



Urbanization, Informal Settlements, and Social Welfare in Burundi: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Urbanization in Burundi has accelerated rapidly over recent decades, leading to significant challenges such as informal settlements and inadequate social welfare services. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions among residents, local government officials, and service providers. Ethnographic observations also supplemented this approach. Informal settlements in urban areas of Burundi are predominantly composed of low-income households who have settled there illegally due to lack of formal housing options and employment opportunities. Social welfare services are often insufficient or non-existent in these areas. The study reveals significant disparities between the needs of informal settlement residents and the availability of social welfare resources, highlighting a critical gap that requires targeted interventions. Policy recommendations include the development of comprehensive urban planning strategies to address informal settlements and the integration of social welfare programmes specifically tailored for these populations.

Keywords: *Urbanization, Informal Settlements, Social Control, Dependency Theory, Ethnography, Community Development, Micro-politics*

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