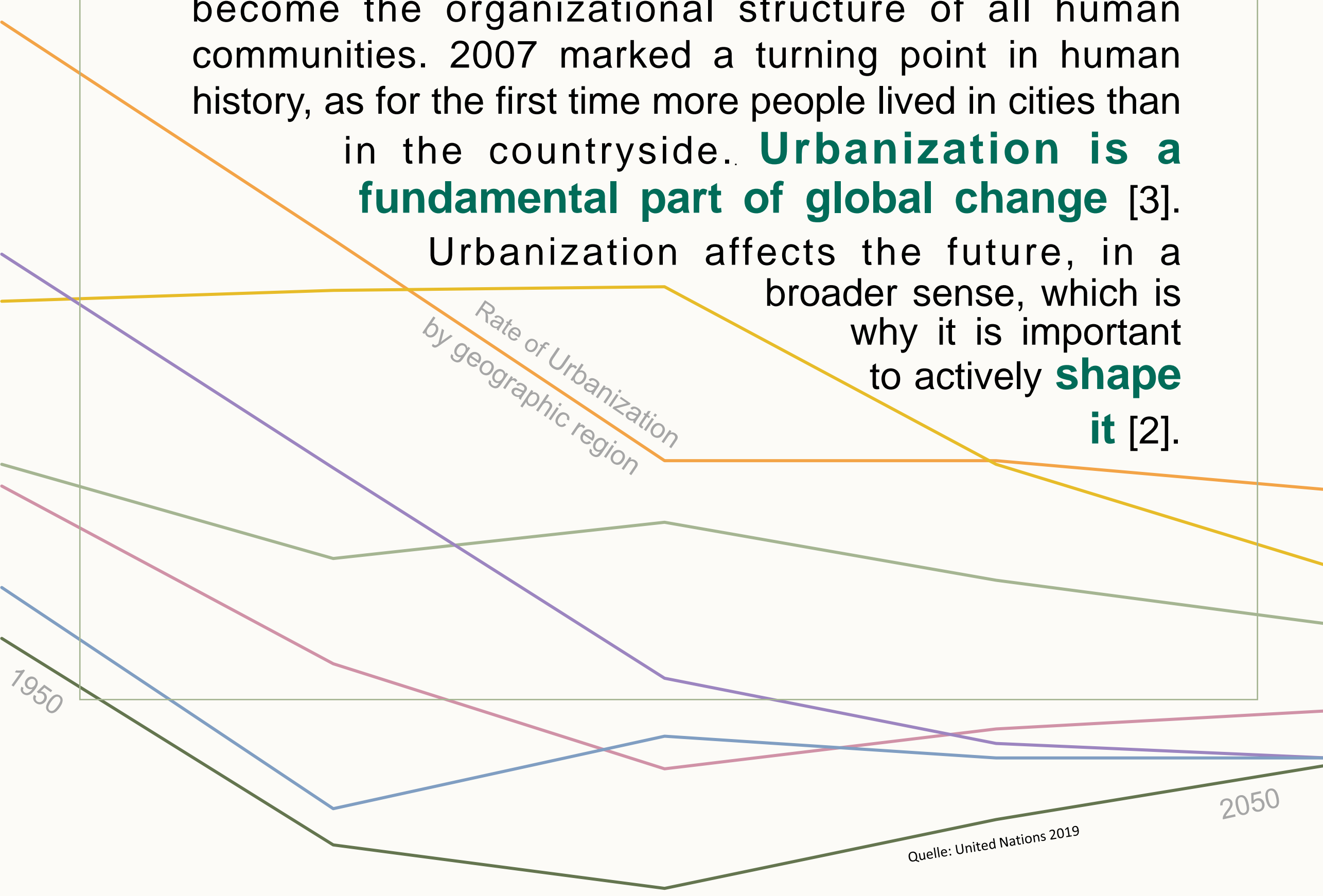


Beyond Global and World Cities

Why Cities?

“Cities provide an opportunity to mitigate or even reverse the impact of global climate change as they provide the economies of scale that reduce per capita costs and demand for resources” (UN-Habitat 2008: xiv). Many people are hoping for a better life in the city. Driving forces for the growth of cities are rural exodus and migration [1]. The future of the world's population therefore lies in cities [2]. Urban spaces become the organizational structure of all human communities. 2007 marked a turning point in human history, as for the first time more people lived in cities than in the countryside. **Urbanization is a fundamental part of global change** [3].

Urbanization affects the future, in a broader sense, which is why it is important to actively **shape it** [2].



What we need:
Ordinary Cities

Global and World Cities as a common thinktank for urban theories



- are thinking in hierarchies
- developed categories for division of cities
- Consideration of flows and networks that pass through the cities
- necessity to climb up rankings, to be part of global actions

Globalisation has shifted urban studies

[4]

Ordinary cities as a postcolonial urban study

A **post-colonial** urban study needs to **move beyond hierarchies** and classifications and leave the insist to represent some cities as proto types for others behind. The geographer Robinson urged the importance of letting all cities be ordinary ones [4].

In so doing, concepts such as global, local, micro and macro, as well as the city, are viewed critically. The problem lies in the simplification of such juxtaposition and the concrete living environment of urban communities [5]. As a post-colonial approach, ordinary cities try to create a **new framework for urban studies**, a framework in which all cities are seen as ordinary [4]:

«Ordinary cities (and that means all cities), are understood to be diverse, creative, modern and distinctive, with the possibility to imagine (within the not considerable constraints of contestations and uneven power relations) their own futures and distinctive forms of city-ness.» (Robinson 2002: 546)

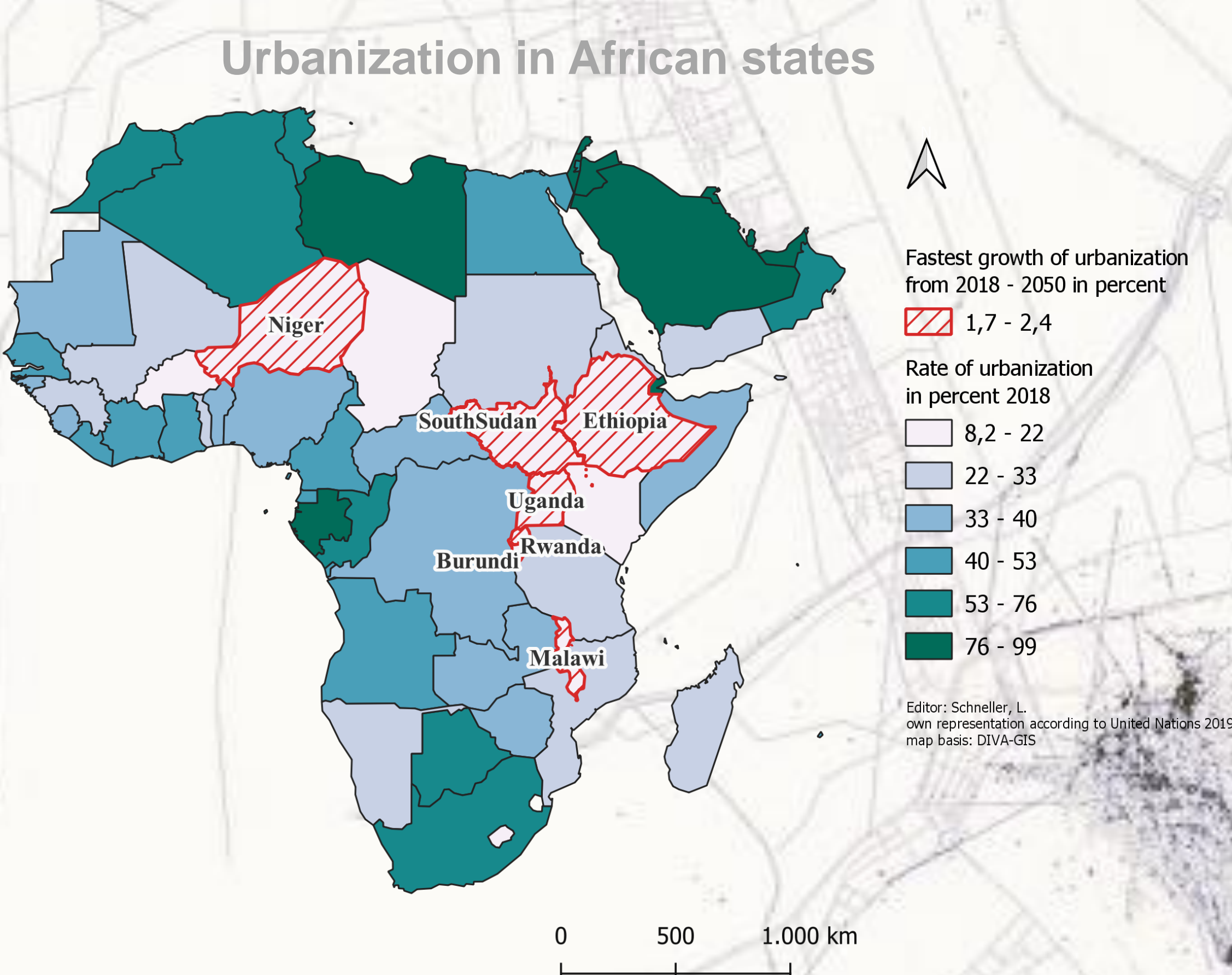
Ordinary Cities are...



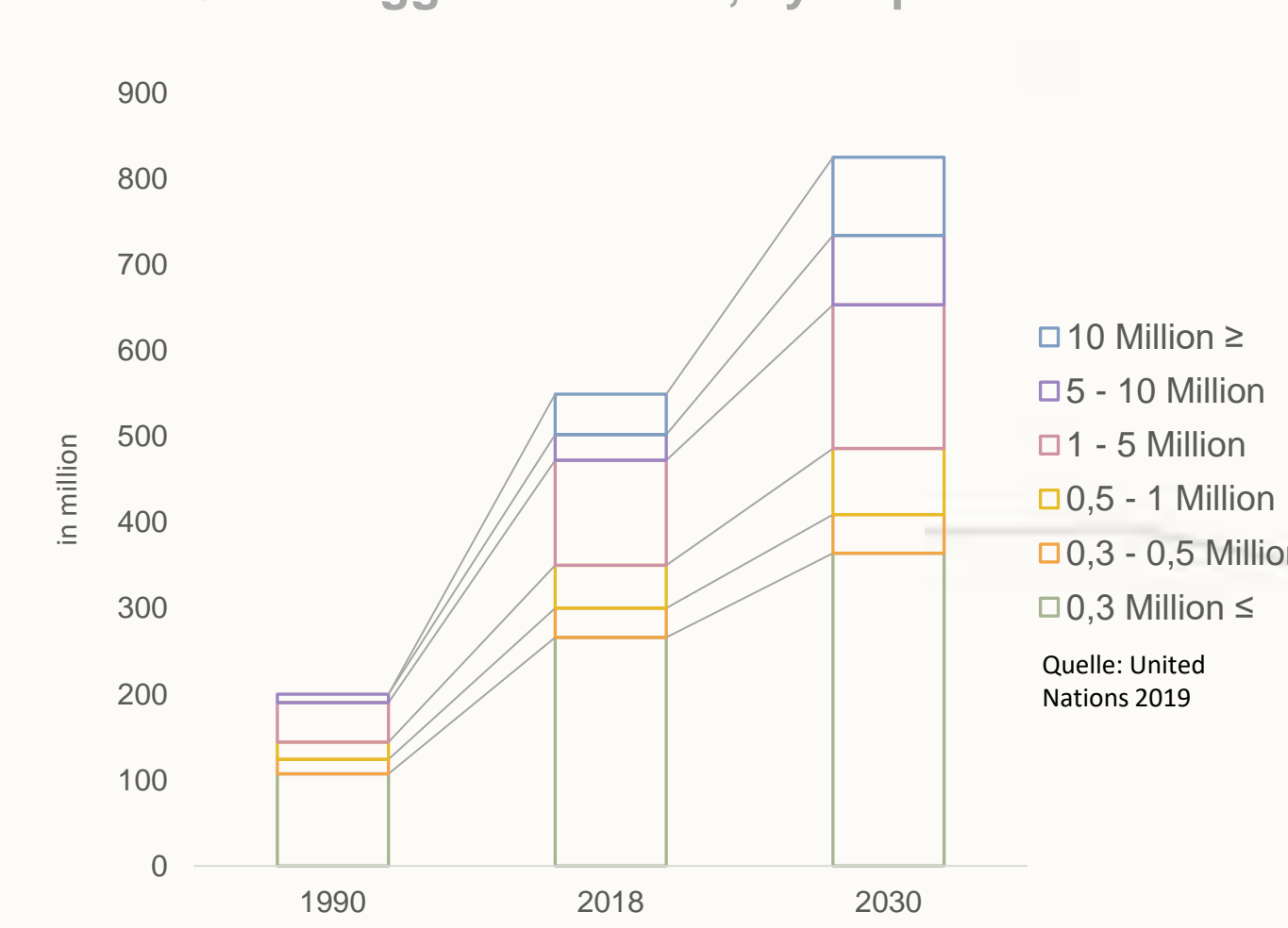
The theorization of the city should be based on **diversity** and **cosmopolitan**. This leads to the understanding of the city as an ordinary entity with its own rights. This requires a city theory that is general **suspicious of classifications** and hierarchies, but nevertheless works on a comparative basis. Strategies that contribute to urban regeneration on the individual and specific capabilities of the city needs to be promoted [6].

Meanwhile in Africa

According to Robinson, the lack of consideration of “cities of the global south” in large parts of urban-theoretical research landscapes is the result of a **development dualism** that shapes international urban research. That state prevents an adequate theorization of large parts of southern urbanization processes by shifting them to the focus of Western attention primarily from a development-theoretical perspective. Cities outside of the West are **measured by pregiven standards** of western city-ness, because they got established as geographically universal urban theory. That's why African cities (and “cities of the global south” in general) appear always unlikely and stunted, as they would refuse popular theory proposals and are for that dismissed as structurally irrelevant [7].



Urban Agglomerations, by Population in Africa



There is no doubt that Africa's urbanization pathways are linked to a whole range of serious problems and related challenges, and that cities must be seen as the bearers of hope if the situation is to be improved [7]:

- hunger
- health care
- poverty
- access to education

Future Issues:

The ordinary cities that are still way too much ‘off the map’ are telling stories that **should change the paradigm**. After all, if the narrative is about the rapid urbanisation of the planet, that is a paradigm that, in the twenty-first century, evidently **belongs** to South Asia, South-East Asia, China and **sub-Saharan Africa**. Countries like Burundi and Ethiopia have one of fastest growth of urbanization worldwide from 2018-2050 [8].

Questions to think about:

Potential of ordinary cities becoming climate pioneers [9]?

How does the „global city“ analytic effect our comprehension of migrant urbanization and how might the ordinary city offer a means to engage with the range of city spaces being made by migration [10]?