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## A CHRONOLOGY OF LAND USE ACCRETION AND HOUSING POLICY IN NAIROBI

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### ABSTRACT

This paper is a brief introduction of the history of spatial accretion of Land Use in Nairobi; its accompanying housing policy, and the resulting housing forms. It indicates the effect of the Colonial Government's racial discrimination policy on land use allocation, housing policy and housing forms. Africans, as a racial group have been the least favoured by the Colonial land use and housing policies. While the current Republican Government is doing its best to correct this situation, land availability is seen as the chief developmental constraint against achieving any policy objective in this direction.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

In the early days of commercial penetration of East Africa by the Europeans the present route to Uganda originating from the Kenyan Coast town of Mombasa was rarely used because of the difficulties experienced in sustaining long caravans over the arid Nyika Region between the Coast and the Kenya Highlands, and the hostility of tribes inhabiting this area - especially the Masai. Colonial penetration of the present area known as Kenya began about 1850 and intensified after 1883 when Joseph Thomson managed to cross Masai Land; and after the 1885 Berlin Conference that designated Kenya as a British Sphere of Influence.

Colonial penetration from 1885 to 1894 was done by Sir William Mackinnon's Imperial British East African Company - which was chartered by the British Government to manage their newly acquired sphere of influence. Hostile tribes were easily subdued by use of advanced gun technology - the invention of a Maxim machine gun - and astute diplomacy of divide and rule as practiced by colonial administrators of this time. With one menace eliminated it was possible to manage caravans bearing water and other supplies to cross the Nyika. Once Nyika was crossed, food and water were available in great abundance at Ngongo Mbagas (present day Ngong) and the Kikuyu escarpment in the neighbourhood of the day city of Nairobi. (See Map No. 1)