

Urbanisation and Environmentalism in Malawian State building: Turning Tensions into Synergies?



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Overview

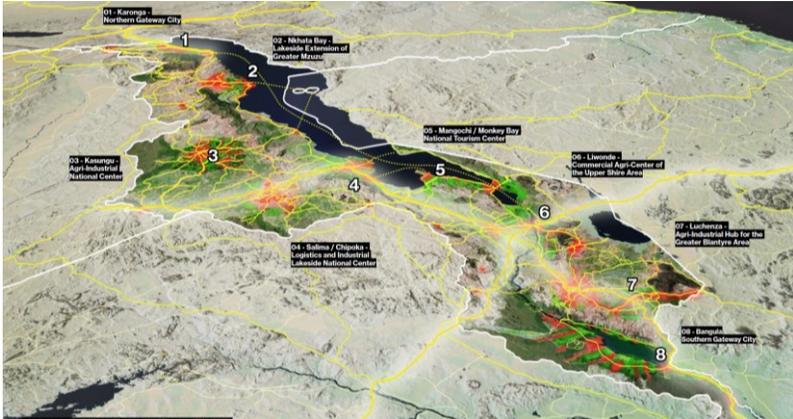
- Background to Malawi
- Where is the African Political-Economy in questions of Environment and Urban Development?
- Malawi: A green urban policy entrepreneur
- Explaining a case of urbanization driven environmental impact in Malawi
- Exploring climate-vulnerable urbanization in Malawi
- What do we do with the state? (A question for academics and practitioners alike)





Malawi Today

“7th most rural country in the world”



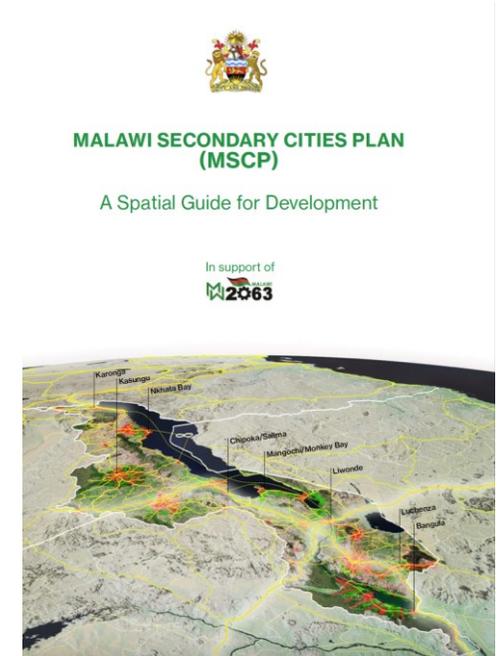
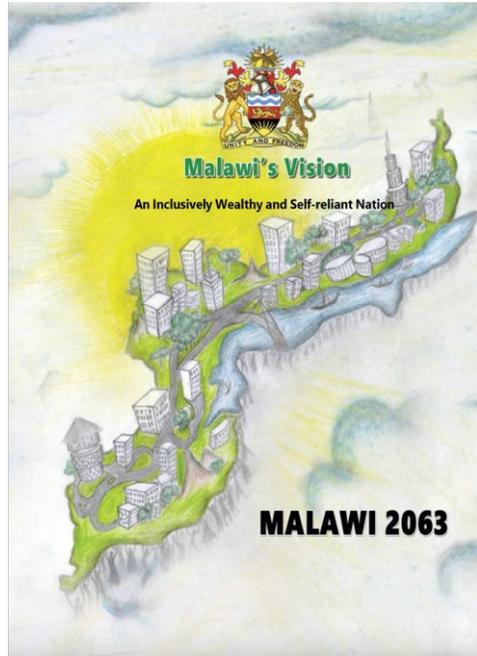
A Future Malawi?

“8th fastest urbanizing country in the world”



Posing the question: Where is the
African Political-Economy?

Urban-Environmental Policy Entrepreneurs



“Having urbanisation as a pillar in the National Development Plan, that in itself speaks volumes... We went to the World Urban Forum, and Malawi was commended for having prioritised sustainable urban development”

The
Redevelopment
of Lilongwe's
Kenyatta Drive



"I think a 6-lane road in the heart of a city covering a distance of only 4km is a very damned idea and bad city planning... Future cities are without cars in the heart of the city!"

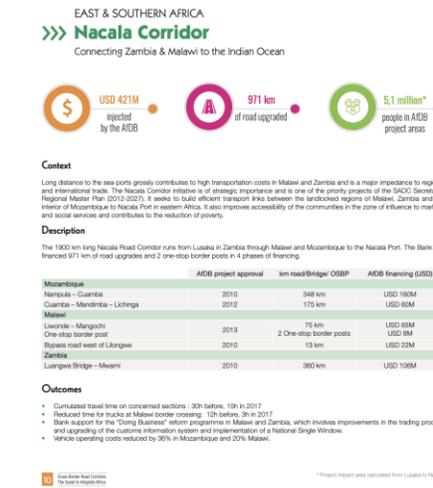
M1 is supposed to be the primary road. But M1 is being designed and built as a 4-lane road, 2 by 2, and so Kenyatta road is a child road that is bigger than the mother! But I think political projects don't look at those things."

So now, when we were doing the initial dual, we fitted it between the trees...I was only losing two trees. Two trees. Two! I even see them in my head. Two trees close to the roundabout because they have a curve in the branches. Then the President stands on the podium, and he says, "I am doing a six-lane road." I said, "What?!?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEKb6cf5hal>

Uncovering an Innovative Political-Economy

- Signature assets helping build market confidence so that domestic currency Infrastructure Bonds become a viable new development financing tool
- Domestic capital markets maturing over long periods of time and now starting to exert macro-economic pressure
- Dominance of regional infrastructure corridors by donors means the urban is where these domestic resources get put to work
- Regionally stimulated cashflows for the transportation sector channeled towards the urban using parastatals (Fuel Levies and Toll Booths)





'An Urbanization of Sovereign Debt'

(Lane, Mwachungu and Robinson)

Future Research Plans

- Again, a following of regional economic growth agendas
- This time with land use implications
- Sporadic urbanization in Western Lilongwe District (beyond the city boundaries)
- Counter to secondary cities policy and Lilongwe master plan spatial logic
- Consumption of vast amounts of peri-urban, flood-prone agricultural land
- But once again this is enabled by the state's dynamic and responsive fiscal agenda...



Source: JICA Study team



Vulnerable Urban Energy Infrastructures



What does the future of renewable energy (e.g. solar) look like in a sovereign Malawi?

What are the implications of financing climate resilient urbanisms with climate vulnerable ones?

Where do narratives of devolution and city environmental leadership fit into this picture?

