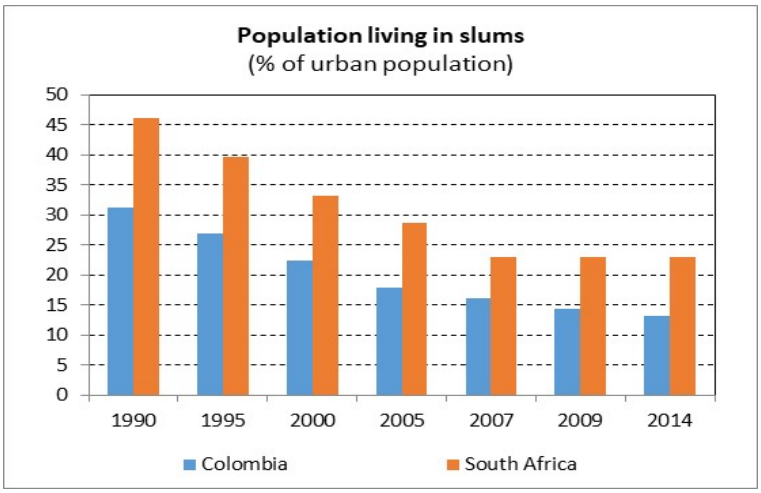
IV.1.b. Slums and Urban Concentration

While statistics on the urban share of the population say nothing about the living conditions of the urban population, the existing information on the percentage of the urban population living in slums indicates a steady decline in slum conditions in both countries (see Figure 5). In 1995, a staggering 39.7 percent of urban South Africans lived in slums while, in Colombia, 26.8 percent of city residents lived in slums. Over the next decade, slum populations declined precipitously in both countries, reaching 23 percent in South Africa and 16.1 percent in Colombia in 2007.

The trends began to diverge in 2007, however, as Colombia continued to draw urban residents out of slum conditions while slum clearance stalled in South African cities. By 2014, 23 percent of urban residents in South Africa still lived in slum conditions while only 13.1 percent of city-dwelling Colombians remained in slums. Notably, because of the strong growth of the urban population in each country, the raw number of slum-dwellers declined far less dramatically over this period, and given the lack of slum-clearing progress in South Africa in recent years, Turok and Borel-Saladin (2014) found that the South African population living in shacks increased in

recent years. Using the World Bank (2020) data on population growth, the urban share of population, and the percentage of urban population living in slums, our calculations show that the number of South African slum dwellers increased from 6.8 million in 2007 to 7.2 million in 2009, and 8.1 million in 2014.

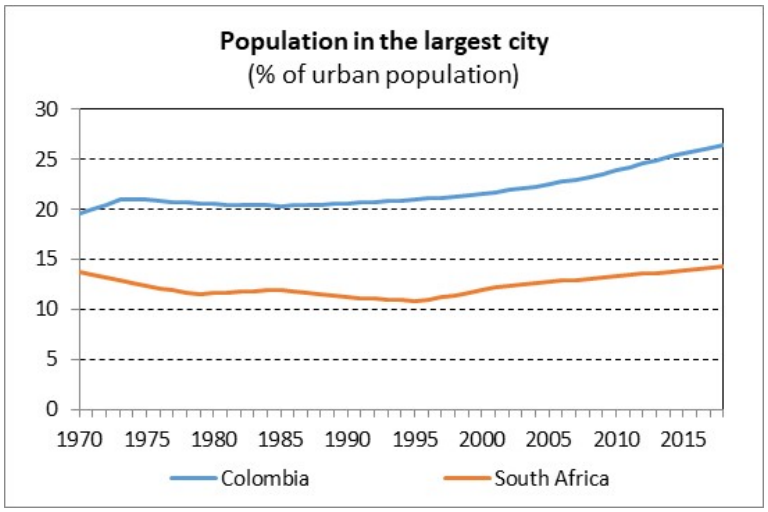
Figure 5: Percentage of Urban Population Living in Slums, 1995-2014



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2020).

Colombia's achievements in reducing slum conditions for its urban residents are made even more interesting by its increasing urban concentration. Bogotá, Colombia's largest city, held host to 26.4 percent of all urban residents in the country in 2017, a sharp increase from 19.6 percent in 1970. Meanwhile, the share of the population in South Africa's largest metropolitan area, which has alternated between several cities over the past five decades, has remained relatively flat since 1970, only increasing from 13.7 to 14.3 percent.

Figure 6: Urban Concentration in Largest City, 1970-2018



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2020).

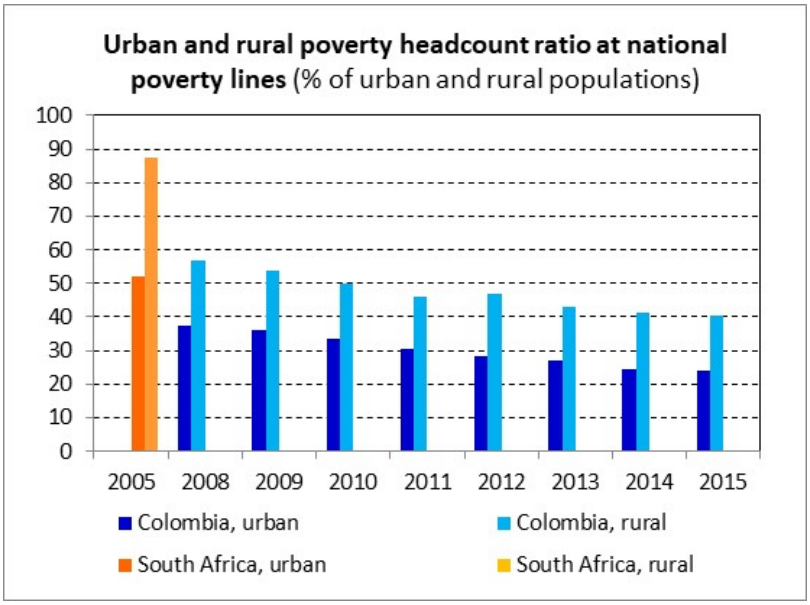
IV.2. Dimensions of Urban Living and Development

IV.2.a. Urban Poverty

The high levels of urbanization and the gradual decline of slum living in South Africa and Colombia have direct impacts on other dimensions of urban living. Beyond the simple living conditions of Colombians and South Africans, this section explores other elements of the experience of urban living in the two countries, beginning with poverty and employment. Unfortunately, World Bank data collection on the South African urban and rural poverty rates is extremely limited, having only been collected once, in 2005. That year, 52 percent of urban South Africans lived in poverty, compared to a staggering 87.6 percent of rural residents.

While comparisons between the two countries are difficult because the World Bank did not collect urban poverty statistics from Colombia until 2008, their 2008 urban poverty rate of 37.4 percent was considerably lower than South Africa's only three years earlier. The most recent update in 2015 found that the urban poverty rate had declined to 24.1 percent. Like South Africa, Colombia's rural poverty rate is significantly higher than its urban rate and has consistently remained at least ten percentage points higher than the urban rate. However, as the urban poverty rate has declined, the rural rate has come down as well, decreasing from 56.6 percent in 2008 to 40.3 percent in 2015.

Figure 7: Urban and Rural Poverty Headcount Ratios, all available years



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2020).

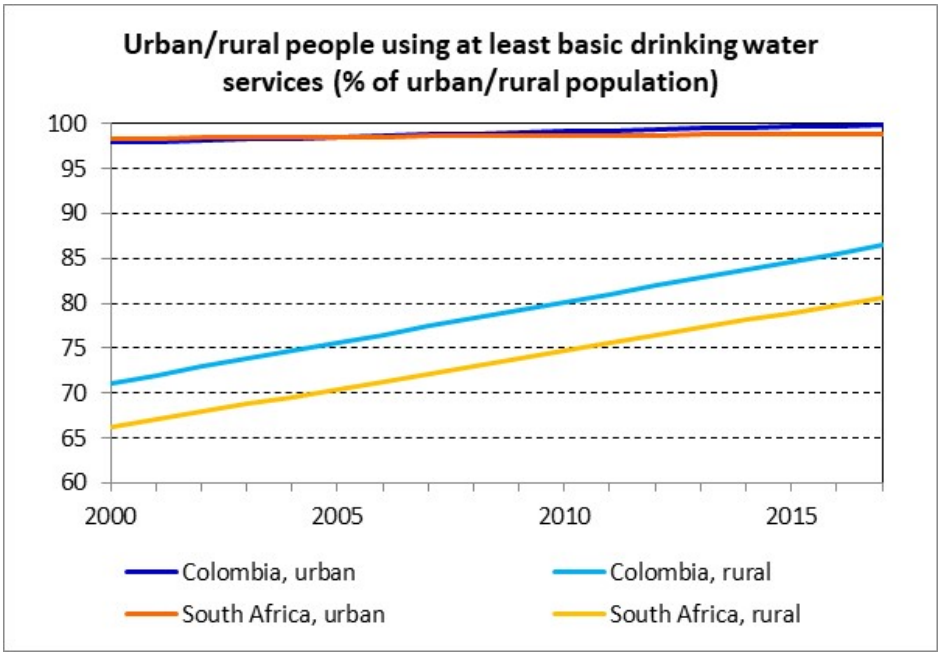
IV.2.b. Public Safety and Health Infrastructure

Cities also face unique challenges in maintaining safe living conditions for their residents, especially as all large cities in Colombia and South Africa have slums. Beginning with basic sanitation, public health can be threatened when people lack easy access to clean drinking water and the issue is compounded in areas that have little or no infrastructure, like in slums. In these areas, both countries have found unambiguous success and Colombia has nearly ensured that 100

percent of its urban residents can access clean water. As shown in Figure 8, in 2000, the first year that the World Bank collected data on urban basic drinking water service access, urban South Africans had higher levels of access than urban Colombians, 98.4 percent to 97.9 percent. However, since 2000, Colombia has achieved faster improvements to its water resources and bypassed South Africa's rate in 2006. By 2017, Colombia reported that a remarkable 99.94 percent of urban residents could access drinking water services. South Africa also continued to improve its access rates, ending with 98.90 percent in 2017. As Turok and Borel-Saladin (2014) found, the recent increase in South Africa can likely be explained by investments in public sanitation, which have improved access rates among the poorest South Africans.

Meanwhile, rural water access in both countries has lagged in urban areas, although Colombia's rural areas have experienced faster growth in access since 2000 than rural South Africa. As also shown in Figure 8, in 2000, 66.2 percent of rural South Africans used at least basic clean drinking water services, compared to 71.1 percent of rural Colombians. By 2017, rural access rates in both countries rose by over 10 percentage points compared to their rates in 2000, with rural South Africa reaching 80.7 percent and rural Colombia reaching 86.5 percent, indicating that neither country's investments in urban drinking water infrastructure have forestalled efforts to improve the same infrastructure for the rest of the country.

Figure 8: Percentage of Urban and Rural People Using at Least Basic Drinking Water Services, 2000-2017

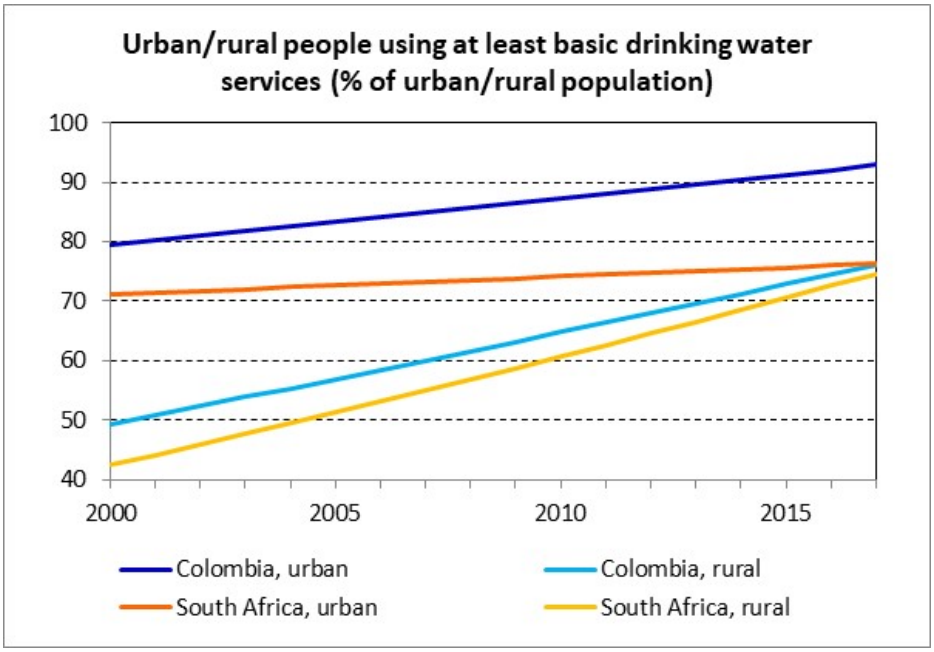


Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2020).

The same trend appears evident for Colombia when considering broader health infrastructure, like sanitation services, which is illustrated in Figure 9. In 2000, 79.4 percent of Colombia's urban residents use at least basic sanitation services, compared to 49.3 percent of their rural residents. By 2017, these rates increased to 92.9 percent and 76.2 percent, respectively for urban and rural

Colombians. However, South Africa does diverge somewhat from the trend. Although the number of urban residents in South Africa using at least basic sanitation services increased from 71.1 percent to 76.3 percent from 2000 to 2017, South Africa's rural access improved even more dramatically than Colombia's, having increased from 42.5 percent to 74.7 percent. Thus, while it appears that the government in Colombia has put roughly equal emphasis on improving health services in urban and rural areas, the fact that South Africa saw relatively little improvement in its urban infrastructure at the same time that its rural infrastructure improved dramatically gives some indication that the government has prioritized rural governance.

Figure 9: Percentage of Urban and Rural People Using at Least Basic Sanitation Services, 2000-2017



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2020).

Some progress has also been made in reducing violence, which typically is more concentrated in urban than rural areas. Given the high urban populations in each country, the national incidence of intentional homicides gives a relevant, although not complete, indication of how safe cities are in each respective county. Both countries reported high levels of violence in the early 1990s, with Colombia reaching an all-time high of 81.4 homicides per 100,000 people in 1991 and South Africa reporting 63.5 homicides per 100,000 people in 1995. However, despite a brief spike in homicides in Colombia in the early 2000s, both countries have achieved a steady decline since the 1990s. In 2017, South Africa had 35.9 homicides per 100,000 people, while Colombia had 24.9 homicides per 100,000 people.[4]

In conclusion, both South Africa and Colombia have simultaneously seen strong growth in their urban population and improvements in the material conditions of their city-dwelling residents. Colombia remains more urbanized and has a longer history of urbanization while South Africa has

[4] The data reported in this paragraph is from World Bank (2020).

seen faster growth in recent years and has taken its urban population from a minority of the population to nearly two-thirds of the country's residents. Further, urban South Africans and Colombians are now significantly less likely to live in slums than they were in the 1990s, but Colombia retains an advantage in slum removal as well. In terms of poverty and safety, Colombia has seen clear success in reducing both urban poverty and unemployment, while South Africa, which started with very high urban poverty, has failed to achieve low unemployment. Colombia, despite having a higher homicide rate and worse clean water access in the early 2000s, has managed to reach nearly universal urban clean water access and halved its homicide rate, while South Africa has made some, but less, progress on these metrics and has seemingly placed a greater emphasis on increasing rural access.

V. Ethical Origins and Ethical Structures of Urbanization

V.1. Ethical Origins

Both Colombia and South Africa carry violent histories that inform the necessity of the effective provision of urban services. An ethics-based examination of the choices that formed Colombia's and South Africa's existing urbanization realities is invaluable in understanding how these governments can continue to improve their approach to urban services.

V.1.a. Ethical Origins in South Africa

Before the official end of South African apartheid in 1991, the country operated under a strict and violent system of racial segregation and repression (Jones, 2019). Apartheid, first introduced as a legal framework in the late 1940s, mandated separate zoning for different races and locked Black South Africans out of land ownership or residence in the country's wealthiest areas (Jones, 2019). In addition to the formal employment discrimination written into South Africa's legal hierarchy, this restriction of movement meant that Black South Africans were systematically denied access to the economic opportunities that allow for a path out of poverty. By 1985, 89.6 percent of white South Africans lived in urban areas, compared to only 39.6 percent of Black South Africans (Ogura, 1996). While this possibly understates the near-urban Black population, Ogura (1996) estimates that 51.8 percent lived in urban areas if including "peri-urban" areas, which, defined by their rural/urban mixed-use landscape, present increased pressures on water, food, and energy (Ogura, 1996; UNESCO, 2014). Under apartheid, non-white South Africans were also formally barred from freely traveling the country and required documents to enter certain areas (Jones, 2019).

Given these material deprivations burdening Black South Africans and the influx of Black residents into previously all-white cities,[5] recent urban planning focused on affordability and improvement of urban services. However, progress has been uneven. According to Malala (2019), the massive influx of Black South Africans into the country's cities in 1994 led to a spike in slums on the periphery of cities before the new Mandela government could adequately provide housing, water, electricity, and other amenities to the previously disadvantaged. For example, 40 percent of the urban South African population lived in slums as of 1995 (World Bank, 2020). In response, the government prioritized building formal homes, a project that succeeded in ensuring a decline in slum living while leaving cities almost entirely segregated. These scattered projects failed to

[5] As detailed in Malala (2019), Johannesburg now hosts a high Black population in its central business district.

satisfy the need for long-term planning, an ethical shortfall that left many residents without access to employment opportunities or access to wealthier business districts. [6]

More recent projects indicate that South Africa has recognized its ethical failings, as its recent priorities have included systematic urban planning intended to connect poorer residents to the economic and social benefits of urban living. Turok and Borel-Saladin (2014) and Matzopoulos et al. (2020) found that in cities like Cape Town, targeted urban environmental design and installment of urban sewage infrastructure combined led to lower violence, improved health outcomes, and better intra-city foot transportation. These improved provisions have had carry-over effects, including increased literacy. Given these improvements, it appears that the South African government recognizes its ethical imperatives.

V.1.b. Ethical Origins in Colombia

Unlike South Africa, where urbanization followed a slow and uneven egalitarian direction, Colombia's urbanization is rooted in anti-rural forced-displacement policies implemented under the advice of economist Lauchlin Currie in the 1950s and 1970s (Brittain, 2005). Driven by a doctrinaire capitalist theory of accelerated economic development, the Colombian authorities implemented an "extensive and violent displacement of poor peasants and agricultural workers," leading them to settle haphazardly in cities.[7]

With over 14 percent of the urban population still residing in slums as of 2014, the echoes of the forced *campesinos* migration remain evident (Brittain, 2005). Additionally, urban administrators recognized soon that the core premise behind the forced migration, Currie's theory that peasants would easily be able to find well-paying, formal jobs in the cities, was entirely false (Brittain, 2005). Instead, the so-called informal sector ballooned, with 63 percent of all non-agricultural jobs existing outside of the formal economy in 2010.[8] According to Brittain (2005, p. 344), these informal jobs included "paramilitary and criminal activity," a result of the civil conflict that raged in Colombia between the government and FARC from 1964 to 2017.

While the failed economic theories of the 1950s and 70s led to an urban crisis in Colombia, the modern municipal and national governments in Colombia have undertaken policies that indicate a more ethical approach to providing urban services and promoting formal employment opportunities. One of the most important advances involved the end of the civil war. Throughout the armed conflict, informal employment remained high, but as the conflict began to slow in the mid-2010s, informal employment also declined, reaching 57.25 percent of all non-agricultural employment in 2018 (World Bank, 2020). Municipal governments have also invested heavily in infrastructure, including billions in transportation spending and the creation of agencies to "acquire cheap land to build affordable housing, schools and clinics."[9]

While the post-migration governance of Colombian cities has succeeded in decreasing poverty, violence, and the incidence of slums, the extreme ethical violations that precipitated the country's urban growth still require redress. Rural peasants were denied the freedom of residence and self-governance guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Furthermore, with

[6] United Nations Population Fund (2007).
[7] Brittain (2005), p. 343.
[8] World Bank (2020); 2010 is the first year the World Bank (2020) has such data.
[9] del Ama (2013), paragraph 9.

the still-elevated levels of informal employment, gender parity will be difficult to achieve, as the informal sector is considered a major employment destination for under-educated girls.[10]

V.2. Existing Ethical Structures of Urbanization

Article 13 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) holds that "[e]veryone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state". This assertion is inextricably tied to urban policy and provides a foundation for understanding why governments have an ethical responsibility to not only allow for free movement to and from urban areas but also to promote good urban governance, as the Declaration also holds that "[e]veryone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family". While these ethical obligations pre-date the modern expansion of cities, they underscore how existing ethical structures are not alien to urbanization, allowing for further extrapolation with theoretical ethical foundations and for comparisons of cases like Colombia and South Africa.

While the unethical urbanization approaches in South Africa and Colombia appear to have been nearly polar in their application, with Colombia forcing rural residents out of their homes while South Africa prohibited urban migration by Black residents, their approaches both violate the same fundamental ethical guideline: the right of people of poor people to live in a city. Urbanization must be undertaken with a long-term vision for improved urban living and an acknowledgment of the freedom of people to live where they choose, and even today, neither country has succeeded in these ethical prerogatives. Thus, given the still-elevated levels of slum living, it is worthwhile to examine existing ethical structures of urbanization and to consider applications of other ethical frameworks.[11]

Good governance tends to reap rewards, such as the decline in informal employment following the end of the FARC conflict. Globalization has yielded significant improvements and innovations in infrastructure and with it has come an increased understanding of cities as the economic and cultural core of modern societies. However, the re-centering of economic engines around urban growth is not intrinsically positive or equitable, largely due to resistance by policymakers to promote urban migration.[12] To achieve an ethical urban policy paradigm, lawmakers must both recognize the right to live in cities and incorporate long-term thinking that accommodates future growth as well as address present needs.[13] While this approach would be a positive step towards a people-focused urbanization approach, it fails to recognize some of the intra-urban inequality that can arise even when governments apply facially neutral programs in infrastructure and education in cities.

From a philosophical perspective, two frameworks of ethical standards apply to modern urbanization: the Utilitarian and Common Good approaches. As defined by the Markkula Center (2015), the Utilitarian approach focuses on producing the greatest balance of good over harm. This would necessitate urbanization programs that reduce the gap between the urban rich and poor, as inequality hinders overall societal wellbeing. According to Oxfam International (2014), research indicates that extreme inequality undermines overall economic growth and also reduces the impact of poverty-reduction programs by sorting society firmly into a "winner-take-all" structure, thus

[10] United Nations Population Fund (2007).
[11] Most of this paragraph is based on United Nations Population Fund (2007).
[12] United Nations Population Fund (2007).
[13] These suggestions are building on suggestions made in United Nations Population Fund (2007).

making social mobility less attainable. Therefore, from a Utilitarian perspective, strong investment into urban growth and maintenance is an ethical imperative, as the economic power of cities cannot be fully harnessed until their poorest residents can access the formal economy. While both approaches would encourage governments to increase investment in urban services and promote urban growth, the Common Good approach tends to emphasize integratory policy more than the Utilitarian approach. The Common Good approach would also limit the emergence of gated suburbs more than the Utilitarian approach.

However, by the nature of the modern economy, cities will almost always yield high levels of wealth for some, complicating the understanding of utilitarianism as the maximizing of the overall "good." Once inequality has been reduced by improving employment and schooling for the poor, governments would no longer face the same pressure to implement egalitarian policies. This could be problematic when, for example, health services are improved in cities, but women still systematically lack access to modern contraceptives and health services, leaving them vulnerable to unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and gender violence.[14]

The Common Good approach, meanwhile, holds that "the interlocking relationships of society are the basis of ethical reasoning," thus promoting mutual respect and compassion across society as a key goal.[15] Understood as expressing that societies are only as well off as their most vulnerable, this ethical approach would mandate far more expansive investments into urban infrastructure, housing, and education. Furthermore, it would require an end to segregationist policies, which would otherwise prohibit locking poor residents out of more prosperous neighborhoods. Of course, this approach would also be considerably more expensive and time-consuming for governments to accomplish. Regardless of approach, governments have an ethical responsibility to prioritize better urban governance as a key initiative in the coming years to reduce poverty most effectively among their citizens.

VI. Conclusion

This article examined the intricacies of urban life and governance in South Africa and Colombia. Both countries are somewhat anomalous among their international peers because of the violent histories behind their urbanization process, and yet both countries have exhibited encouraging progress at improving conditions in their respective cities. Various indicators, including GDP per capita, poverty, shares of slum population, and urban water infrastructure indicate that Colombia has been more successful in achieving sustainable urban growth than South Africa, even though South Africa has generally seen improvements since the end of apartheid. These differences are noteworthy, but the fact that neither country has experienced significant backsliding of institutional capacity in their cities is encouraging, particularly given the increased pressure of growing urban populations.

Given the history of the forced migrations out of rural areas in Colombia and the lingering impacts of South African apartheid, both governments have a clear ethical imperative to balance supporting the health and prosperity of their cities with assisting the remaining rural populations. Fortunately, both countries have seemingly accepted this challenge, and Colombia has been especially successful at improving the services offered to urban residents while drastically overhauling rural

[14] United Nations Population Fund (2007).
[15] Markkula Center (2015).

health infrastructure. Existing ethical structures of urbanization emphasize the importance of the right of people to choose where they live inside their country, and while both countries violated this right in their early urbanization process, their recent actions indicate a desire to improve conditions in both urban and rural areas, making intra-country migration a safer and more desirable process. However, particularly in South Africa, where segregation is still rampant, there are still many improvements to be made.

An unfortunate limitation for this article was the lack of existing information regarding several key indicators, including poverty rates (which were collected only sporadically) and unemployment rates (which did not differentiate between rural and urban areas). Future studies on this topic should thus endeavor to collect further data, particularly on the urban and rural divide of poverty and employment. Given the currently available data, however, this article suggests that South Africa and Colombia are useful case studies for urban development in the developing world, not because they are perfect examples of flawless execution, but because they exhibit the struggles of attempting to execute an ethical and equitable urbanization process.

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