

# From Expected to Unexpected Comparisons

Garth Myers, Trinity College Hartford

“A World of Cities? Comparison across the Disciplines”

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# My Expected Comparisons

- Sub-Saharan African regional comparisons:
  - Nairobi, Lusaka, Zanzibar, Lilongwe: British colonialism's comparative legacies
  - Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Lusaka: United Nations Sustainable Cities Program solid waste management projects compared; neoliberalism, “good governance”, sustainability, and politics of cultural difference
  - Post-colonialism, informality, governance, violence and cosmopolitanism across a wide range of cities

# Problems of the Expected Comparison

- It fits into the proscribed divisions of global urbanism
- It is circumscribed to a relatively small range of cities (just like the much-critiqued Global North literature)
- Do the demands from “Global South” urbanists change the urban disciplines?

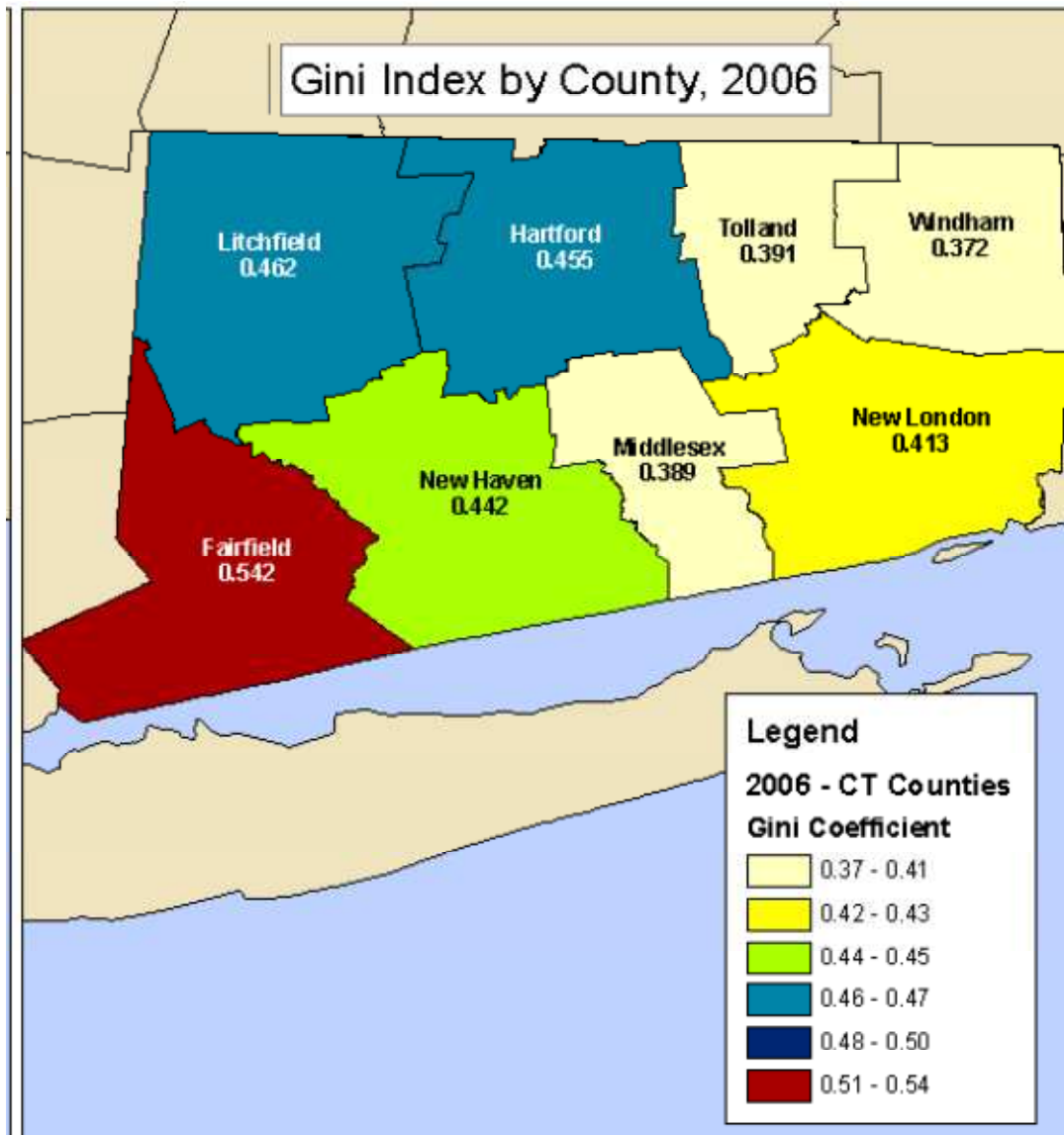
# What if We Turn the Lens Around?

- From “What if the Postmetropolis is Lusaka” to a “global rethinking of... all the stuff of urban geography”
- Does it make a difference to start from Africa to study US cities? What could we learn thinking things through in that direction?

# The Unexpected Comparison: a Thought Experiment

- If Africa's cities are so poor and so divided, why aren't they the cities we study to understand urban divides?
- What if we look at Hartford, Connecticut from African urban studies – are there lessons to be learned, models, or concepts that are useful this way? I think so!

# A Few Themes about Hartford



Among the Highest Gini Coefficients in the US (with nearby Fairfield, often rated as the highest in the US)

CT is the richest state in the US by income, a Brookings Institution study published in January 2012 lists the Hartford MSA (Hartford, Tolland and Middlesex counties) as the world's richest by GDP/capita (though anyone in CT would say Fairfield MUST be richer...), and yet...

...America's "Insurance City" is one where half of all children lack health insurance and 43% live below the poverty line

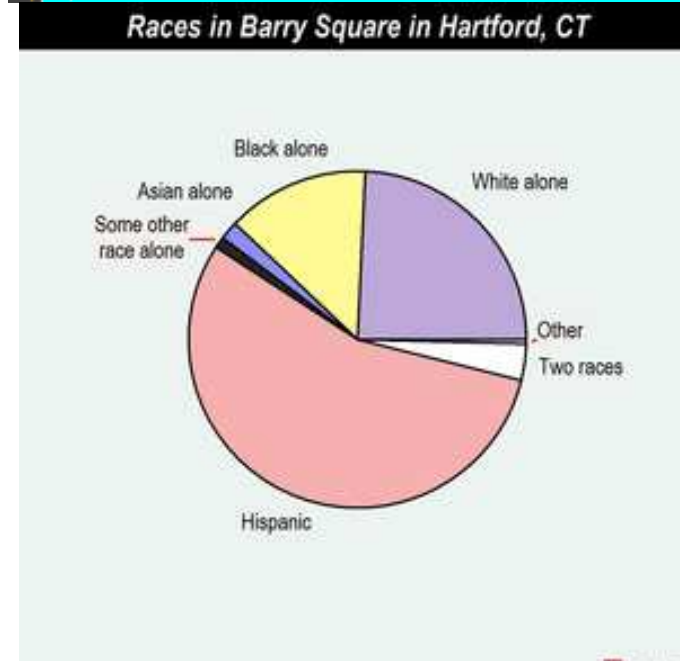
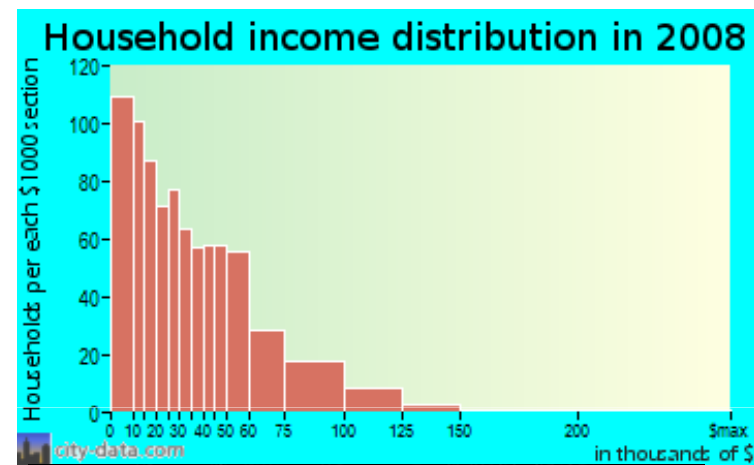
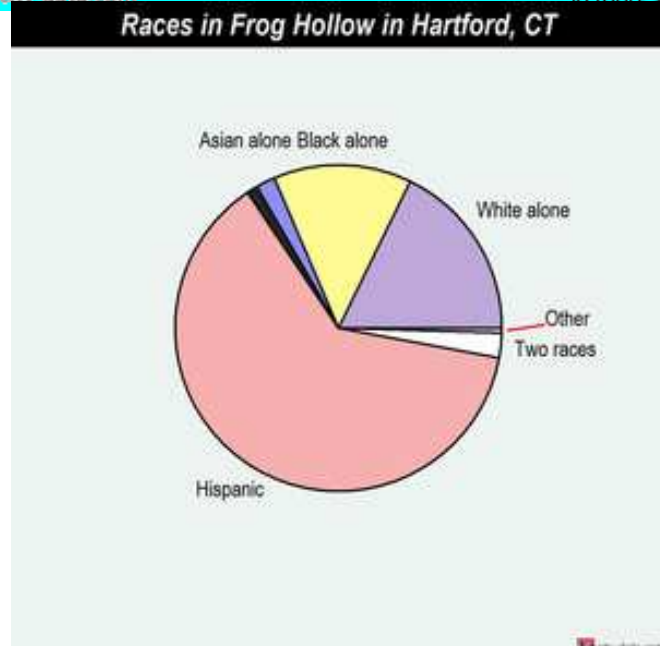
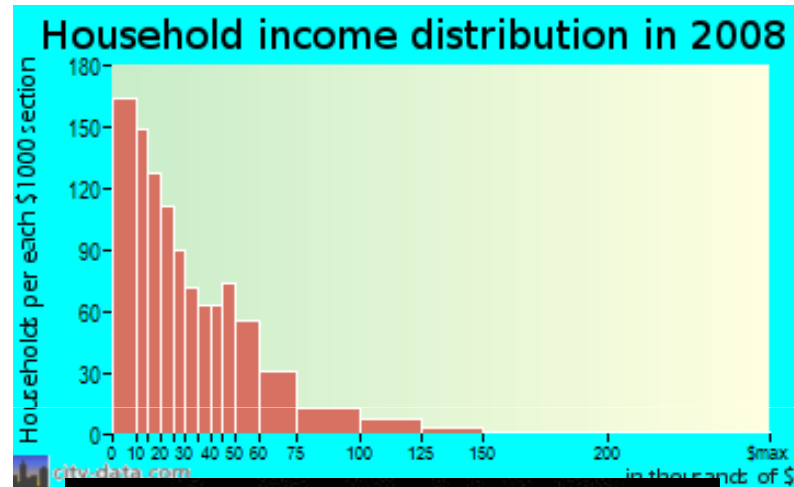
Although violent crime has declined, it remains a high crime city.

# Trinity College's Neighborhood

- Barry Square and Frog Hollow
- Combined populations = 24,574
- 299 violent crimes last year (and 48 murders and 63 rapes reported between 2000-06)

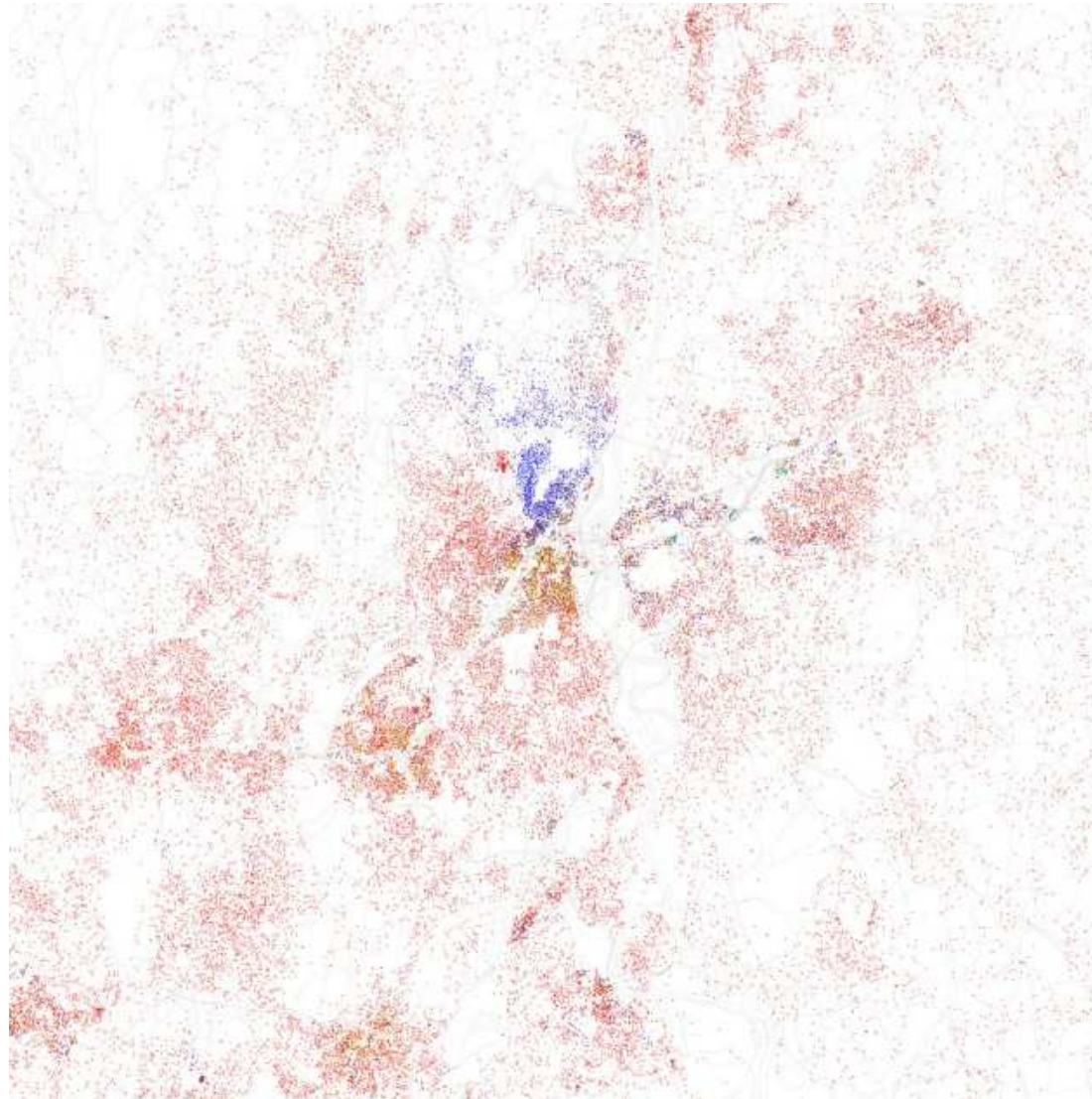


# Income and Ethnicity



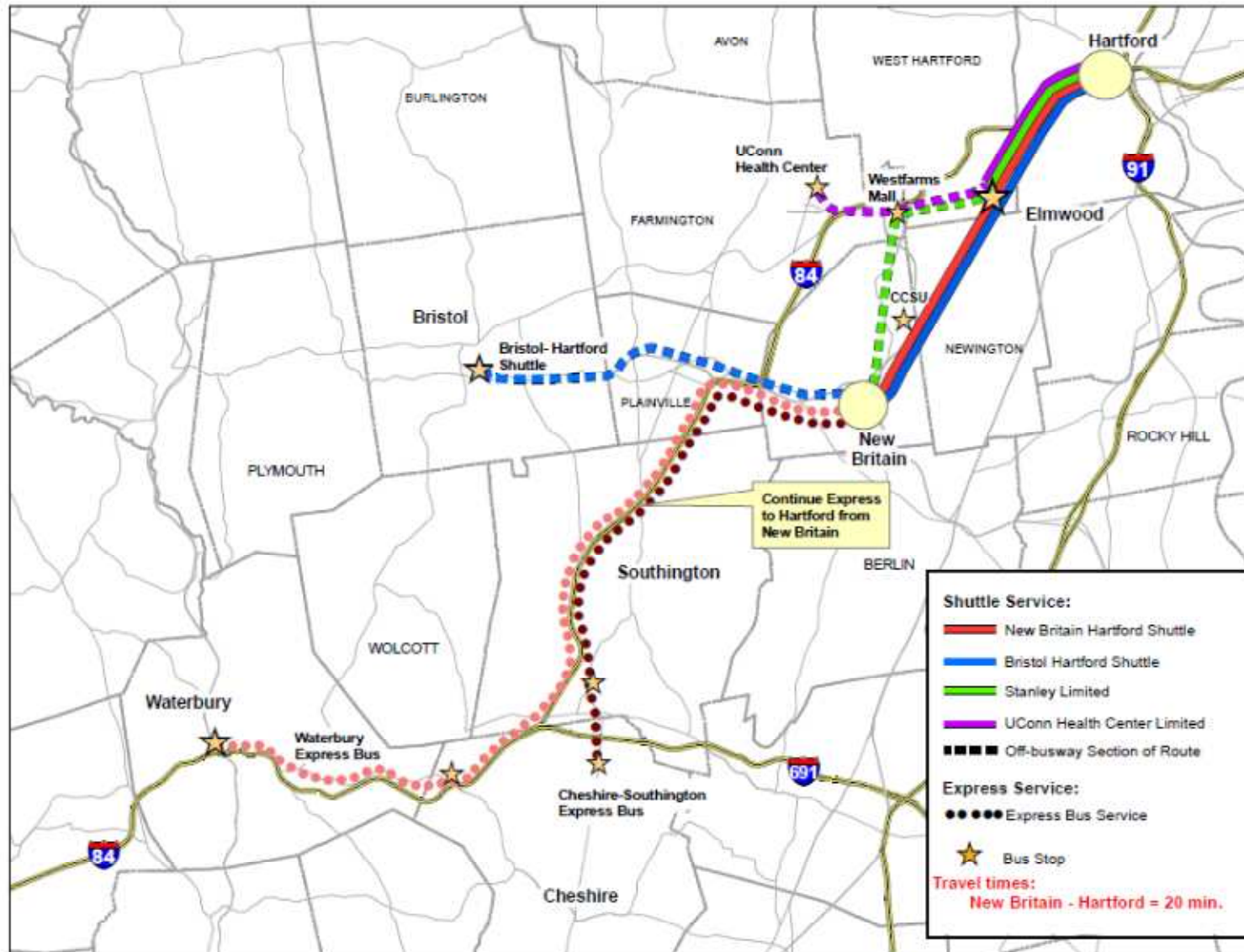


Hartford MSA Segregation Drawing (Core Area: red is white, blue is black, orange is Latino/a)

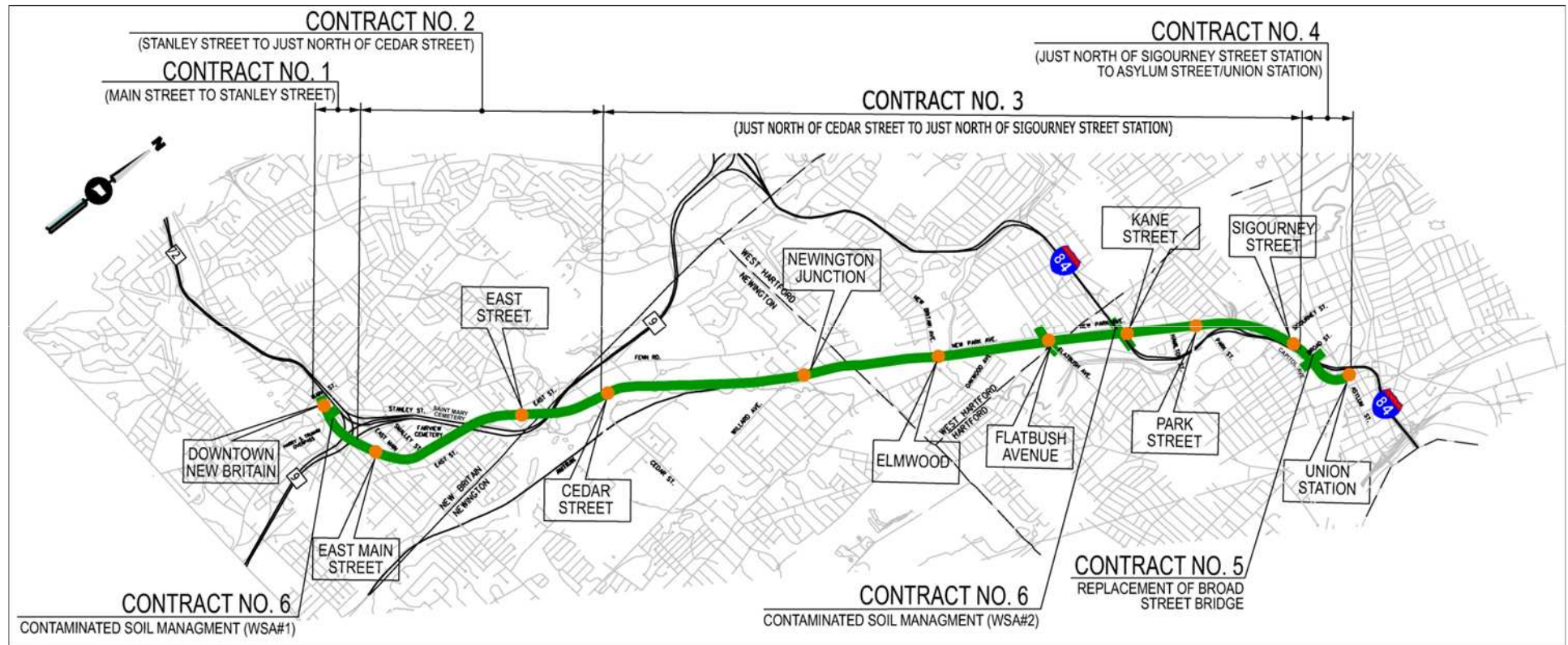




# Another Example Issue in Hartford: the Hartford-New Britain Busway



## Lucrative Contracts, Large-Scale Short-Term Employment...

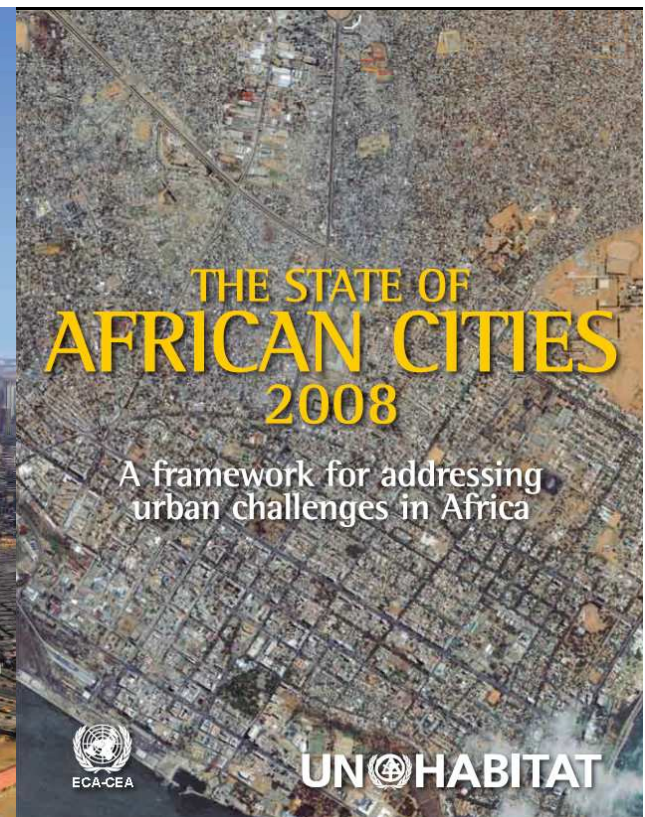
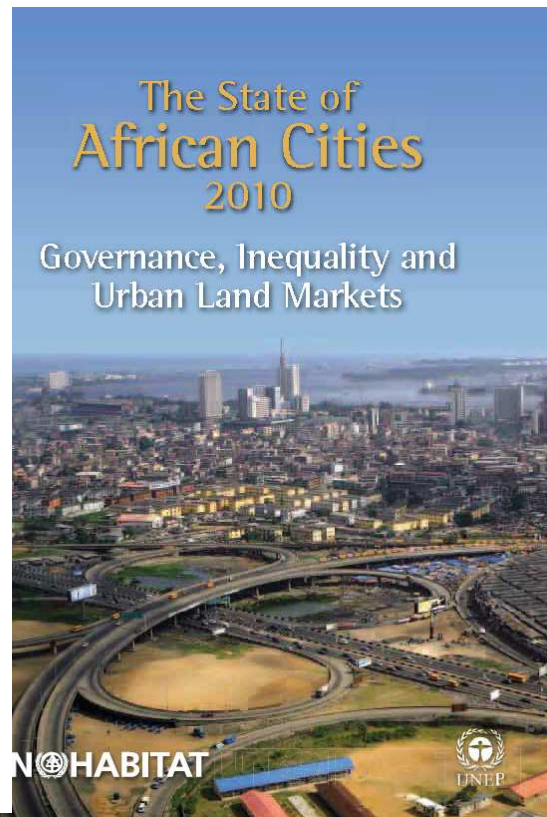
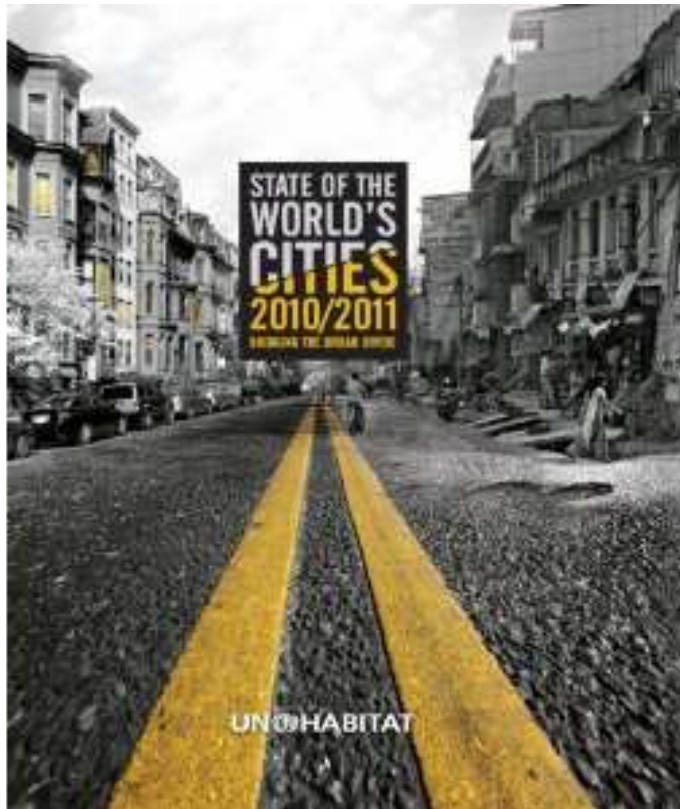


... and small-scale, long-term controversy...



# Hartford's Story Resonates with African Urban Stories

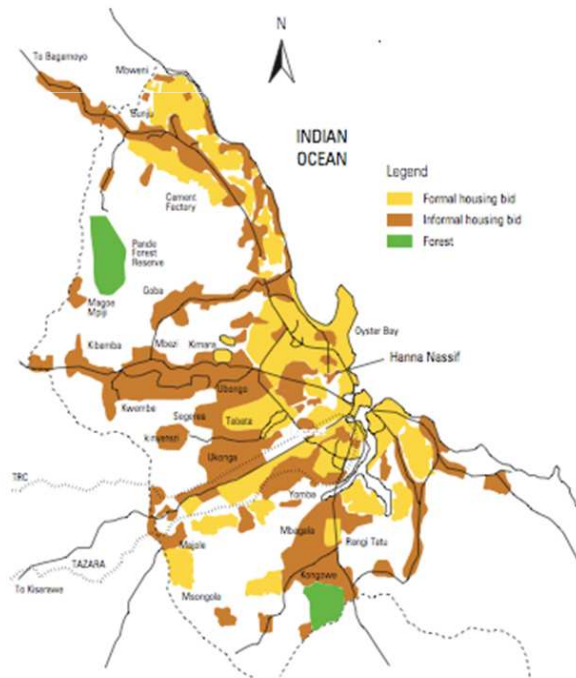
- So can we learn from Africa?
  - UN Habitat ideas can be helpful – a voice from Nairobi with critical analysis of issues that matter in Hartford



# The Pitfalls of Habitat

What starts with good analysis of what causes cities to be divided ends with bland pabulum and depoliticized development-speak for policy recommendations

MAP 4.4: DAR ES SALAAM: FORMAL AND INFORMAL HOUSING (2002)



There is also a bald-faced contradiction between the “Inclusive City” rhetoric and the planning approaches of the chief creator of these UN reports, Anna Tibaijuka, once she became Tanzania’s Minister for Lands and Human Settlements

# Alternative Visions of Urban Theory from Africa

- No need to detail greatly here, since several key creators of them are here...
- ...but let's think of Edgar Pieterse's ideas of relationality in cities, and his call to “produce a more patient, in-depth and nuanced account of the mobile, diverse and complex socialities that form and reform at the intersection of multiple identities, spaces, networks and imaginary registers...”
- Surely this is what is needed in Hartford?

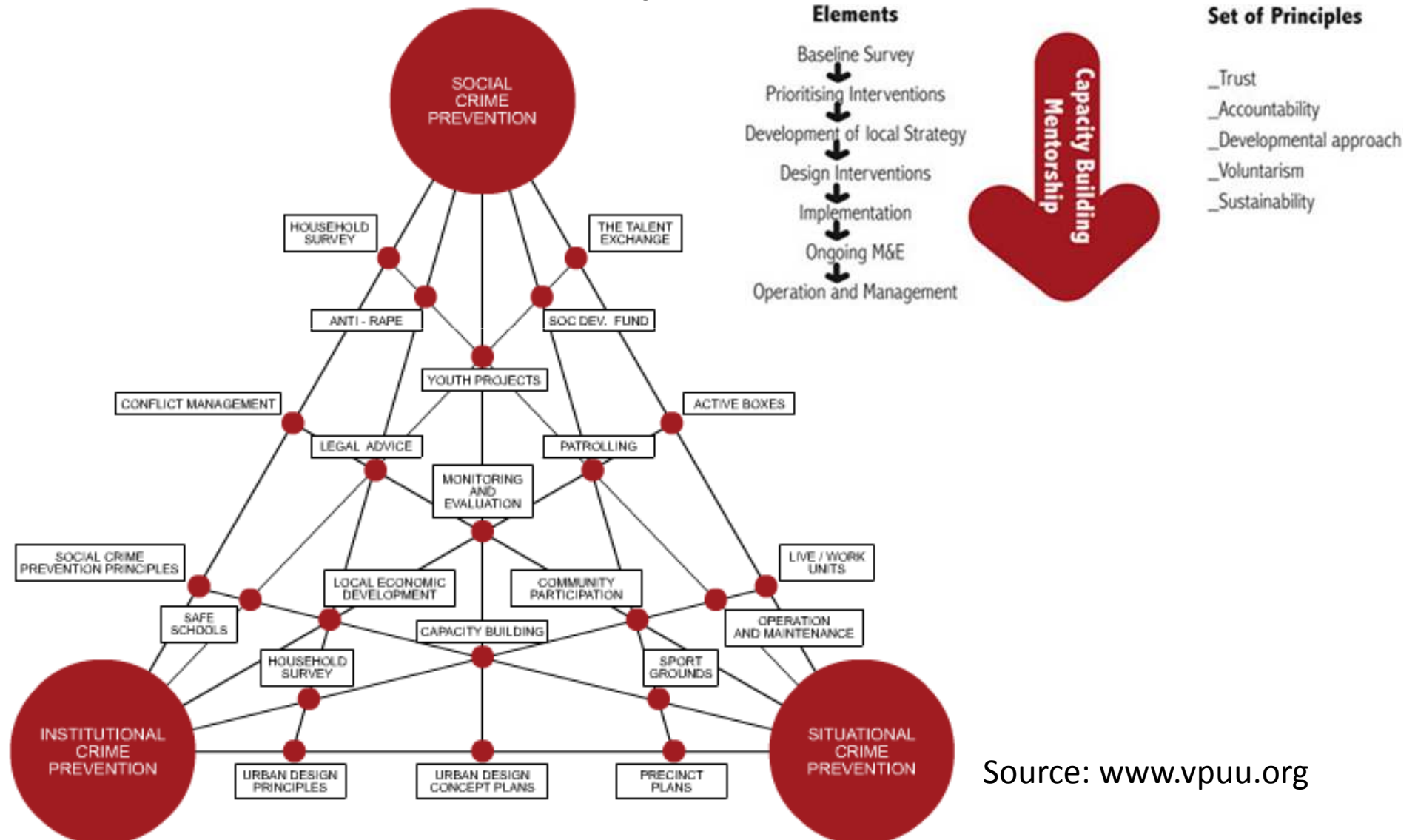
# Practical Dimensions too

Two brief examples: Cape Town's Violence Prevention Through Urban Upgrading and Dar es Salaam's Bus Rapid Transit System

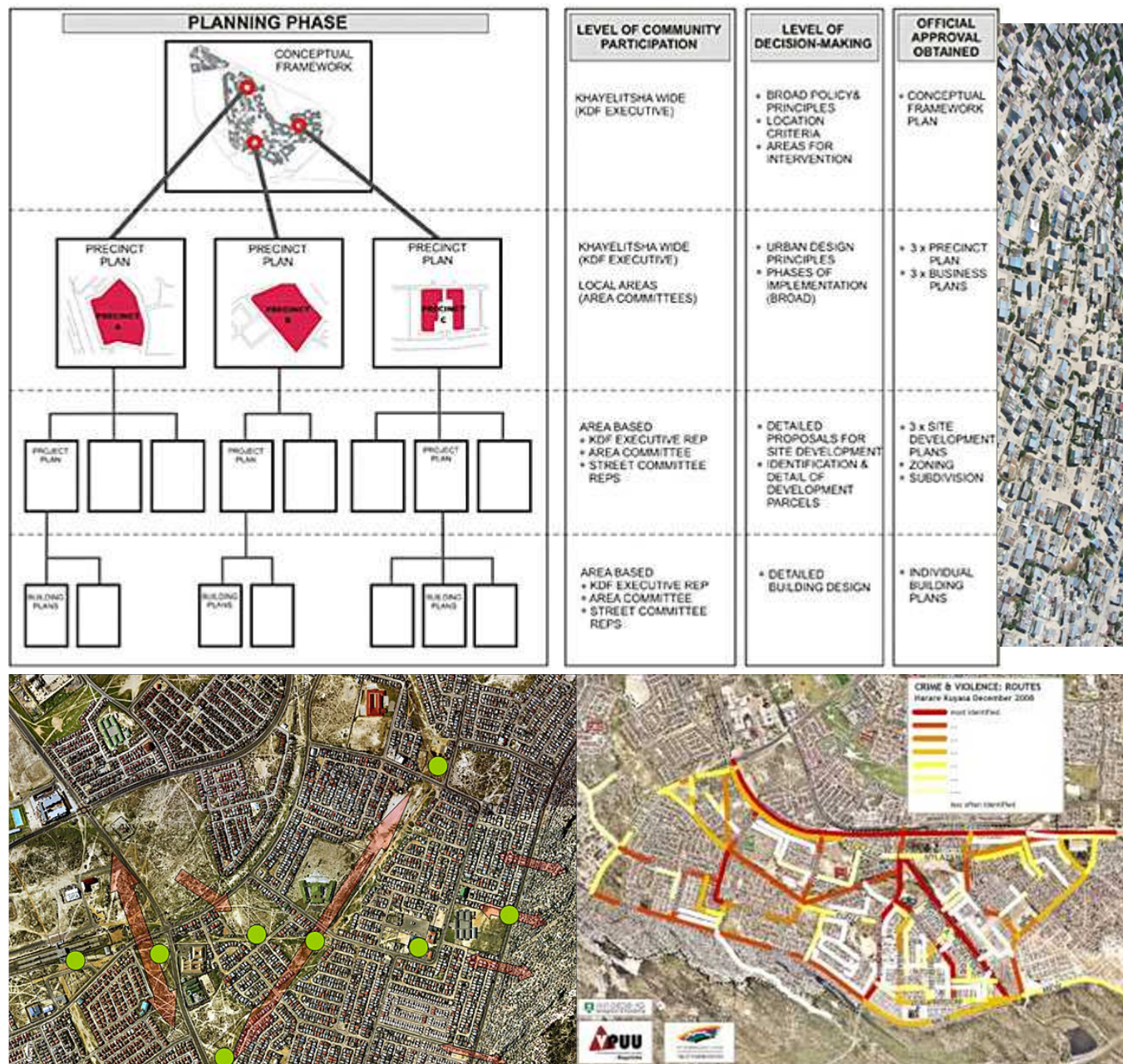
The last thing I think should happen is to call either one a successful model to be plopped down on top of Hartford, but...



# Prevention through Urban



Source: [www.vpuu.org](http://www.vpuu.org)



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CAPE TOWN

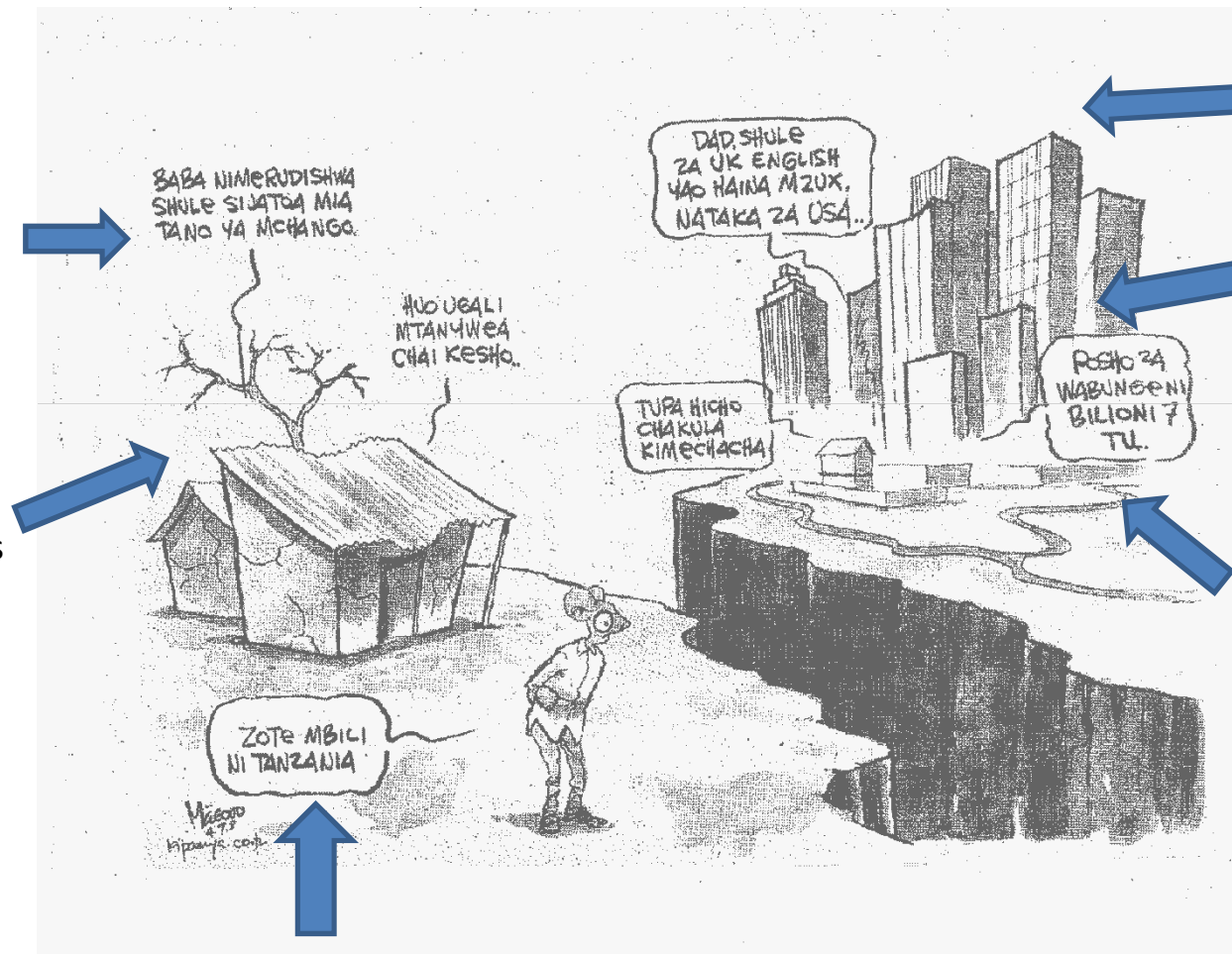


# Dar's Divide

Father I've been sent home from school, I haven't yet given my 500 shillings 'contribution'

You'll drink this porridge for breakfast tomorrow

Source:  
Masoud Kipanya,  
*Mwananchi*  
(2008)



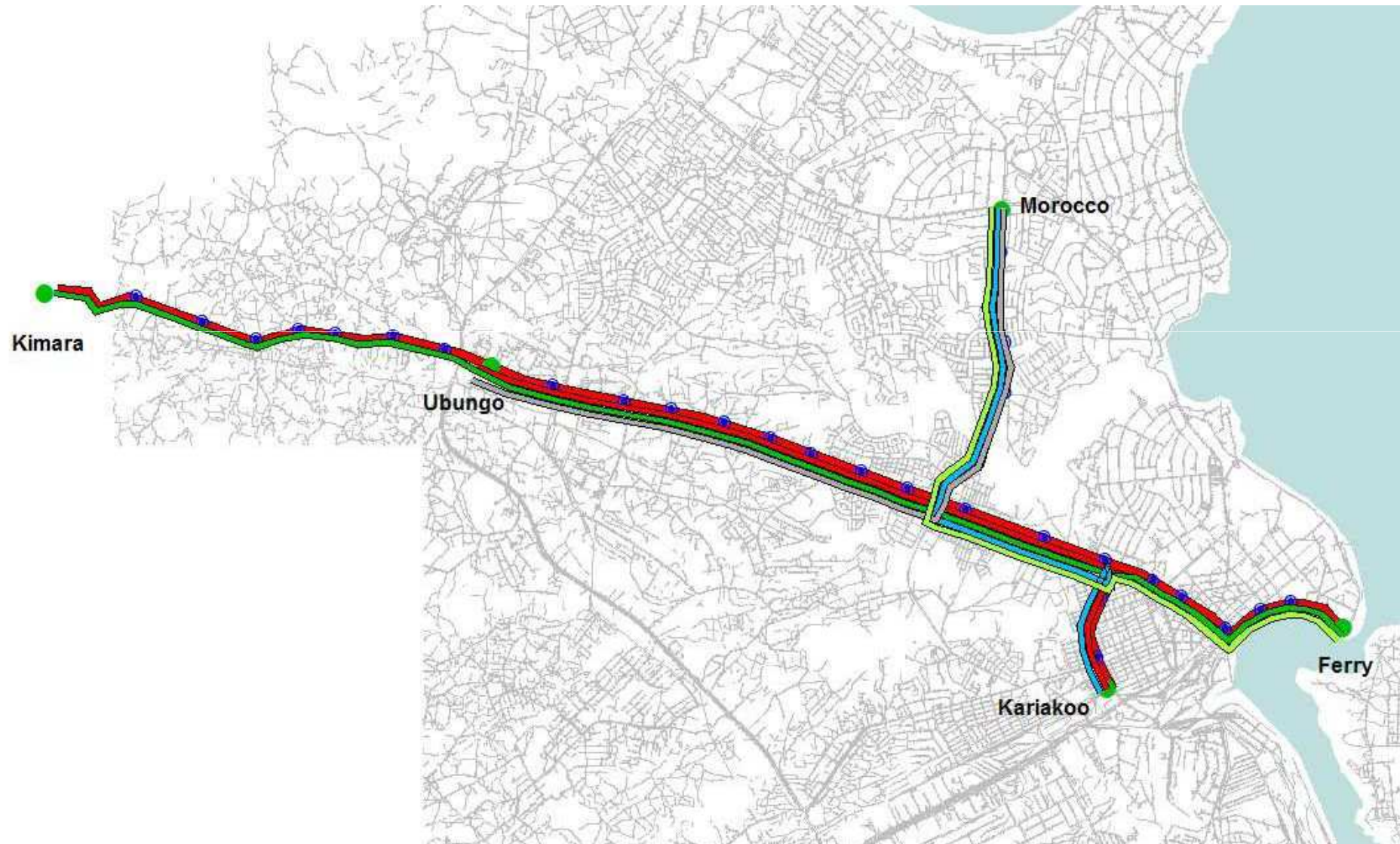
Dad in UK schools the English has no mzux, I want the USA

Throw this food out, it has fermented

The allowance for parliamentarians is only 7 billion shillings

Kipanya (Little Mouse): "Both of these are Tanzania"

## DART's Initial Core Line (construction began in 2010)



# Conclusion

- Never lose sight of the fluid, flexible, undetermined, non-linear, ever-changing, unpredictable and surprising things that await us around any corner in a city
- Place cities on a level analytical plain
- Commensurable comparability exists in urban policy circulations, such as preventing violence by landscape architecture or aping Curitiba's busway everywhere
- Comprehensive, multi-regional comparison – yes, but via broad multi-cultural research teams