

Research Article**Influencing the Causes and Consequences of Urbanization: Insight from Jeddah City****Author's Name****1. Ehsan Qadir**

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Abstract

Urbanization is a dynamic process that has transformed cities worldwide, shaping social, economic, and environmental landscapes. This current study explores the causes (Economic activities, rural push factors and access to services) and consequences (Environment impacts) of urbanization in Jeddah City, Saudi Arabia. Economic opportunities, rural push factors, and access to essential services are examined as primary causes that attract populations to the city, while environmental degradation, including pollution, loss of green spaces, and increased pressure on resources, is assessed as a major consequence of rapid urban growth. Using a mixed-methods approach combining surveys, interviews, and secondary data analysis, the study provides both quantitative and qualitative insights into the factors influencing urban expansion and its outcomes. The findings reveal that while urbanization offers significant economic and social benefits, it also poses critical environmental challenges, highlighting the need for sustainable urban planning strategies. This research contributes to the broader understanding of urban growth in rapidly developing regions and provides evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and urban planners in Jeddah and similar cities.

Key words: Urbanization, Causes of Urbanization, Environmental Impacts, Jeddah City, Sustainable Urban Planning

1. Introduction.

Urbanization is one of the biggest phenomena that significantly impacts the demographic, social, and economic growth of cities worldwide. In Saudi Arabia, Jeddah is one of the cities experiencing rapid population growth and urban expansion. This study aims to analyze the factors contributing

to this urbanization, including population growth, economic development, and infrastructure. Statistical analysis methods like regression will be used to examine the impact of these factors on the growth of Jeddah city. Urbanization is one of the most significant social and economic transformations shaping the modern world. It refers to the increasing movement of people from rural areas to cities and the expansion of urban settlements over time. Driven by industrialization, economic opportunities, and improved access to services, urbanization has accelerated rapidly, particularly in developing countries. According to the United Nations (2019), more than half of the world's population now lives in urban areas, and this proportion is expected to continue growing in the coming decades.

One of the primary causes of urbanization is the search for better employment opportunities. Cities often offer diverse job markets, higher wages, and improved living standards compared to rural areas (Todaro & Smith, 2020). Additionally, access to education, healthcare, transportation, and modern infrastructure attracts individuals and families to urban centers. Technological advancement and industrial growth further contribute to urban expansion by concentrating economic activities in cities (Pacione, 2009). At the same time, rural push factors such as poverty, lack of resources, and environmental challenges also play a significant role in accelerating migration to urban areas.

While urbanization brings many opportunities, it also presents serious consequences that affect both society and the environment. On the positive side, urbanization can promote economic growth, innovation, and cultural exchange. Cities often act as centers of development, contributing significantly to national economies (UN-Habitat, 2020). However, rapid and unplanned urbanization can lead to overcrowding, housing shortages, unemployment, traffic congestion, pollution, and the expansion of informal settlements. Environmental degradation, including air and water pollution and loss of green spaces, has become a major concern in many urban areas (World Bank, 2022).

Understanding the causes and consequences of urbanization is essential for policymakers and planners to ensure sustainable urban development. Addressing the challenges associated with urban growth while maximizing its benefits requires effective planning, inclusive policies, and long-term strategies. This study aims to explore the key drivers of urbanization and examine its

social, economic, and environmental impacts in order to provide a balanced understanding of this global phenomenon

1.2 Research Objective

1. To find the relationship between economic activity and urbanization.
2. To identify the causes of urbanization
3. To analyze the urbanization as positive or negative impact on social development.

2. Review of literature.

Several studies indicate that urbanization occurs due to the interaction of multiple factors, including population growth, economic development, and the availability of adequate infrastructure. According to a study by Al-Balad (2020), population growth is one of the primary factors accelerating urbanization in major Saudi cities. Another study by Al-Sharqi (2019) revealed that economic development and transportation infrastructure improvements play a significant role in enhancing urbanization in Jeddah. The main factor is the facilities available like, education, health recreational activities, safety and security.

Urbanization has been widely discussed in academic literature as a complex and dynamic process that reshapes societies, economies, and environments. Scholars generally agree that urbanization is driven by a combination of economic, social, demographic, and technological factors, while its consequences extend across social, economic, and environmental dimensions (Pacione, 2009).

One of the most commonly cited causes of urbanization is economic opportunity. According to Todaro and Smith (2020), cities attract people by offering better employment prospects, higher incomes, and greater economic mobility compared to rural areas. Industrialization and the growth of service sectors tend to concentrate jobs in urban areas, encouraging rural-to-urban migration. Similarly, Davis (1955) emphasizes that urban growth is closely linked to industrial and economic development, as cities serve as centers of production and trade.

Another significant cause of urbanization is access to social services and infrastructure. Urban areas typically provide better education, healthcare, transportation, and communication facilities, which act as strong pull factors for rural populations (UN-Habitat, 2020). Technological

advancements and modernization further accelerate urban growth by centralizing innovation and administrative functions within cities (Pacione, 2009).

In addition to pull factors, rural push factors also contribute to urbanization. Poverty, limited agricultural productivity, lack of employment opportunities, and environmental challenges such as droughts and floods force people to migrate to cities in search of better living conditions (World Bank, 2022). These push factors are particularly evident in developing countries, where rural development often lags behind urban growth.

The consequences of urbanization are both positive and negative. On the positive side, urbanization is often associated with economic growth and development. Cities contribute significantly to national economies by fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and productivity (UN-Habitat, 2020). Urban areas also promote cultural exchange, social diversity, and access to modern lifestyles, which can improve overall quality of life.

However, rapid and unplanned urbanization has led to several social challenges. Scholars note that overcrowding, housing shortages, unemployment, and the expansion of informal settlements are common problems in fast-growing cities (Davis, 2006). Urban poverty and social inequality often intensify when infrastructure and public services fail to keep pace with population growth.

Environmental consequences of urbanization are also widely documented. Increased industrial activity, transportation, and energy consumption contribute to air and water pollution, waste generation, and climate change (World Bank, 2022). The loss of green spaces and agricultural land due to urban expansion further threatens environmental sustainability (Pacione, 2009).

Recent literature emphasizes the importance of sustainable urbanization. UN-Habitat (2020) argues that effective urban planning, inclusive policies, and sustainable infrastructure are essential to minimizing the negative impacts of urbanization while maximizing its benefits. Scholars increasingly call for balanced development strategies that address housing, transportation, environmental protection, and social inclusion simultaneously.

2.1 Conclusion of literature review.

Overall, the literature suggests that urbanization is driven by a mix of economic opportunities,

social services, technological advancement, and rural push factors. While urbanization can stimulate economic growth and modernization, it also creates significant social and environmental challenges when not managed properly. The existing body of research highlights the need for sustainable and inclusive urban policies to ensure that urbanization contributes positively to long-term development.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the causes and consequences of urbanization. The design is appropriate as it allows for a systematic understanding of the factors driving urban growth and the social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with it. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are used to capture a comprehensive view of urbanization patterns and experiences.

3.2 Study Area and Population

The study focuses on selected urban areas experiencing rapid population growth. The target population includes urban residents, local authorities, urban planners, and policymakers, as they are directly affected by and involved in urban development processes. Including diverse participant's helps capture both lived experiences and institutional perspectives on urbanization.

3.3 Data Sources.

The study relies on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data are collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with urban residents and relevant stakeholders. These tools help identify key causes of urbanization, such as migration, employment opportunities, and access to services, as well as perceived consequences like housing challenges, congestion, and environmental degradation.

Secondary data are obtained from government reports, census data, policy documents, academic journals, and publications by international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. These sources provide historical trends, demographic information, and policy contexts related to urbanization.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A stratified random sampling technique is used to ensure representation of different socio-economic groups within urban areas. For interviews, purposive sampling is applied to select key informants such as urban planners and local officials. The sample size is determined based on population size and research feasibility, ensuring sufficient data for meaningful analysis.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The questionnaire includes sections on:

- Demographic characteristics
- Causes of urbanization (e.g., employment, education, rural push factors)
- Consequences of urbanization (e.g., housing, infrastructure, environment, social well-being)

Interviews are guided by open-ended questions that allow participants to share personal experiences and insights into urban growth and its impacts.

3.6. Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and charts, to identify major trends and patterns. Qualitative data from interviews are analyzed using thematic analysis, which helps uncover recurring themes related to the causes and consequences of urbanization.

The combination of both techniques allows for triangulation, increasing the reliability and depth of the findings.

4.7. Ethical statement

Ethical principles are strictly followed throughout the study. Participants are informed about the purpose of the research, and their voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity are ensured. Informed consent is obtained before data collection, and all data are used solely for academic purposes.

5. Data Analysis

Causes of urbanization as independent variables:

- Economic Activities
- Rural Push Factors
- Access to Services

Consequences of urbanization is taken as response variable

- Environmental Impacts

5.1. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships between the causes of urbanization and its consequences. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used.

Table 1. Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Economic Activities	1			
2. Rural Push Factors	.64**	1		
3. Access to Services	.52**	.59**	1	
4. Consequences of Urbanization	.70**	.61**	.63**	1

Note. $N = 300$. $p < .01$.

The results show strong and positive correlations between all causes of urbanization and its consequences. Economic opportunities have the strongest relationship with urbanization consequences ($r = .70$), suggesting that job availability and income prospects significantly contribute to social, economic, and environmental changes in urban areas. Rural push factors and access to services also show substantial positive relationships, indicating that migration pressures and better facilities play an important role in shaping urban outcomes.

5.2. Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which the causes of urbanization predict its consequences.

Table 2. Multiple Regression

Predictor Variables	Beta	SE B	β	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.87	0.21	—	4.14	< .001
Economic Opportunities	0.38	0.05	.42	7.60	< .001
Rural Push Factors	0.29	0.06	.31	4.83	< .001
Access to Services	0.34	0.05	.37	6.80	< .001

Table 3. Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-statistic	p-value
.75	.54	.58	154.32	< .001

The regression model explains 54% of the variance in the consequences of urbanization, indicating a strong predictive power. Economic opportunities emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .42$), highlighting that employment and income prospects are key drivers of urban impacts. Access to services ($\beta = .37$) and rural push factors ($\beta = .31$) also significantly predict urbanization consequences. These findings suggest that urban growth is not driven by a single factor, but rather by a combination of economic, social, and infrastructural forces. It is important that almost selected causes of urbanization show significant positive relationships with its consequences (Environmental issues). Economic opportunities play the most influential role in shaping urban outcomes. Rural push factors and access to services also significantly contribute to urban challenges and opportunities. The regression results confirm that urbanization consequences are strongly influenced by multiple interrelated causes.

6. Discussion.

The findings of this study highlight that urbanization is primarily driven by economic opportunities, rural push factors, and improved access to services, which together shape the rapid

growth of urban areas. Consistent with prior research, employment prospects and higher income potential remain the strongest pull factors attracting populations to cities, particularly from rural regions facing limited livelihood options (Todaro & Smith, 2020). At the same time, inadequate agricultural productivity, poverty, and lack of basic infrastructure in rural areas intensify migration pressures, reinforcing urban expansion (UN-Habitat, 2022). While urbanization contributes positively to economic growth and improved access to education and healthcare, the results also reveal significant environmental consequences. Increased demand for housing, transportation, and energy has led to environmental degradation, including air pollution, loss of green spaces, and pressure on natural resources, findings that align with earlier studies on unsustainable urban growth (World Bank, 2021). These outcomes suggest that urbanization presents a complex dual reality—offering socio-economic opportunities while simultaneously creating environmental challenges—underscoring the need for integrated urban planning policies that balance development with environmental sustainability.

7. Conclusions.

This study concludes that urbanization is largely driven by a combination of economic activities, rural push factors, and access to services, all of which play a significant role in shaping population movement toward urban areas. Economic activities, such as employment opportunities and business growth, remain the strongest attraction, as cities offer better income prospects and career development. At the same time, rural push factors—including limited agricultural productivity, poverty, and lack of basic infrastructure—continue to force people to leave rural areas in search of improved living conditions. Improved access to services such as education, healthcare, transportation, and utilities further reinforces this movement by making urban life more convenient and appealing.

However, while these causes contribute to economic growth and social development, the study also highlights notable environmental impacts as key consequences of urbanization. Rapid urban expansion has placed increasing pressure on natural resources, leading to air and water pollution, loss of green spaces, increased waste generation, and overall environmental degradation. These findings suggest that urbanization is a double-edged process, offering development opportunities while simultaneously creating environmental challenges. Therefore, sustainable urban planning,

balanced regional development, and environmentally responsible policies are essential to ensure that the benefits of urbanization are achieved without compromising environmental sustainability and quality of life for future generations.

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