

The dynamics and implications of residential segregation in Nairobi

K' Akumu, O.A.; Olima, W.H.A.

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Abstract:

Residential segregation is an urban phenomenon that has intrigued researchers the world over and sustained a debate for decades. However, the debate has not been engaging Africa as much as it does countries of Europe, America and the Far East. In Africa, the colonial governments and the apartheid regime in South Africa initiated residential segregation. For example, in Nairobi, residential segregation took root during the onset of colonialism. By 1900, a racially segregated Nairobi had been set up. Racial segregation was sustained in Nairobi from these early times up to 1963 when Kenya attained independence. Racial segregation transformed into socio-economic and legal-tenural residential segregation upon attainment of independence. It is this feature of transformation, also termed dynamics of residential segregation that this paper contributes to the global debate using the case of Nairobi. This is a belated contribution that would inform urban managers in a country like South Africa that is currently undertaking desegregation programmes.