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Working papers on population and land  
use change in central Ethiopia, nr. 2

Acta Geographica-Trondheim

Serie A, Nr. 9  
Series A, No. 9

Avhandlinger og rapporter  
Theses and reports

Trondheim 2005

# City Expansion, Squatter Settlements and Policy Implications in Addis Ababa: The Case of Kolfe Keranio Sub-City<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

In physical terms, Addis Ababa is currently expanding at an increasingly rapid rate. Further, the city has been undergoing horizontal expansion as the major form of development throughout its history. The degree of the physical expansion of the built-up area of the city has outpaced the capacity of the city government's infrastructure and basic urban services. Responsibility for this physical expansion has been attributed to legal landowners, land developers, and squatter settlements. In Addis Ababa, squatter settlements are mainly located in the peripheral areas of the city.

This study focuses on squatter settlements that are found in Kolfe Keranio sub-city. The principal objective of the study is to assess the causes and consequences of squatter settlements in the light of unplanned expansion of the built-up area of the city. In order to achieve the study's objective, a questionnaire survey covering a total of 230 sample household heads was carried out in *kebele* 04 and *kebele* 05 of Kolfe Keranio.

Major findings of the study indicate that emergence of squatter settlements in the study area is a recent phenomenon that has occurred since 1994. High building standards of the legal houses, delayed responses and procedural problems of the legal land provision, and high housing rents in the city centre were identified by respondents as the causes of squatting in the study area. In addition, less government control of open spaces, the limited capacity of the code enforcement service to control illegal house construction, lack of a comprehensive legal response towards the problem of squatting, and the practice of land sale by land speculators as a means of making profit are other factors that have contributed to the emergence and proliferation of squatter settlements. Compared to the plot sizes of the legal land provision, the plot sizes of the squatter settlements in the study area are large and there are undeveloped vacant fenced plots between squatter housing units. Thus, land in the area is inefficiently exploited and the situation has greatly contributed to the unplanned and rapid horizontal expansion of the built-up area of the city.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Geography and Environmental Studies. The fieldwork was partially funded by a grant from NUFU Research Project in Addis Ababa. I would therefore like to express my sincere gratitude for this support. I would also like to thank the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Addis Ababa University, for facilitating the funding.

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## **1 Introduction**

It is widely and increasingly accepted that urbanization is an inevitable phenomenon. In the developed countries of Europe and North America, urbanization has been a consequence of industrialization and has been associated with economic development. By contrast, in the developing countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, urbanization has occurred as a result of high natural urban population increase and massive rural-to-urban migration (Brunn and Williams, 1983:4).

Urbanization is often associated with economies of agglomeration and cities are essential to development. They are centres of production, employment and innovation. In a number of countries, urban centres containing only one-third of the total population generate up to 60% of the national output. In developing countries, cities contribute significantly to economic growth. The economic importance of cities is rapidly increasing and the future economic growth will become dependent upon the ability of urban centres to perform crucial service and production functions (Cheema, 1993:3).

Despite the economic benefits, the rapid rates of urbanization and unplanned expansion of cities have resulted in several negative consequences, particularly in developing countries. Most cities in developing countries are expanding horizontally and the population is moving to unplanned settlements on the peripheries at the expense of agricultural lands and areas of natural beauty (Lowton, 1997:5). Unplanned and uncontrolled expansion of cities' built-up areas usually lead to problems of soil erosion, segregation of low-income groups in ecologically sensitive areas, and increased costs in terms of infrastructure provision. In most cities in developing countries the problems relating to rapid physical expansion are not due to land shortage but to lack of appropriate policies and strategies to guide new development, since overcrowding occurs in particular areas and yet at the same time large amounts of land are left vacant or only partially developed in other areas (Hardoy *et al.*, 2001:175).

As one of the cities in the developing countries, Addis Ababa has experienced a rapid rate of physical expansion. This trend is largely influenced by spontaneous growth, which has resulted in the emergence and development of squatter settlements. As new houses are being built in the existing squatter settlements, the number and size of squatter settlements in Addis

Ababa has been increasing over time. This situation has aggravated the unplanned and rapid horizontal expansion of the built-up area of the city, which in turn has led to increasing costs in terms of infrastructure and basic urban services provision. Thus, the purpose of this study is to assess the trends in squatter settlements, the causes for the emergence of squatter settlements and their consequences in the light of unplanned city expansion, and to overview the legal position of governments with regards to squatter settlements.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Ethiopia is one of the least urbanized countries in the world. Even by African standards, the level of urbanization is low. According to the Population Reference Bureau's *World Population Data Sheet* (2002), while the average level of urbanization for Africa in general was 33% in 2002, Ethiopia had only 15% of its population living in urban areas. Despite the low level of urbanization and the fact that the country is predominantly rural, there is rapid rate of urban growth, which is currently estimated at 5.1% per year. The urban population of Ethiopia is concentrated in few urban centres and the urban system of the country is dominated by Addis Ababa, which has status as a primate city, i.e. ranking as the first urban centre, with 28.4% of the total population of the country (CSA, 1998:14).

Addis Ababa was founded by Emperor Menelik and his wife Empress Taitu in 1886, and since 1889 it has functioned as the seat of the government and capital of Ethiopia. The city has experienced a highly accelerated population growth, from 443,728 in 1961 to 1,423,111 in 1984, and 2,112,737 in 1994. Currently, the total population of the city is estimated to be 2,805,000 (CSA, 1999:265).

Addis Ababa has also experienced rapid physical expansion, though this has not been properly controlled by appropriate planning intervention. Almost none of the plans prepared at different times by different planners have been effective, nor have they been ever been fully implemented. (ORAAMP, 1999:51). This unsuccessful planning history of the city is reflected in its development, which has largely been characterized by spontaneous growth.

As a result of rapid horizontal expansion and the spontaneous growth, Addis Ababa is now confronted with different types of problems, one of which is the emergence and development

of squatter settlements. In this study, ‘squatter settlements’ refers to those residential housing units built on publicly-owned land without the legal claims, authorization, or permission from the relevant authorities. According to the study conducted by the Urban Development and Works Bureau (UDWB 2002), in the year 2000 the total area covered by squatter settlements in Addis Ababa was circa 2000 hectares and about 300,000 people were living in 60,000 squatter housing units (UDWB, 2002:2). Major squatter settlements are found in the peripheral areas of the city, where they are characterized by their irregular shape and large plot sizes. As a result, they have significantly contributed to the unplanned and rapid horizontal expansion of the built-up area. This study focuses on the squatter settlements in the Kolfe Keranio sub-city area.

### **1.3 Study Objectives**

The general objective of the study is to assess the causes and consequences of squatter settlements and the policy implications in the light of unplanned expansion of the city. The specific objectives are to:

1. establish the extent of the expansion of the city
2. describe the emergence and development of squatter settlements and causes of squatting in the study area
3. examine the nature of the land-acquisition process in the study area
4. investigate the demographic characteristics and the economic status of the squatters and their housing conditions
5. outline the government policies regarding squatter settlements in the city in general and the local government’s action in the study area in particular
6. make some recommendations to help to alleviate the problem of squatting and its negative consequences.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

On the basis of the stated specific objectives, the following research questions are raised to be assessed in the study:

1. What is the extent and expansion trend of the city?

2. What is the magnitude of squatter settlements, what are the factors contributing to the emergence and development of squatter settlements in the study area, and who are the actors?
3. By what process do the squatters acquire land and what is the pattern of squatting in the study area?
4. What are the relationships between the housing conditions and the economic status of the squatters?
5. What is the legal position of the city government and the actions taken towards squatter settlements in the study area?
6. What are the possible solutions to minimize the problem of squatter settlements and their negative consequences in the study area?

### **1.5 Research Methodology**

In Addis Ababa, squatter settlements are mainly located in the peripheral areas in the southern, eastern, and western parts of the city. First, Kolfe Keranio<sup>3</sup> sub-city was selected for this study because it is one of the major expansion areas of the city and where the problem of development of squatter settlements is more prevalent. Secondly, from the total of 16 *kebeles*<sup>4</sup> in Kolfe Keranio, *kebele 04* and *kebele 05* were selected on the basis of the magnitude of the squatting problem and its contribution to unplanned city expansion. Thirdly, according to data obtained from the offices of these two *kebeles*, there was a combined total of 2300 squatter housing units there. Out of this total, a 10% sample was selected using a systematic random sampling technique, and 230 household heads of the squatter housing units were selected for interview. Thus, during the field survey, household heads at every tenth unit were approached.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, both primary and secondary data were collected and used. The primary data were collected from the sampled household heads through structured interviews and secondary data were collected from a review of the literature, including books, legal documents, published reports, and unpublished sources.

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<sup>3</sup> Kolfe Keranio is one of the ten sub-cities of Addis Ababa found in the western part of the city.

<sup>4</sup> A *kebele* is the lowest administrative unit in Addis Ababa.

After the collection of the necessary information, data processing was performed with SPSS and the data were analyzed using different statistical methods and techniques. The unplanned expansion of the built-up area of the city as a result of squatter settlements in the study area was analyzed using GIS (Geographical Information System) techniques on the basis of aerial photos of the study area taken in 1994 and 2002.<sup>5</sup>

## **2 City Expansion and Development of Squatter Settlements**

### **2.1 City Expansion: Conceptual Framework**

Historically, cities have developed as centres of trade. They are also centres of culture and education, and the birthplaces of most artistic and technological innovations. In addition, they are characterized by agglomeration and scale economies. In general, cities are stimulators of development (Devas and Rakodi, 1993:25). In developing countries, they are making vital contributions to economic growth through crucial service and production functions. In many countries, cities account for about two-thirds of the national output (Cheema, 1993:3). Thus, the overwhelming problem in developing countries is not urban growth in itself but the rapid rate of growth and unplanned expansion of cities, which outstrips the financial capacity of the municipal governments to provide infrastructure and basic urban services (Hall and Pfeiffer 2000:14).

There are two major arguments regarding the way that cities should be developed in the future and the impact that the shape and size of cities can have on resource depletion, the economic cost of growth, and environmental degradation. At one extreme, there are those who believe that compact cities are important components of sustainable urban development. Hillman (1996), for instance, stated that compacting the city by encouraging higher density development, infill and redevelopment is one way of reducing the demand for more space, and power and transport costs, and it also makes the most effective use of urban land, thus reducing pressure on the countryside (Hillman, 1996:37). At the other extreme, there are those who believe that compact cities may result in overcrowding and a consequent loss of urban quality, with less open space, more congestion and pollution, and incurring greater costs. According to Stretton (1996), any substantial increase in density will require some demolition

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<sup>5</sup> Aerial photographs obtained from the Ethiopian Mapping Authority

and replacement, which costs more than suburban expansion; further, transportation systems can be improved by increasing taxation rather than restructuring cities compactly.

## **2.2 City Expansion and Its Challenges: Overview of Developing Countries**

Currently, the rapid rate of urban growth in developing countries does not correspond to economic development, social change, and technical advancement. Further, the unplanned and uncontrolled physical expansion of cities greatly exceeds the resources available and has posed economic, social, and environmental challenges to the governments of the respective countries (Hardoy *et al.*, 2001:175). Most municipal governments of developing countries lack financial and administrative resources to provide newly expanded areas with infrastructure and basic urban services. As a result, there is inadequate provision and the existing services are not sufficiently maintained (Cheema, 1993:5).

Many cities in developing countries have expanded into highly fertile areas. Thus, loss of agricultural land and forest land with valuable ecological function is another negative consequence of uncontrolled city expansion. The problem of city expansion towards agricultural land is generally not one of lack of vacant land but rather lack of appropriate government policy and strategy to guide new developments on land other than the best farm land and to ensure that vacant and urbanized land are fully used. In Egypt, more than 10% of the nation's most productive land has been lost to city expansion, much of it through squatter settlements, yet at the same time prime sites within cities remain undeveloped (Hardoy *et al.*, 2001:176).

## **2.3 Policies to Contain Rapid Urban Growth and Horizontal Expansion of Cities**

Many governments of developing countries have adopted specific policies and strategies to control further expansion of their large cities. Some countries have attempted administrative decentralization in order to reduce population pressure. Establishment of green belts around major urban areas has been also used to restrict city expansion and to preserve open land for agriculture and recreational use. In the Republic of Korea, a green belt of 166.8 square kilometres was established around Seoul in 1971 to restrict further expansion of the city. In Egypt, a law has been enacted to prohibit construction on agricultural land (Oberai, 1993:45).

Capital city relocation to relieve the pressures of growth in a primate city is another strategy followed by some countries. However, due to lack of resources and inability to control land uses, metropolitan policy makers in most developing countries have not performed this important task very well (Richardson, 1993:63).

#### **2.4 Emergences and Development of Squatter Settlements in Developing Countries**

In developing countries, the emergence of squatter settlements dates back to the 1940s. For instance, squatter settlements first appeared in Istanbul in the late 1940s. The term *Gecerkodus* (landed by night) is the name for squatter settlements in Turkey, referring to the fact that housing units with roofs had to be completed overnight and inhabited before government forces arrived in order to prevent demolition (Yonder, 1998:61).

Government investments and formal housing construction largely serve the middle- and high-income groups, leaving lower-income populations to address their housing needs through informal means. As a result, the urban poor in most cities of developing countries have occupied land illegally and have built their houses with their own resources, without following the building codes and other governmental regulations. This has led to the proliferation of squatter settlements (Cheema, 1993:5). However, Fernandes and Varley (1998:15) have stated that urban researchers should not forget that the phenomenon of illegality is not restricted to the urban poor. Many more privileged groups of the society are also observed in squatter settlements.

Squatter settlements are mostly concentrated in the peripheral areas of large cities, on steep hillsides, river gorges, and flood plains. The main reason for the expansion of squatter settlements on these fragile slopes and hazardous areas is that land there is very cheap or can be occupied without payment, and also there is less possibility of eviction from such sites (Hardoy *et al.*, 2001:74).

#### **2.5 Policy Responses to Squatter Settlements in Developing Countries**

Until the 1970s, the usual policy of the authorities towards squatter settlements in developing countries was to clear the land by demolishing the structures and resettling the residents in low-cost housing schemes or in rural areas (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1993:119). The effect

of such demolition and resettlement policies was negative because the families that were resettled under these schemes could not afford the cost of the houses and subsequently abandoned their dwellings. In addition, those families that were resettled in the rural areas returned to the cities where they could make a living (UNCHS, 1985).

In the early 1970s, governments of developing countries and international development agencies, such as the World Bank, became increasingly aware that squatter settlements should not be regarded as a mere symptom of the housing problem of the urban poor but rather as a contribution to its solution (Yonder, 1998:59). Thus, from the 1970s onwards, many governments adopted major policy options of squatter-settlement upgrading and site-and-service schemes. However, such policies have had limited success because, as indicated by Oberai (1993), in the case of squatter settlements' upgrading, the financial capacity of governments has been limited and inadequate to provide infrastructure and basic urban services for squatter settlements, and to improve their living conditions. The site-and-services schemes have also suffered from inappropriate location and high costs. The locations preferred by the poor are generally in the vicinity of the city centre, close to employment opportunities. However, either vacant land is simply not available in these areas, or if it is available, it is not in large enough plots to make site-and-services projects feasible (Oberai, 1993:122).

### **3 Emergence and Development of Squatter Settlements in Addis Ababa and their Contribution to the Unplanned Expansion of the City.**

#### **3.1 Historical Origin of Addis Ababa**

Following the founding of Addis Ababa in 1886 as capital of Shewa Province, widespread building programs were undertaken from March 1887. After the coronation of Emperor Menelik II as King of Kings in Ethiopia in 1889, Addis Ababa became the political, administrative, and religious hub of the country (Garretson, 2000:11). Currently, the city is also the diplomatic capital of Africa, housing numerous embassies and international organizations, including the United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) and the African Union (AU).

### 3.2 Population Growth in Addis Ababa

The urban population of Ethiopia is concentrated in few urban centres, predominantly in Addis Ababa. As shown in Table 1, Addis Ababa has experienced highly accelerated population growth. The rapid population increase of the city has been mainly attributable to natural urban population increase and internal migration. According to the country's 1994 population and housing census, out of the total population of the city, 46.7% were migrants from rural and other urban areas in Ethiopia (CSA, 1999:161).

Table 1. Size and Average Annual Population Growth Rate of Addis Ababa (1961–2004).

Year	Population size	Average annual growth rate (%)
1961	443,328	-
1967	683,530	7.6
1978	1,167,301	4.9
1984	1,423,111	3.5
1994	2,112,737	4.0
2000	2,495,000	2.9
2004	2,805,000	3.0

Source: CSA (1999).

### 3.3 Physical Expansion Trend in Addis Ababa

The rapid growth of population of the city has put great pressure on the demand for urban spaces. In response to this demand, efforts are being made by the city government to incorporate the peripheral areas of the city, which is resulting in hastening the sprawl of the built-up area of the city. Accordingly, Addis Ababa has experienced rapid physical expansion (Table 2).

Table 2. Physical Growth of Addis Ababa City Built-Up Area (1886–2000).

Period	Area covered (hectares)	Total built-up area (hectares)	Annual growth rate (%)
1886–1936	1863.13	1863.13	-
1937–1975	4186.87	6050.0	3.1
1976–1985	4788.0	10,838.0	6.0
1986–1995	2925.3	13,763.3	2.4
1996–2000	909.4	14,672.7	1.6

Source: Based on data obtained from ORAAMP (2001:17–18).

The early development of the city from 1886 to 1936 was characterized by fragmented settlements. Following Italian occupation in 1937, the process of physical development of Addis Ababa was characterized by infill development and consolidation of the former fragmented settlements (ORAAMP, 1999:6). The physical expansion of the built-up area of the city during the period 1937 to 1975 was characterized by a compact type of development. From 1976 to 1985, the built-up area increased by 4788 hectares, thus increasing the cumulative total to 10,838 hectares.

The next period of physical expansion of the city was between 1986 and 1995, when the built-up area expanded by 2925.3 hectares, increasing the cumulative total to 13,763.3 hectares. Simultaneously, horizontal expansion took place in all peripheral areas of the city, where both legal and squatter settlements were established. Out of the total 94,135 housing units built in the city between 1984 and 1994, 15.7% (14,794 housing units) were built by squatters (ORAAMP, 2001:6).

During the most recent period of physical expansion, between 1996 and 2000, the physical built-up area of Addis Ababa increased by 909.4 hectares, reaching a cumulative total of 14,672.7 hectares. Expansion of the city was characterized by the development of scattered and fragmented settlements in the peripheral areas of the city, with both legal residents and squatters. In 2000, Addis Ababa had an estimated total of 60,000 housing units with squatter settlements. This figure accounted for 20% of the total housing stock of the city and the total area occupied by squatter settlements was estimated at 13.6% of the total built-up area.

### **3.4 Emergence and Development of Squatter Settlements in Addis Ababa**

As in other cities in developing countries, the development of squatter settlements in Addis Ababa has become one of the major urban planning and management problems today. There is inner-city decay and there is simultaneous rapid expansion of the built-up area through legal landowners, land developers, and squatter settlements. This study focuses on the latter, commonly known in Amharic as *Yechereca Beto*,<sup>6</sup> and their contribution to the unplanned and rapid expansion of the built-up area of the city.

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<sup>6</sup> *Yechereca Beto* (moonlight houses) is a local name for squatter housing units constructed overnight.

It is stated by some writers that squatting in Addis Ababa began after the nationalization of urban land and houses in July 1975. For instance, Solomon (1985:41) has stated that prior to 1975 the private landholding system was strong enough to control illegal land occupation and squatting was almost impossible.

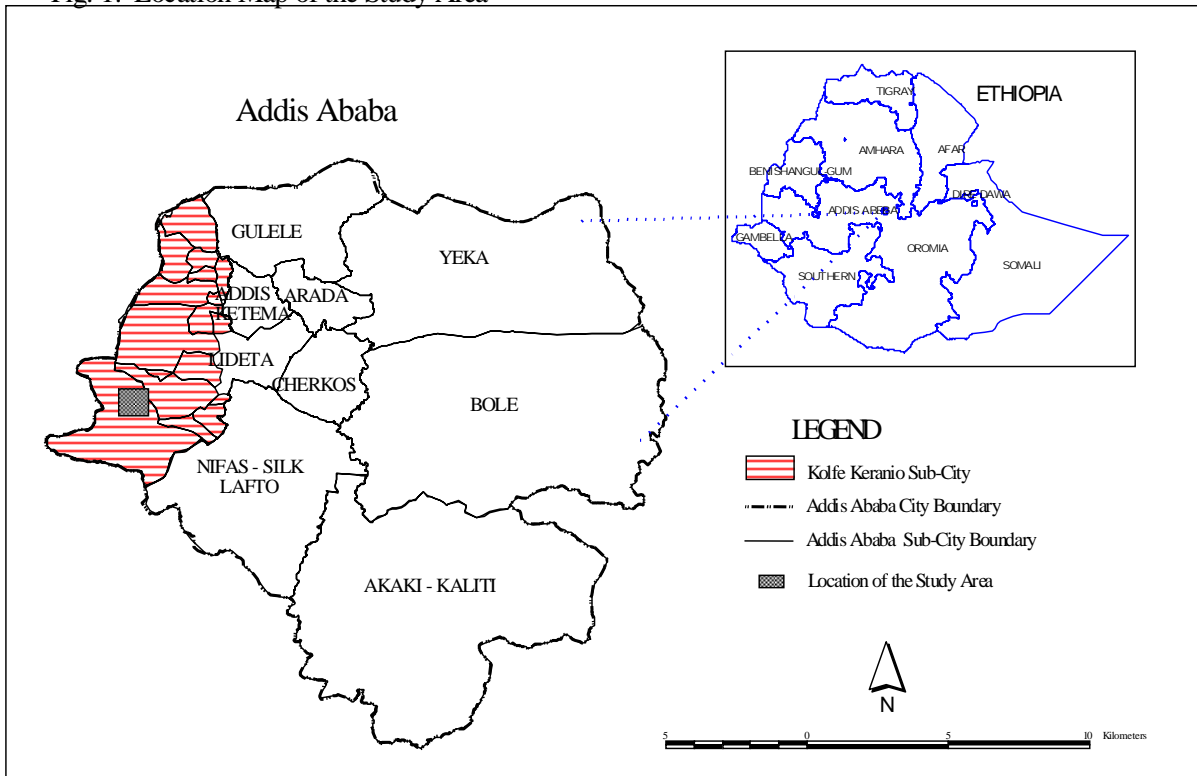
Today, squatter settlements are located in both the city centre and the peripheral areas. In this study, however, the focus is only on those in the peripheral areas of the city, where they are numerous, irregular in shape and with large plot sizes, and hence their impact on planned development as well as their contribution to unplanned and rapid horizontal expansion of the built-up areas is enormous.

#### **4 Development of Squatter Settlements in Kolfe Keranio Sub-City and Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Squatters**

##### **4.1 Description of the Study Area**

Kolfe Keranio sub-city is one of the newly established ten sub-cities of Addis Ababa. It is located in the western part of the city, between 8°57'00"N and 9°05'24"N and between 38°39'36"E and 38°43'12"E. It is 9.6 km from the centre of the city and has an estimated total area of *c.* 6400 hectares.

Fig. 1. Location Map of the Study Area



Source: Office for the Revision of the Addis Ababa Master Plan (ORAAMP),2002

## 4.2 Emergence and Development of Squatter Settlements in Kolfe Keranio Sub-City Area

In Kolfe Keranio, the emergence of squatter settlements is a recent phenomenon. As can be seen in Fig. 2, in 1994 the area was predominantly agricultural land and some areas close to the river gorges were covered with natural vegetation. After 1994 squatters began to settle in the area, converting agricultural lands and areas formerly covered with natural vegetation to urban use.

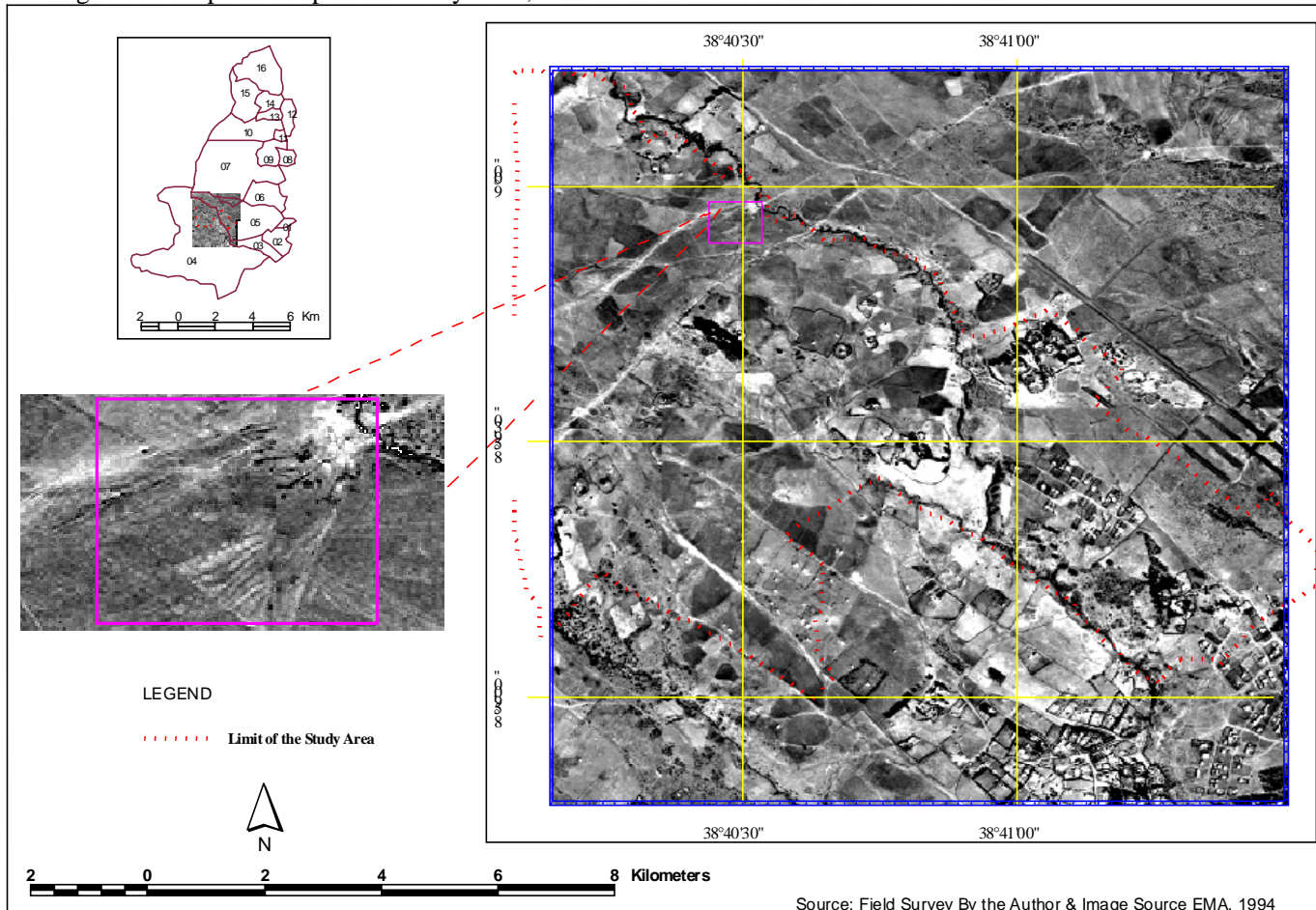
Table 3. Distribution of Household Heads at the Time of Construction of their Houses.

Time of Construction	Sample household heads by <i>kebele</i>				Total	
	04		05			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Pre-1991	7	4.7	-	-	7	3.1
1991–1994	8	5.3	2	2.5	10	4.3
1995–1998	55	36.7	22	27.5	77	33.5
1999–2002	72	48.0	46	57.5	118	51.3
2003	8	5.3	10	12.5	18	7.8
Total	150	100.0	80	100.0	230	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2004.

Table 3 shows that the majority of the housing units (92.6%) were built after 1994. Comparison of the two *kebeles* in the study area shows that squatter settlements in *kebele* 05 emerged more recently than squatter settlements in *kebele* 04. The growth of squatter settlements increased until 1998, and the highest growth rate occurred during the period between 1995 and 1998.

Fig. 2 . Orthophoto Map of the Study Area, 1994



### 4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Squatters

The majority (82.3%) of the household heads are male; 88.8% are between 20 to 40 years of age, and 83.6% are married. Only about 7.8% of the household heads are illiterate. Almost half (49.6%) of the squatter household heads are Muslims, c.43% are Orthodox Christians, and Protestants and Catholics constitute 4.8% and 2.6% respectively.

### 4.4 Origin of the Household Heads

Table 4. Distribution of Household Heads by Place of Birth (%)

Place of Birth	<i>kebele</i>				Total	
	04		05		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
Addis Ababa	26	17.3	16	20.0	42	18.3
Outside Addis Ababa	124	82.7	64	80.0	188	81.7
Total	150	100	80	100	230	100

Source: Own survey, 2004.

The majority (81.7%) of the squatter household heads in the sample originated from outside Addis Ababa, while those household heads who were born in Addis Ababa accounted for only 18.3% (Table 4). Thus, it is evident that the squatter settlements in the study area are focal points for migrants.

Table 5. Distribution of Sample Household Heads by Place of Birth outside Addis Ababa.

Place of Birth	Frequency	(%)
Amhara	52	27.6
Tigray	3	1.6
SNNP	100	53.2
Oromiya	33	17.6
Total	188	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2004.

Table 5 shows that in 2004 more than half (53.2%) of the squatter household heads in the study area were born in the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) region, 27.6% came from Amhara region, while those migrants from Oromiya and Tigray regions constituted 17.6% and 1.6% respectively. During the field survey, sample squatter household heads were asked about the reasons why they had left their place of origin. The majority (68.1%) replied that they came to Addis Ababa to look for employment, 18% replied that they

came to the city for better education, while other reasons such as job transfer, marriage, and displacement together constituted 13.9%. Thus, looking for work is the major reason why squatters in the study area leave their place of origin and migrate to Addis Ababa.

#### 4.5 Economic Status of the Household Heads

Table 6. Distribution of Household Heads by Occupation Type (%).

Occupation type	<i>kebele</i>				Total	
	04		05		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
Self-employed	116	77.3	44	55.0	160	69.6
Government employees	10	6.7	16	20.0	26	11.3
Private institution employees	10	6.7	9	11.2	19	8.3
Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) employees	-	-	3	3.8	3	1.3
Unemployed	14	9.3	8	10.0	22	9.6
Total	150	100	80	100	230	100

Source: Own survey, 2004.

As shown in Table 6, self-employed household heads engaged in commerce and daily activities are major actors (69.6%) of squatting in the study area, followed by government employees (11.3%), private institution employees (8.3%), and Non-Governmental Organization employees (1.3), and the unemployed sample squatter household heads constituted 9.6%.

While 17.4% of the household heads earn monthly incomes of less than birr 200<sup>7</sup>, the majority (58.7%) of the household heads earn monthly incomes of birr 200–500, and 16.3% earn birr 501–900 per month. Those household heads with monthly incomes of birr 901 or more constitute 7.4%. A comparison of the two *kebeles* reveals that household heads in *kebele* 05 (recently emerged squatter settlements) have better monthly incomes than those household heads in *kebele* 04 (relatively old squatter settlements of the area).

When the monthly incomes of squatter household heads in the study area are compared to those of the residents of the city as a whole, it is evident that squatter settlements in the study area are not inhabited only by the low-income groups or the urban poor. Economically strong or higher income earning household heads are also found in the squatter settlements of the

<sup>7</sup> 1US\$ = between 9 and 10 Ethiopian Birrs

study area. Hence, squatting in the study area, especially in the recently emerged squatter settlements, is not poverty driven.

#### 4 Causes of Squatting, Methods of Land Acquisition and Housing Conditions

##### 5.1 Causes of Squatting

High building standards of the legal houses, delayed responses and procedural problems of the legal land provision, and high housing rents in the city were identified by respondents as major reasons for squatting. The low-income groups in Addis Ababa have been marginalized by the legal provision of housing. As shown in Table 7 below, more than half (59.1%) of the sample household heads in the study area were forced to squat because of the unaffordable legal houses, which are built to a high standard. Further, 29.1% of the squatter household heads responded that another reason why they resorted to illegal practices was the city government's delayed responses concerning applications for housing plots for legal construction, i.e. the bureaucratic red tape was discouraging. The proportion of sample squatter household heads stating this factor as a cause of squatting is high (62.5%) in *kebele* 05 (recently emerged squatter settlements).

In addition, less government control of open spaces, limited capacity of the code enforcement service to control illegal construction of houses, lack of comprehensive and clearly defined legal response to control emergence and development of squatter settlements, and the practice of land sale by land speculators as a means of making profit were also found to be causes for the emergence and proliferation of squatter settlements.

Table 7. Distribution of Household Heads by Reasons for Squatting.

Reason for Squatting	<i>kebele</i>				Total	
	04		05		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
High building standard of legally-built houses	113	75.3	23	28.8	136	59.1
Delayed response and procedural problems of legally-built houses	17	11.3	50	62.5	67	29.1
High rent of houses in the city	20	13.4	7	8.7	27	11.8
Total	150	100.0	80	100.0	230	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2004.

## 5.2 Methods of Land Acquisition

The sites occupied by squatter settlements in the study area vary from deep river gorges reserved for vegetation on the city's master plan to plane areas reserved for legal residential use. In these squatter settlements, the major ways by which squatters acquired land for housing included buying from neighbouring peasants (60.4%), buying from land speculators (33%), and acquiring land through relatives (5.7%). Thus, illegal land purchase from the neighbouring peasants has been the major way of acquiring land for housing.

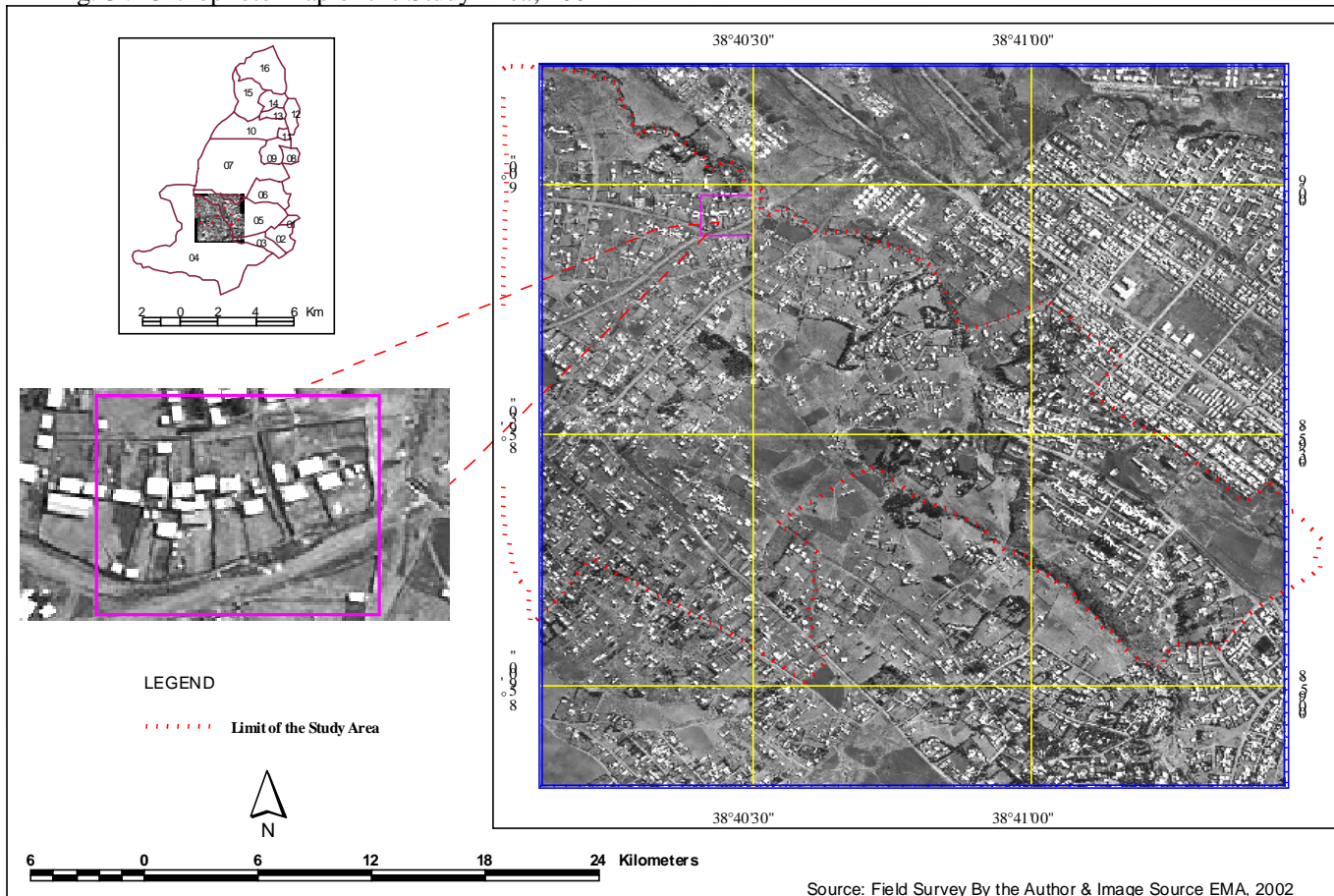
Table 8. Distributions of Household Heads by Method of Land Acquisition.

Method of land acquisition	<i>kebele</i>				Total	
	04		05			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Bought from neighbouring peasants	127	84.7	12	15.0	139	60.4
Bought from land speculators	16	10.7	60	75.0	76	33.0
Acquired from relative	7	4.6	6	7.5	13	5.7
Other	-	-	2	2.5	2	0.9
Total	150	100.0	80	100.0	230	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2004.

As a result of the illegal land market, agricultural land in the area has already been taken by squatters and converted to urban use, and peasants in the area have resorted to moving into the hilly and mountainous areas. This has resulted in loss of agricultural lands and deforestation, and consequently flooding has become a problem in the squatter settlements in the area, especially in *kebele* 04.

Fig. 3 . Orthophoto Map of the Study Area, 2002



### 5.3 Landholdings of the Squatters in the Study Area

Table 9 shows that 61.3% of the household heads have plot sizes of 176 square metres or more. Observations during the field survey also revealed that there are also underdeveloped vacant fenced plots between housing units in squatter settlements. Thus, as compared to the legal land subdivision and plot provision, land in the study area has been inefficiently utilized and the problem has significantly contributed to the unplanned and rapid horizontal expansion of the built-up area of the city.

Table 9. Distribution of Household Heads by Total Area of Holding.

Total area of the compound (m <sup>2</sup> )	Number of household heads by <i>kebele</i>				Total	
	04		05			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Less than 176	36	24.0	53	66.3	89	38.7
176–200	37	24.7	9	11.2	46	20.1
201–300	50	33.3	6	7.5	56	24.3
301–400	12	8.0	11	13.8	23	10.0
401–500	14	9.3	1	1.2	15	6.5
501 and above	1	0.7	-	-	1	0.4
Total	150	100.0	80	100.0	230	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2004.

### 5.4 Housing Conditions and Amenities in the Squatter Settlements

Housing conditions in the squatter settlements seem generally poor, as the majority (84.8%) of the housing units have walls made of wood and mud (i.e. temporary materials). However, in the recently emerged squatter settlements more than one-third of the housing units are made of block walls (i.e. durable materials).

Table 10. Distribution of Housing Units by Wall Construction Material.

Construction material of wall	<i>kebele</i>				Total	
	04		05			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Wood and mud	146	97.4	49	61.3	195	84.8
Hollow blocks	2	1.3	29	36.3	31	13.5
Stone and cement	2	1.3	1	1.2	3	1.3
Stone and mud	-	-	1	1.2	1	0.4
Total	150	100	80	100	230	100

Source: Own survey, 2004.

The majority (82.2%) of the household heads reported using electricity for lighting, while 17.8% used lanterns as the source of lighting for their housing units. Private traditional kitchens existed in 48.3% of the housing units had, 0.4% of the units had shared kitchens, while more than half (51.3%) of the units had no kitchen facilities at all. With regard to sanitary conditions, 36.5% of the housing units had private toilets, 1.3% of the housing units had shared toilets, and the majority (63.2%) did not have any toilets at all. The majority (64.8%) of the household heads said they obtained water supplied by water vendors, while 33% of the household heads obtained water from both water vendors and from unprotected rivers. Only 2.2% of the household heads reported that they had access to piped water supplies. Thus, in comparison to the city as a whole, the housing amenities in the study area are poor.

## **6...Legal Response of the City Government towards the Problem of Development of Squatter Settlements in Addis Ababa**

The legal responses of the city government towards the problem of emergence and development of squatter settlements in Addis Ababa can be described from two standpoints, as indicated below.

### **6.1 Demolishing Approach**

In Addis Ababa, the city government has responded to the problem of emergence and development of squatter settlements by resorting to demolition. Though compiled and well-organized data about the total number of demolished squatter housing units are lacking, periodic demolition of squatter housing units without legal provision of land for housing has been common practice in response to the problem of squatter settlement development. Recent information obtained from *Addisadmas News Letter* indicates that about 1000 squatter housing units in Nefas Silk Lafto sub-city, particularly in the area known as Furi, were demolished by the order of the sub-city administration. Due to this demolition, squatter household heads have been deprived of shelters and have complained about the absence of compensation for their demolished dwellings (*Addisadmas*, 2004:1). Similarly, in Kolfe Keranio the administration demolished 58 squatter housing units in *kebele* 05 in 2003.

Despite all previous and recent demolition of squatter settlements carried out by the city government, the number and size of squatter settlements in Addis Ababa have been gradually increasing and hence demolition as a means of curtailing squatter settlements has not been effective.

## **6.2 Application of Regulation Number 1**

The other response of the city government to solve the problem of the development of squatter settlements in Addis Ababa was the introduction of *Regulation Number 1*, which was issued by the city government in December 1998. Under this regulation, a housing plot that has been illegally occupied since the issuance of Proclamation No. 47/1975 up to May 1996, will obtain legal status if it is within the master plan and not exceeding an area of 175 square metres (Regulation Number 1, 1998:15). According to the same regulation, housing unit constructions that have not complied with the master plan and those constructed after May 1996 will not be granted legal status.

According to different documents and as also mentioned by government officials, the intention of Regulation Number 1 was misunderstood and misinterpreted by the public to mean only that all squatter housing units are to be given legal status and recognition by the city government. Thus, the issuance of the regulation has contributed to the emergence of new squatter housing units and proliferation of squatter settlements. For instance, c.400 squatter housing units were constructed around Bole Secondary High School in a very short period of time following the issuance of Regulation Number 1 (ORAAMP, 2001:48).

In the study area, more than half (59.1%) of the sample household heads had built their houses after the issuance of Regulation Number 1. Owing to the city government's attempts at regulation in 1998, squatters were encouraged to construct their houses illegally in the hope that the same measure would be reintroduced in the future.

Government officials working at sub-city and *kebele* levels in the study area informed that in January 2003 the city government held a meeting with the public and agreed not to demolish squatter housing units which had been built before the meeting. This situation encouraged squatters to continue to construct their houses, even using durable materials; 36% of the

squatter household heads in the study area had built their houses using durable materials or block walls. Thus, in addition to demand pressure and supply constraints, lack of comprehensive and clearly defined legal response towards the problem of squatting has also contributed to the emergence and further development of squatter settlements in the city in general and in the study area in particular. Consequently, the problem has contributed to the unplanned and rapid horizontal expansion of the built-up area of Addis Ababa, resulting in increased costs in terms of infrastructure and basic urban services provision.

## **7 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **7.1 Conclusions**

In Addis Ababa the degree of physical expansion of the built-up area of the city has outpaced the infrastructure and basic urban services provision capacity of the city government, which as a result, are inadequately provided. Legal landowners, land developers, and squatter settlements have been jointly responsible for this rapid expansion. Squatter settlements are mainly located in the peripheral areas of the city, where they are numerous, and irregular in shape. In most cases they are characterized by large plot sizes and have greatly contributed to the unplanned and rapid horizontal expansion of the built-up area of the city.

In the study area, the emergence of squatter settlement is a recent phenomenon that has occurred since 1994. The high building standards of the legal houses, delayed response and procedural problems of the legal land provision system, and high housing rents in the city centre are the major factors identified by respondents as reasons given for squatting. In addition, less government control over open spaces, limited capacity of the code enforcement service to control illegal house construction, lack of comprehensive and consistent legal response towards the problem of squatting, and land speculators' practice of selling land for profit are other factors that have contributed to the emergence and proliferation of squatter settlements.

The city government has responded to the emergence and development of squatter settlements mainly through periodic demolition and partial regulation. However, such attempts have so far aggravated the problem rather than alleviating it. Thus, in addition to the demand pressure and supply constraints, lack of comprehensive legal response towards the problem of

squatting has also contributed to the emergence and development of squatter settlements in the city in general and in the study area in particular. Combined, these problems have all contributed to the unplanned and rapid horizontal expansion of the built-up area of Addis Ababa.

## **7.2 Recommendations**

In view of the negative consequences of squatter settlements, the following recommendations are made:

1. The city government should formulate a comprehensive and consistent legal basis to prevent the emergence of new squatter settlements. The government should take preventive measures rather than demolishing the structures or regulating of squatter housing units.
2. Squatter settlements are the foci of migrants and the majority of the migrants have come to the city to look for job opportunities. Thus, in order to minimize cityward migration and pressure on the primate city, strengthening of the regional capitals and other small urban centres should be enhanced.
3. Land is a basic resource which has reached a stage of scarcity in certain areas today as a result of rapid urbanization. In the study area, however, squatters and land speculators have been inefficiently exploiting the land for their own speculative gain. Thus, in order to control the problem, the city government should enact proper policy regarding conversion of agricultural lands to urban use.
4. The majority of the household heads in the study area are in low-income groups and they have been forced to squat mainly due to the high building standards of the legal houses, i.e. which makes them unaffordable. The preconditions for legal house building, such as depositing part of the construction costs in closed accounts and building a block-walled house, are beyond the reaches of the urban poor. Hence, policies that encourage low-cost housing should be in place.
5. The city government should strengthen the local government's ability to control the emergence of new squatter settlements.
6. Generally, detailed studies concerning the root causes of squatting, the extent of the problem of squatting, and the possible solutions should be provided by the concerned

bodies. Such studies should focus on policy directives that can prevent the emergence of new squatter settlements and can properly deal with the existing problems.

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ISSN 1502-2390  
<http://www.svt.ntnu.no>

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