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# EAST AFRICAN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

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## A TREAT TO RESILIENT URBAN FUTURE

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### 1. STATE OF RESEARCH

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Only about 20 percent of the East African people reside in urban areas and the rest living as agrarian or pastoral rural communities. The rate of urbanization, however, is more than 3.5 percent on average, which is very high. The core reasons for this fast urban population increase can be: rural-urban migration - looking for better lives, and natural growth. That means, urban areas of east Africa have to be able to “serve” the hugely flocking immigrants and the rapidly increasing total population. The service could be in terms of health, education, business, employment, accommodation, or in any other convenient way to make the residents happy. In principle, while East African cities struggle to serve their booming inhabitants, the environmental as well as socioeconomic problems should not be induced. In clearer words: settlement and housing should be in a planned manner, land and surface waters should not be contaminated, transport and mobility have to be safe, social security issues should not be compromised, and economic problems should not be exacerbated. But in practice, all the above principles seem to have been breached. In other words, the above issues have already become problems. So, it can be believed that East African cities look no more habitable.

The city of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, can be taken as a case point. In the first place, it is natural that everybody that migrates to Addis needs either house to rent or a place to build a house. For majority of immigrants to Addis, the first step is to stay at a relative's home temporarily and then to get own accommodation quickly, most probably a house to rent. Then after, having made some money, the migrant starts to think about having own house somewhere in Addis Ababa. Asking the municipality for a plot of land is not a good option because that will take years even tens of years (The government of Ethiopia has already stopped providing land plots for residence since 2008). So, the last two options for low and middle income people are: either living in confined slums or going to build an informal poor quality house at the outskirts of the city. That is where the problem emanates.

The core issue of this PhD thesis is to assess the **implication of informal settlements on resilience of metropolitan area area of Addis Ababa.**

If we look at the legal state of the already built parts of the city of Addis Ababa, literatures as well as the reality tell us that more than 60 percent of the residential houses are informal or squatter or illegal. This implies that more than 70 percent of the city's population lives either in squatted houses or in dilapidated slums.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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1. Are the current squatter settlements sources for future slums? This general question will be answered in terms of facts and figures from past history of city of Addis Ababa. The level of existing slum areas, the struggle of the government to revitalize them, and the scale of current squatter settlements will generally be assessed here.
2. How can we measure socioeconomic costs caused by squatter settlement of Addis? Issues like: distress, safety, and separation look quite difficult to measure. But some primary data will be collected to indirectly measure them regard to squatting. Additionally: time, infrastructure, service quality, business access etc... will also be tried to be taken into consideration.
3. How can we quantify environmental effects caused by squatter settlements in Addis? The level of land degradation/pollution, the surface water quality, the use of biomass, waste management aspects, and fire hazard can generally be tried to be quantified as a function of squatter settlements.
4. To what extent the resilience or sustainability of the regions is being affected by squatter settlements? The summation of the above two points (i.e. socioeconomic and environmental) costs will be summarized. If benchmarks can be found the results will be compared to them. And if no absolute standard exists then relativity will be taken into consideration. Finally, the question "is Addis Ababa a resilient region?" will be answered depending on the aggregate result.

## 3. HYPOTHESIS

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1. Squatter settlements can cause socioeconomic and environmental costs.
2. Squatter settlement can adversely affect the resilience of metropolitan areas.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

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Primary and secondary data collection will be held for the first and the second research questions. The history and development trend, the master planning attempts, the originations of slums, and the general trend of squatters in the city will be analyzed. Access to public transport, quality of roads, supply of potable water, supply of power, availability of schools, access to health facilities, fire fighting access etc... will also be evaluated objectively.

Simple and logical quantification systems can be used to numerate the environmental effects of the squatter settlements. Mainly the adverse effects on land will be evaluated with detailed data collection on share of green space, area of land used for solid waste dumping, area covered by unplanned development (landscape), and level of distortion in terms of vegetation cover or forest; will be assessed. Water quality will be measured depending on the available laboratory and other pollution measurement techniques as well. Various techniques with GIS software will be used for this purpose.

Finally, the results will be evaluated in terms of resilience of the whole metropolitan area to cross-check the hypothesis.

Regards

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