

Extended Abstract

PATTERNS, TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES OF URBANIZATION: Implications for Growth and Transformation in Ethiopia

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Introduction

In the past 20 years, Africa has experienced tremendous population growth, witnessing a transformation in demographic and spatial composition, underpinned by rapid urban growth. Over the same period, the urban population in Africa has almost doubled and projections indicate that this trend is likely to continue with increased intensity. Africa is also the fastest urbanizing region in the world with far reaching implications for its agenda of transformation.

As the urbanization process continues to unfold in Africa, it is important to understand the drivers at a national level which vary from country to country as well as the dynamics fuelled by the process at the local level. In this study we will be analyzing Ethiopia's urbanization process as it relates to the country's growth and transformation¹ for inclusive development.

Ethiopia has attached a premium on its transformation process and this study will help deepen the understanding of the urbanization process and salient issues emanating from an economic, demographic, political, social and cultural aspect to continue informing the policy formulation and planning processes in Ethiopia.

¹ This paper adopts the definition of Structural Transformation by the United Nations Economic for Africa (UNECA) whose key elements includes: a reallocation of resources from less productive to more productive sectors and activities; an increase in the relative contribution of manufacturing to GDP; a declining share of agricultural employment to total employment; a shift in economic activity from rural to urban areas; the rise of a modern industrial and service economy; a demographic transition from high rates of births and deaths (common in underdeveloped and rural areas) to low rates of births and deaths (associated with better health standards in developed and urban areas); and a rise in urbanization. It is associated with a fundamental change in the structure of the economy and its drivers of growth and development. (ECA. 2013. Economic Transformation for Africa's Development. Prepared for C-10 Meeting April, 2013 Washington D.C.).

Understanding the drivers of the urbanization process in Ethiopia pertinent to transformation, requires an examination of the pace and characteristics of urbanization, also informed by the patterns, trends and trajectory of growth in urban areas, and related implications for the structure of the economy. The paper examines the opportunities and challenges presented by urbanization with a specific focus on the case of Addis Ababa which are essential in maintaining Ethiopia's overall recent growth and improving overall quality of life in the country.

Objectives

The paper will analyze patterns, trends and the trajectory of Addis Ababa ² as well as the implications for growth and transformation for informed policy and urban planning and development.

Specifically, an analysis of urbanization in relation to the evolution of a selected agricultural value chain over time within the framework of Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan, also known as the policy document that is guiding the country's transformation process.

Data and methods

Nationally accredited data will be used including census data for an overview urban trends, conditions and an analysis of demographic characteristics in urban areas. Spatial analyses will be used to further determine the scale and patterns of urbanization.

Data will also be obtained to analyze a specific agricultural sub-sector value chain (from production to value addition),

Multivariate analyses of demographic characteristics and sectoral analyses will be conducted to understand the correlation of demographic characteristics and the agro industry of the economy within a particular period in time as well as the drivers affecting transformation.

Expected findings

This paper will provide suggestions for overall national development planning. The research will also look at the extent to which urbanization has aided growth and transformation in Ethiopia.

² The other nine largest cities in Ethiopia include Dire Dawa, Mekele, Nazret, BahirDar, Gonder, Dessie, Awaasa, Jima and Bishoftu

Additional analysis on land use to inform trends, trajectory and urban growth over time, might also be done depending on the availability of data.