

NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA:

Topic: Entangled Urbanization: Capabilities and Informal Labor, Dignity and Deprivation

Introduction:

Professionally, I am a planner and lecturer in the area of Urban and Regional Planning. My area of concern over the past years is the growing fate of many residents who find themselves financially incapable of surviving in our cash driven city economies, such as Nairobi. Most of these residents engage in informal businesses and activities that yield meagre returns and therefore end up in slums; while others simply survive on debt. To these two categories of residents, our cities are quite unlivable, despite their modern services and facilities. The search of what underlies this incapability and what can be done to break the traps is on and so the validity of the conference to me.

The three faces of informality in Nairobi; economy, land and housing and social

Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya, and arguably one of the biggest and economically vibrant cities in East Africa. The city owes its growth to the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway. It has also benefited from being a colonial headquarter hence a seat of the highest administrative offices in the land. Residential settlement was largely based the racial segregation; an aspect that still influences land prices to date. Though the city has had some planning efforts, it still experiences urban sprawl, increasing growth of urban slums and a challenge of city management and development control

According to the last census report in 2009, Nairobi's population growth stood at about 3.1 Million people, representing a 46% growth within a span of 10 years. This population is expected to increase to 6 million by 2025.

Table 1: Population Trends for Kenya and Nairobi

<i>Year</i>	<i>1969</i>	<i>1979</i>	<i>1989</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2009</i>
<i>Kenya</i>	10, 942, 705	15, 327, 061	21, 445, 636	28, 686, 607	38, 610, 097
<i>Nairobi</i>	509, 286	827, 775	1, 324, 570	2, 143, 254	3, 138, 369

Table 2: Nairobi City Population Projection

<i>Year</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2025</i>
<i>Nairobi</i>	2, 233, 000	3, 363, 000	4, 881, 000	5, 871, 000

While city growth ought to mirror economic and structural advancement, it also presents social, economic and physical challenges. Rapid City growth strains the existing city infrastructure and amenities, and when demand of services and infrastructure by the city residents exceed supply, rise of informality then takes shape. In Nairobi, this informality is manifested mainly in three spheres; economic, social, and physical.

Economy; The city of Nairobi, and the country in general, has an existing dual economy made up of the formal and the informal (Jua Kali) sector. The informal sector largely points out to the unregulated sector operating outside the government regulations, and is attributed to high population outpacing the ability of the management systems to create employment opportunities, and also the need to earn extra income by city residents.

Over the years, the sector has grown exponentially, and employs more than 80% of the labour force in the country. However, in spite of the important role of the sector to the development of the country, there has been little effort put in to enhance its revitalization and growth. Prior policies put in place have suffered from lack of proper implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation, thus sidelining the sector in terms of regularization and planning interventions

In the city of Nairobi, Jua Kali zones and clusters are more often characterized by haphazard coordination and organization of activities on space, resulting in environmental degradation, and aesthetically-unappealing zones. Others have taken up road reserves along busy streets and roads, as well as hawking, and have been subjected to harassment by the city management systems and they operate in fear of eviction, due to poor recognition and accommodation, as well as consideration in mainstream city planning agendas.

Year	Modern sector: Wage employment (%)	Modern sector: Self- employment & unpaid family workers	Estimated informal employment (%)	Total employment
1985	80.33	2.26	17.41	146,200
1988	77.47	2.54	20.00	173,140
1991	56.38	2.04	41.58	255,710
1994	44.86	1.74	53.41	335,620
1997	35.06	1.36	63.57	469,840
2000	28.68	1.10	70.22	591,160
2003	23.53	0.90	75.57	733,940
2006	20.66	0.75	78.60	899,340
2009	19.13	0.65	80.23	1,045,650
2012	16.87	0.60	82.53	1,278,110
2013	16.89	0.62	82.49	1,351,700
2014	16.56	0.72	82.73	1,431,670

Policy Responses/Stakeholder Responses to Informality and their inadequacies

Physical; Nairobi city is challenged by pervasive slums and informal settlements, where living conditions are desperately challenging for the urban poor because of extremely high settlement densities. The biggest slum in Africa; Kibera is located in Nairobi, with other notable ones being Mukuru, Mathare, and Korogocho slums. These slums are characterized by lack of security of tenure, precarious living conditions and poor and inadequate housing and infrastructure provision.

It is a pity because, many who end up in slums came expecting to reside in posh, leafy residential city neighbourhoods, only to find themselves trapped in settlements where cases of frequent fires, flooding, poor drainage, low connectivity index, poor road conditions and water supply are the order of the day, as can be seen in the plates below.

Plate 1 & 2: Expected Residence for many Migrants into Nairobi City



Plated 3 & 4 Reality Residences of many residents after arriving in Nairobi City



Kenya has had many programmes and still continues with others such as the Kenya Municipal Programme (KMP) and Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) and KISIP. Nairobi city has also joined the 100 Resilient Cities (100 RC) Programme (2016) by the Rockefeller Foundation; a network of 100 cities around the world that will receive \$164 million to build resilience against urbanization challenges. The heavy dependency on Donor or World Bank Funding to address informality is being seen a challenge

Social: Another face of informality in the city of Nairobi is the social exclusion and deprivation of the urban poor. The social aspect is interdependent on both the physical and the social aspect, where the urban poor are deprived of their dignity and capability to accumulate assets due to their physical environment (lack of tenure and housing conditions and environment) and their economic environment (lack of established and recognized livelihood activities). Informal powers have therefore come in place to fill the void created by the exclusion. These are mainly manifested in the form of cartels in informal settlements and low income neighbourhoods; informal powers that s have gained considerable control over infrastructure and services provision such as water, electricity and sanitation. This is continuing to trap or entrench many residents into deeper poverty (growing cases of generational poverty).