

Resolved: On balance, the benefits of urbanization in West Africa outweigh the harms.

## Links

### Understanding

- [Home Page](#)
  
- Africa is among the countries with the highest urbanization rate
  - [https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-PopFacts\\_2018-1.pdf](https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-PopFacts_2018-1.pdf)
  - <https://www.cfr.org/blog/africa-fastest-urbanizing-place-planet>
  - <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/44127736.pdf>
  
- Does Urbanization lead to less poverty
  - Pro (YES)
    - Urbanization and poverty have a two-way relationship. Using fixed-effects regression and panel data from household surveys, we estimate the effect of urbanization on welfare and poverty of rural households in Vietnam. We find that urbanization tends to increase landlessness of rural households and to reduce their farm income. However, urbanization helps rural households increase their wages and non-farm incomes. As a result, total income and consumption expenditure of rural households tend to be increased with urbanization. Then we find that urbanization also helps rural households decrease the expenditure poverty rate, albeit at a small magnitude.
      - <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01068266/document>
  - Con (NO)
    -
  
- Infrastructure issues the general welfare among the individual is lower due to the lower access to basic services
  - [Urbanization as a driver of changing food demand in Africa](#)
  - <https://rmportal.net/framelib/urban.pdf>
  - Lack of provision to basic services
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## Perspectives

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Resolution: On balance, the benefits of urbanization in West Africa outweigh the harms.

Pro: The Benefits DO outweigh the harms

Value Premise:

Improvement in public welfare and the Earth is more than any costs it may incur

Framework:

- Urbanization is natural- every developed country has gone through it. If Africa wants to be considered modern, then they will eventually have to catch up
- Urbanization clears the path for the emergence of more educated democracies
- Urbanization reduce overall pollution and impact on environment, more modern solution to waste management and sanitation

throughout history, cities have been the main centres of learning, culture and innovation. It is not surprising that the world's most urban countries tend to be the richest and have the highest human development.

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/rapid-urbanisation-opportunities-and-challenges-improve-well-being-societies>

Contentions:

- Technical
- Moral
- Urbanization → Opportunities & Education → less poverty → upward mobility
  - [World bank and the importance of urbanization](#)
  - This leads to greater and better public welfare
    - <https://www.fordfoundation.org/just-matters/equal-change-blog/posts/habitat-iii-urbanization-can-be-a-force-for-tackling-inequality/>
- Urbanization clears paths for Democracy
  - <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2019-12-16/africas-slums-arent-harbinger-anarchy-theyre-engines-democracy>

- <https://www.ivint.org/africa-on-the-up/>
- <http://reportnewstoday.com/africas-slums-arent-harbingers-of-anarchy-the-ire-engines-of-democracy/>

Con: The Benefits DO NOT outweigh the harms

Value Premise:

Explicit and implicit costs of urbanization outweigh the benefits

Framework:

Africa is currently one of the fastest-growing continents in the world in terms of urbanization. More and more people are moving into cities at higher rates than ever seen before in Africa.

Contentions:

- you'd have to have existing infrastructure, manpower, expertise, capital, and time to modernize and urbanize a country.
  - Who will provide these resources, and what gives that they shouldn't use it to solve their own problems?
  - West African countries does not have the resources nor the knowledge to urbanize themselves, or else they would have done it already
- The indirect costs of modernization: mismanagement, pollution, consolidation of power
- The government must reform to provide equal baseline opportunity, something that cannot be supported by the economically weak
- Creates opportunity for despotism/plutocracy to rise
- The risks of urbanization outweigh its benefits
- Even if Africa continues to urbanize at the pace they're currently going at, they would not be able to sustain the growth.
  - Already see the consequences of growth right now → overpopulation etc
- There are several risk factors that could inhibit growth.
  - Crime
  - Infrastructure
    - <https://africa.com/pros-cons-of-the-rapid-growth-of-african-cities/>
    - <https://africabusinesscommunities.com/africadata/urbanization-dampens-growth-opportunities-in-west-africa-world-bank/>
- \*\*\*Urbanization in Africa is an idealized utopia, and Africa isn't equipped to deal with such growth

- “But in order to reap the benefits of urbanization, countries must plan for, execute, and manage it properly. Without proper planning, countries are susceptible to being locked into patterns of inequitable and unsustainable development.” - [here](#)

### Rebuttals

#### Pro rebuttal to Con

- Rebuttal to urbanization → problems
  - The glory of the free market
    - Basic economics, demand, and supply
  - It is difficult to harness the pros of urbanization, however, that is no reason to avoid it

#### Con rebuttal to Pro

- Urbanization → define urban vs non-urban
  - Make opponent’s argument more specific, then attack from another angle (bring moral if opponent argue technical, bring technical if opponent argue moral)
- Upward mobility (specifically household welfare) is not actually gained x
  - <https://portal.pep-net.org/document/download/33518>
    - As seen with Kuznet’s curve

Base:

Africa is currently one of the fastest-growing continents in the world in terms of urbanization. More and more people are moving into cities at higher rates than ever seen before in Africa.

This has caused overcrowding and the emergence of slum neighborhoods. Urbanization promises to solve that issue, by introducing a middle class that is able to afford everyday luxuries on top of necessities.

Thesis:

Pro - The solution is far from theoretical - it had proven itself in countries all over the world, including America and China, which together holds almost 40% of the world's GDP.

Con - That opinion, however, is mistaken. Urbanization is the cause of these issues, and will worsen the problem in its current form. It is best to scale down urbanization until the inherent issues are resolved and the economy ready to move forward.