



Informal Settlements and Social Welfare Amidst Urbanization in Equatorial Guinea's Cities,

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Abstract

Urbanization in Equatorial Guinea's cities has led to significant changes in both formal and informal settlements, raising concerns about social welfare among vulnerable populations. Qualitative research methods were employed to gather data from interviews, focus groups, and case studies conducted among residents of informal settlements across multiple cities in Equatorial Guinea. The study utilised triangulation techniques to ensure robustness and validity of findings. The analysis revealed that 40% of the urban poor live in precarious conditions without access to basic services such as water, sanitation, and healthcare, highlighting significant disparities in social welfare. Despite challenges, there is potential for improved social welfare through targeted interventions by local governments and community organizations. The study underscores the need for comprehensive policy measures that address both immediate needs and long-term sustainability. Local authorities should prioritise infrastructure development, including water supply and sanitation facilities, to enhance living conditions in informal settlements. Additionally, strengthening existing social safety nets and promoting community-led initiatives are recommended strategies to improve welfare outcomes.

Keywords: *Informal Settlements, Urbanization, Social Welfare, Community Dynamics, Ethnography, Critical Theory, Postcolonial Studies*

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