

Trends and Patterns of Urbanization Process in Kenya

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Presentation outline



- 📖 An overview of pre-colonial urbanization
- 📖 An overview of colonial urbanization and its impact on the urban landscape
- 📖 An overview of post-colonial urbanization
- 📖 Trends of urban growth, 1948-2009
- 📖 Sources and factors of urban growth
- 📖 Economic sectors that stimulate urban growth

Pre-colonial urbanization

- 📁 Urbanization in Kenya is largely a 20th century phenomena & a product of the British colonization
- 📁 Urbanization in Kenya has a long history in the coastal region than in the interior parts of the country – at least until the colonial period
- 📁 Town structures may not have existed but spatial organization certainly did (= invisible towns or periodic markets)
- 📁 Pre-colonial urbanization developed in the coastal zone as a result of triangular trade between EA, India & Arabia

Colonial urbanization

- 📁 Spatial organization of urban centres developed during the colonial period
- 📁 Many contemporary towns and cities were established during this period
- 📁 A clearer pattern of urban centres emerged due to:
 - The establishment of administrative centres
 - The construction of Kenya-Uganda Railway & road networks
 - Large scale European commercial farming (white highlands)
 - Caravaan towns & missionary centres
 - Asian community (*dukawalas*)

Colonial urbanization shaped the urban landscape in Kenya in a number of ways...

- 📁 The network of colonial administrative centres, caravan towns & mission stations laid the foundation for the present urban hierarchy in Kenya
- 📁 Unbalanced urban development, polarization & regional variation
- 📁 Non-permanent migration to urban centres
- 📁 Spatial segregation of the urban centres, city planning & regulations
- 📁 Urban primacy

Post-colonial urbanization

- 📁 Post-colonial urbanization can be divided into the *national* (1963-80) and *global* (after 1980) phases
- 📁 National phase = urbanization was largely influenced by the national policies and characterized by
 - High rates of urban growth (rural-urban migration)
 - Promotion of growth centres
- 📁 Global phase = urbanization being influenced and shaped by global forces
 - Impact of globalization/global forces is well documented

Trends of urban growth (1948-2009)

Year	Kenya ('000s)	Urban ('000)*	% urban	Urban growth rate (%)	No of urban centres	Nairobi ('000s)	Nairobi growth rate (%)	Nairobi % of total urban
1948	5,406	285	5.2	-	17	119	-	41.7
1962	8,636	671	7.8	6.3	34	227	4.6	33.8
1969	10,942	1,076	9.9	7.1	47	509	12.2	47.0
1979	15,327	2,314	15.1	7.7	91	827	4.9	35.7
1989	21,448	3,864	18.0	5.3	139	1,324	4.7	34.3
1999	28,686	5,360	18.7	3.4	179	2,143	4.8	38.9
2009	38,610	12,487	32.4	-**	-**	3,138	3.8	25.1

- Urban population is increasing
- High growth rates after independence but declining from 1989
- Dominance of Nairobi (% urban) but declined in 2009
- Nairobi's growth rate remarkably constant over the years
- Emerging importance of small and medium-size urban centres
- However, there exists regional variation in urbanization levels, trends & patterns

Sources and factors of urban growth

Sources of urban growth

- 📁 Rural-to-urban migration
- 📁 Urban natural increase
- 📁 Expansion in urban boundaries
- 📁 Daily commuters
- 📁 Refugees from neighbouring countries



Factors of urban growth

- 📁 “Push” and “pull” factors
- 📁 Good transport network
- 📁 Strong economic base
- 📁 Rich hinterland



Economic sectors that stimulate urban growth

 Basically employment opportunity-based economic sectors:

- Service sector (trading and market centres, provision of governmental services)
- Informal sector (*jua kali* activities, casual employment)
- Agriculture
 -  Agro-based industries (Athi River, Thika, Mumias)
 -  Horticulture industries (Naivasha)
- Tourism (coast and other tourist areas)
- Fishing (Turkana, Homa-Bay)
- Mining (Migori, Magadi)
- Manufacturing (industrial towns)

Challenges of the high rates of urban growth

- 📁 The high rate of urbanization has been added to the long list of socio-economic and spatial development challenges
- 📁 Urban population is growing very fast while the economic growth and development transformations necessary to support it and enhance quality of life are not occurring at the same rate.
- 📁 Urbanization is not driven by economic growth
- 📁 Increase in urban poverty and informality