

DV435 Economic and Political Geography of Kenya

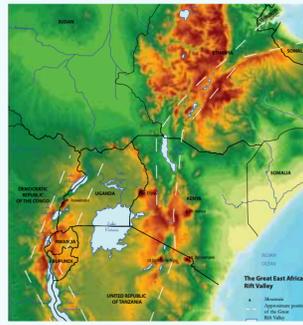
Natalie Davirro, Chiara Brambilla, Fan Xu,
Shuyi Geng, Afiola Etomi

Introduction

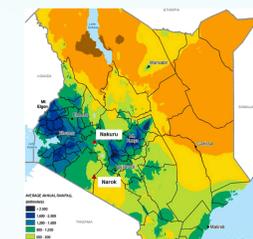
This poster analyzes the location and endowment, colonial economy, economic geography and political geography of Kenya. It considers the effects of these four major themes on Kenya's present-day economic growth rate, political institutions, and sources of economic instability.

I.1 Location

Kenya is located in East Africa and has a total land area of 569,140 km². It extends to the Indian Ocean coast in the south-east region. The Great Rift Valley bisects the country, giving Kenya its diverse range of climates and elevations. Kenya is also one of only three countries with access to Lake Victoria, which provides the country with a large supply of freshwater.

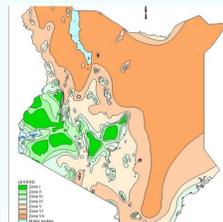


UNEP (2008), "Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment." Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA).



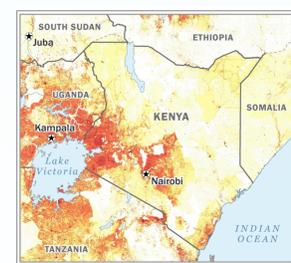
Zander, Kerstin & Mwacharo, Joram & Drucker, Adam & Garnett, Stephen. (2013). Constraints to effective adoption of innovative livestock production technologies in the Rift Valley (Kenya). Journal of Arid Environments. 96. 9-18.

Kenya has six agro-ecological zones, with semi-arid, arid and very arid zones (ASALs) composing approximately 88% of the country's total land area (UNCCD 2002). While these drylands provide a suitable climate for livestock, they are unsuitable for rain-fed agriculture. (Sombroek, W.G., Braun, H.M.H. and van der Pouw, B.J.A., 1982). As such, the vast majority of agricultural labour is in the Kenyan Highlands, one of the most agriculturally productive regions of the African continent (UNCCD 2002). Kenya is both coastal and resource-scarce (Ndulu and O'Connell 2007), and while this presents opportunities for growth facilitated by coastal access, this also leads to dependence on the world market prices and has drastic impacts on the economy in the times of global recession.



Sombroek, W.G., Braun, H.M.H. and van der Pouw, B.J.A. (1982). Exploratory Soil Map and Agro-Climatic Zone Map of Kenya, 1980.

I.3 Population



Map credit: CIA World Factbook, accessed 10/23/2020

The small percentage of arable land causes desertification, and also leads to large disparities in population density. Population is heavily concentrated in the highlands, consistent with agriculture productivity. However, the region is far from the seaport in Mombasa, incurring high transport costs (Bloom & Sachs 1998). Due to exponential population growth, 38% of the population is under the age of 14 (CIA World Factbook). This low ratio of working-age to dependent population has adverse effects on growth (Bloom and Sachs, 1998).

Citations

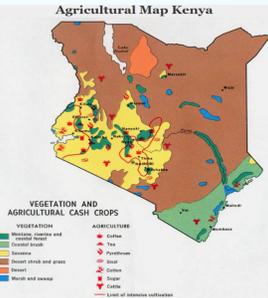
Bloom, D. and Sachs, J. 1998
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Miatia Fahnbullch (2006) in search of economic development in Kenya: Colonial legacies & post-independence realities. Review of African Political Economy, 33:107, 33-47. DOI: 10.1080/03056240600671258 https://oec.world/en/visualize/tree_map/h992/export/ken/all/show/2018/

II.1 Colonial land division and labour migration

Kenya was a settler colony, characterised by a settler agriculture. The colonizers confined the African labour into reserves in order to limit the competition with their farms and to use them as temporary or permanent migrant labour on their farms first and in manufacturing industries later. That is why Kenya can be seen as a labour reserve economy (Amin, 1972). Reserves were only defined in 1926, since the European settler objected to being excluded from these lands. Native reserves were demarcated on tribal lines, so the attribution of right to land and labour were the result of this demarcation. The white settlers reserved for themselves the most fertile lands, the so-called white highlands (Berry, 1993). In fact, they confined Africans to the labour market and out of the produced market, for example Africans were banned from producing coffee until the 1950s (Cooper, 2002). This period was marked by the Mau Mau revolt and led the British to encourage the presence of African land-owners, since they were viewed as more politically conservative (Austin, 2010). The Northern Frontier District (NFD), situated at the border with Somalia and Ethiopia and with a Somali majority, posed a security problem for the colonizers. The NFD had scarce natural resources and was characterized by recurrent conflicts over them and by pastoral and cross-border migrations. So, the British focused on making this area a 'buffer zone' between the highlands and the neighbouring countries, by controlling these movements and defining 'fixed tribal territories' (Whittaker, 2017).

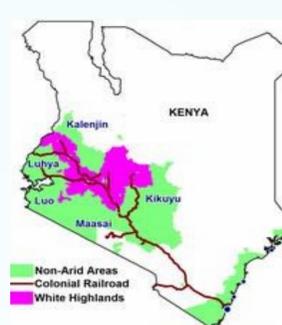
Robertson C., Beyond 'Tribes': Violence and Politics in Kenya, Vol. 1, Issue 7, 2008



Kenyan Ethnic Groups (1972)



Robertson C., Beyond 'Tribes': Violence and Politics in Kenya, Vol. 1, Issue 7, 2008



II.2 Infrastructure - railway and port

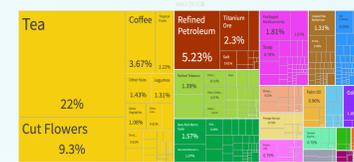
The labour migration was directed also to the port of Mombasa, vital to the import-export economy. In 1903 the railway from Mombasa to Kisumu, an area with fertile lands near Lake Victoria, was completed. It became central to the export of cash crops and to determine the distribution of European settlers (Britannica and Moradi et. al, 2014).

Moradi A., Jedwab R., Kerby E., 3 policy lessons from Africa's colonial railways, International Growth Centre, 2014

III.1 Sectoral Economies and economy complexity

At independence, the manufacturing sector in Kenya constituted 9.5 per cent of GDP, which was amongst the highest in sub-Saharan Africa at the time (Kilby, 1975:135). Meanwhile, restrictions on the production of commodities like coffee were gradually relaxed after the World War Two (Smith, 1976:124), the development of an agro-export sector became the principle engine of growth. Coffee, sisal and tea constituted over 50 per cent of exports in 1965 (Zwanenberg, 1975:189). In last two decades, Kenya's economy relies on a few primary commodities including tea, flowers, and coffee for foreign exchange, which places it at the mercy of fluctuations in world prices.

What does Kenya export? (2018) Total: \$6.63B

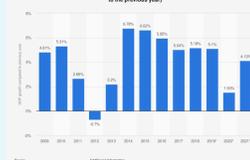


III.2 Unemployment and Sectors of Agriculture, Informal, and Formal.

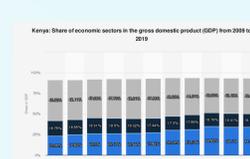
Kenya's most pressing problem was unemployment, of which levels reached the highest with 40% in 2011/12. Interestingly, unemployment rates in most urban areas are far above the national average. High values also can be found in the drier, where households are still rooted in traditional agriculture and pastoralism. Due to low productivity and high risks, they have needed to find employment in other sectors, and in these areas, the informal sector is virtually the only alternative.

On the other side, there are low levels in many parts of the largely rural, high-potential areas of central and western Kenya, with Nyamira(3%) recording the lowest levels, and many sub-locations with values below 4% or even 2%. Unemployment is therefore the result of varying combinations and absorption capacities of the three sectors - agriculture, informal, and formal - in different parts of the country.

Mal: Growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) from 2009 to 2021 (compared to the previous year)



Kenya: Share of economic sectors in the gross domestic product (GDP) from 2009 to 2019



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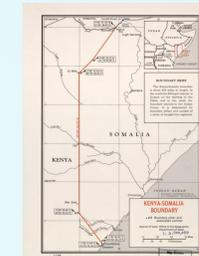
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IV.1. Administrative Boundaries and Political Economic Significance



The boundaries of Kenya and Somalia in 1966 Source: CIA

In colonial era, Kenya's boundaries were product of a series of treaties and agreements incl. The Anglo-German treaty of 1890, Anglo-Italian agreement that demarcated Somalia Kenya border etc. From the early 1960, border skirmishes arose on Kenya north frontiers with Somalia. Under the Constitution of 2010 and other reforms to Provincial Administration, the previous Provinces were scrapped and the 46 Districts, in existence since 1992, were turned into Counties with elected governments. Nairobi is Kenya's most ethnically diverse region (Nellis and John, 1974).

IV.2 Resistance and Political Mobilization in Colonial Era

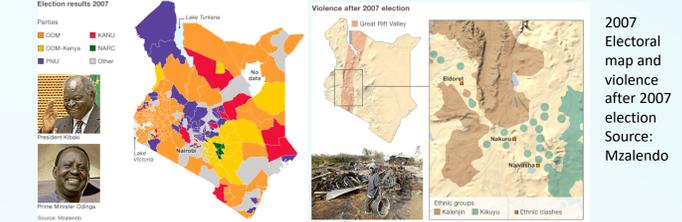
In 1920 the East Africa Protectorate was turned into a Crown Colony and renamed Kenya, for its highest mountain. The creation of the Kenya Colony gave rise to African political activity incl. the Young Kikuyu Association and "Piny Owacho" Movement. Mau Mau Uprising (1952-1960) dominated by the Kikuyu people lived in central Kenya, Meru people and Embu people (between central and coast), the KLFA also comprised units of Kamba and Maasai peoples who fought against the white European colonist-settlers, the British Army, and the local Kenya Regiment (Anderson, 2005). Kenya became independent as a sovereign state in 1963.



Ethnic groups population, 2007 Source: CIA, UK Foreign Office, African Studies Center

IV.3 Geographic Electoral Patterns and Territorial Cleavages

Local governance in Kenya is practiced through local authorities. Many urban centers host city, municipal or town councils. Local authorities in rural areas were known as county councils. Kenyan politics follows a strong ethnic logic, whereby viable presidential candidates tend to win areas inhabited by aligned groups at rates of more than 90% (Mai Hassan, 2016). Since Kenya returned to multiparty politics in 1990s, its elections have been competitive. There was high-visibility election-time violence in Kenya in 1991-1992. Much of the violence in this period occurred in the "borderlands" of Rift Valley Province (Throup and Hornsby, 1998). The violence sporadically and on a lesser scale over the next few years until it was reignited in the 1997 and 2007 elections. (Boone, 2010)



2007 Electoral map and violence after 2007 election Source: Mzalendo