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Peri-urban Land in Ethiopia: Genesis, Dynamics and Planning

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Background and the problem

- We are living in the 'urban age' when more than half of the world's population are living in urban areas and this is projected to increase. Africa will host the majority of the upcoming urban population and have been experiencing the emergence of new settlement forms including the peri-urban. Ethiopia, a rapidly urbanizing populous nation, will have same experience given the transforming socio-economic, political and physical state. The new settlement forms mainly the peri-urban development calls for adequate interventions hence the nation is by large rural and most of the urban transformations will undertake in these areas. Whether it is because of the inside-out transformation of the rural areas or the rapid proliferation of the peri-urban settlements, peri-urbanization is becoming the growing challenge to Ethiopian spatial development. There were a few research works that focused on the tenure, political economy and land rights of peri-urban Ethiopia. Yet studies focusing on the nature, transformation and policy responses were lacking.
- This thesis analysed the genesis /nature, dynamics/transformation/ and planning /response/ of peri-urban Ethiopia taking a case of Hawassa city; and concluded that peri-urban Ethiopia is a recently mounting phenomenon with peculiar formation and transformation calling for adequate policy response. It argues the existing policy-regularization, failed and rather resulted in unintended results because of the inability of the response to adequately address the peri-urban system.

Urbanization and peri-urban settlements In Ethiopia

- Ethiopia has been rapidly urbanizing since 2000 and this will continue for the coming decades. The rapid urbanization was coupled with horizontal expansion of the urban centres, the transformations of rural villages, and the rapid proliferation of settlements in urban expansion areas.
- The policy responses to manage these developments failed and resulted in unintended results including protests that yield deadly violence.

Aims and objectives

- The research aimed at analysing the nature of the peri-urban system that determined the efficacy of the planning endeavours of Hawassa city, Ethiopia. It explored the drivers of Ethiopia's peri-urbanization; explained the nature of peri-urban transition; determined the existing state, and its effects, and evaluated the policy response-regularization in order to find-out the peri-urban system-policy mismatch. It came up with recommendation intended to support the peri-urban planning and management system.

Peri-urban, Peri-urbanization and peri-urban transition

- The literature review shows that peri-urban is a socio-ecological system; inevitably existed within the city-rural region; comprised of the urban-rural spatial, social, physical, economic and psychological mixes that undertake transitions. Peri-urbanization was described as a multi-dimensional and multi-stage development of peri-urban areas through the peri-urban transition

process. The process exhibited a transition with different characters and the pull-push dynamics of various driving forces that in turn determined the nature, form and transform of the peri-urban system.

- Various forces including the nature of urbanization and other policy forces drove the transitions that created pressures and determined the peri-urban state. These in turn yield effects and impacts that initiated the policy responses. Thus the efficacy of the policy responses like regularization was determined by its adequacy to address the drivers, pressures, state and impacts of the peri-urban system.

The case study

- Hawassa, a rapidly growing secondary city of Ethiopia, was taken as a case study and its two peri-urban villages (*Datto-Odahe* and *Tullo-Argo*) were taken as embedded cases.
- The study followed a pragmatic worldview epistemological and ontological positions and mixed method design was employed. It was an exploratory case study research. Primary data was collected through household surveys (400), key informant interviews (34) and field observations (2). Secondary data was collected from policy documents, performance reports and map analysis.

The state of peri-urban Hawassa

- **Spatio-temporal state:** peri-urban Hawassa was recently emerging socio-spatial phenomenon that rapidly growing since 2003 and accelerated after 2011 (62 percent of the residents). It covered a wide area that amounted 1,531.65 hectares of land subdivided in 792 blocks and 17,916 parcels. They constituted 10 percent of the city's total area and nearly 30 percent of the built area and situated on land annexed within the administrative boundary of the city and not planned.
- **Socio-economic state:** They were getting heterogeneous as the number of the new residents (86 percent) out-weighed the number of the former inhabitants. Ethnic and religion compositions were diversified and the number of non-sidama, non-protestant residents increased significantly. The household size decreased, 93 percent were married and men-headed. The demography was youth dominated. New employment structures (included the spouse and youth 74.7 percent of the household members) and urban economic activities (public service-29.8 percent, commercial activities-27.6 percent and daily labor-17.3 percent) emerged and number of middle-income residents increasing (33 percent).
- **Physical state:** The functional typology of houses started to change into urban type. Rural huts were diminished. It was composed of the service quarters (2/3), lesser floor area 20-60M² (7-20percent on average of the plot), lower construction cost (70 percent of the structures had an investment below 100,000ETB), the introduction of new (HCB, cement plaster and CIS) and the prevalence of local construction materials (Wood, mud, and CIS). All imply the on going physical transition and potentials for growth.
- **The state of services and infrastructure:** The improved state of services and infrastructures enhanced the liveability and connectivity of the areas so that many were attracted to reside in

these settlements. They had better access to education (76.1 percent and 64.5 percent of the households had accessed kindergarten and primary schools in their villages) and health services at their vicinities. The CBOs supported the socio-economic system and integrations- 94.4 and 65.5percents were engaged in local and economic CBOs respectively). They also benefited from the local and the near by economic and financial institutions- 64.2 percent relied on local markets in the vicinity and the near b by commercial bank served 60.3 percent of the residents. The improved connectivity to the city helped them get taped to the city's services- 90.1 and 87.1 percent of the students attended secondary and tertiary schools in Hawassa city. The settlements were connected to the city by the expansion of trunk roads and mobile phones. Footpaths dominated Intra village road networks and community constructed earth pressed roads, yet the introduction of motor bicycle taxis enhanced the transport services. Electricity (47.4 percent of the households had private meter) were accessed through common meters and water services (20.9 percent of the households had private meters) were inadequate and private tenders supplied with expensive prices, emerging technologies like solar PV and charging cells were growing. The mobile phone network was reliable. Waste management services were not available and waste was poorly managed.

- **State of local governance:** decentralized local government services better ushered the peri-urban residents while they were deprived of centralized municipal services and the denied rural development services. 67.7 percent of the residents relied on *kebele* administrations. They were engaged in local governance as their participations in elections increased. Thus, legal rights were growing and influenced the policy responses.
- **Morphological state:** Peri-urban neighbourhoods started to take spatial forms in mixing some urban forms with the organic patterns. They became residential neighbourhoods (79.4 percent of the plots were used for residence). Land subdivisions were determined by the boundaries of the rural villages and the farmland. The plot areas were varied. The majority owned- average plot area 184-430M² and the mean average were 277.5M². Yet the plots had more varied length (96.7 percent) and less varied width (20.3 percent). Former inhabitants occupied the plots with longer width. 73.5 percent of the plots had a built structure on their bottom back (67.6 percent) and made the front free. The road networks followed organic patterns, provided access to all the plots; dominated by narrow footpaths, and cul de sac patterns.
- **Hawassa's peri-urbanization-** followed the horizontal expansion of the city, 69 percent of the new residents were pushed/pulled by land policy related drivers and the nature of the city's urbanization. More of the Land was acquired through informal transfers - 62 percent of the landholders acquired it through property sale, or gift.
- **Peri-urban Hawassa- the complex state:** peri-urban Hawassa was the by-product of the interaction between the existing state-borne factors and other external forces. The complex state was the result of the interactions between the state factors, the external factors and their dynamics. These include rurbanization, urbanization, urban expansion, provision of infrastructure and services, undergoing socio-economic transformations, the operations of the ULGs /Urban local governments/, the land policy, city's structural plan, growing peri-urban land use, emerged informal land markets, the peri-urban morphology, the regularization, the CBOs and the

introduction of technologies. These factors shaped the nature, form and transformation of peri-urban Hawassa. The factors interacted in either pushing or pulling the former inhabitants and the new residents in making decisions. They improved connectivity and liveability of the settlements and they shaped the form and magnitudes of the interactions, which in turn shaped the formations and transformations, and the efficacy of the policy response.

The drivers of peri-urban Hawassa

- The annexation driven urbanization of Hawassa and its consequential rapid expansion was one of the drivers of peri-urbanization. It has brought an addition of 137,712 peoples (an average of 35percent of the city's total population each year between 2010 and 2018) and 1,068.9 hectares of land. This resulted in the creation of rural administrative regimes within the urban jurisdiction and the overlapping land administration and management regimes. The annexation was underpinned by political interest, which later yield a conducive environment for the proliferation of peri-urban settlements.
- The second group of peri-urban drivers emanated from the loopholes of the co-existing land administration and management systems. One, they created conducive environments for transforming the rural land under the pretexts of legitimate acts and two the failures of the urban land systems created escalated land values and growing demands to peri-urban land. And thus they resulted in a new pressure /dynamics/ or transition to happen at peri-urban Hawassa.

The pressures /transition/ of peri-urban Hawassa

- The peri-urban land development followed an informal land development path. It was a step-by step process of acquiring and developing a peri-urban land. There were four modes of land acquisition in the areas and nearly 63 percent was acquired through transfer under the pretext of legitimate actions. Anticipated threats of expropriations (lose of huge amount of land except the remaining 500+ M²) coupled with other factors (economic opportunities house renting) drove the subdivisions and transfers. The subdivisions considered legal rights of the landholder, the possibly demanded size, and risk management and land value. The quasi-legitimate land market and the conducive loopholes of the land laws triggered the transfer stage. The private developments were where the new landholder built the physical structures strategically- securing ownership, minimizing risks and maintaining functionality and incremental development. Finally public servicing (like the rural road) enhanced the connectivity and liveability of the areas and shape the morphology.
- Peri-urban Hawassa was at the acceleration stage of transition since 2011. The number of the new residents and construction of housing structures were rapidly growing, consequent socio-economic and other transitions were occurring. As a result the push factors outweighed the pull forces and thus the acceleration stage of transition was acquired. This in turn brought the functional, institutional and organizational changes.
- The transition of peri-urban Hawassa portrayed the three common attributes of transitions: context dependency, self-organization and path dependency. And peculiarly, the transitions manifested market dynamisms. To this end, the prohibited land market forces surfaced all the

stages of Hawassa's peri-urban land development and transition process. There were innovative and strategic approaches employed to establish the functionality of the informal land markets.

The Impacts/effects of peri-urbanization in Hawassa

- Peri-urban Hawassa started to yield both positive and negative effects and the negative outweighed the positive effects. Socio-economic effects were seen in terms of the evicted number of the former inhabitants who lose their land, mismanaged the money from the land sale and destined on the city's streets. The political effects included the growing 'illegality' and the negative attitudes towards the city's growth and the urban development. The spatial effects include the proliferation of unruly and substandard developments that will result in slum.
- Peri-urban Hawassa grow horizontally /as the city's built area grew by 257 percents in the past 17years/ consuming the potential farmland and environmental sensitive areas that will in turn resulted in environmental problems which will get complicated. Thus, environmental problems and hazards started to emerge in the areas.

The response to manage the peri-urbanization of Hawassa

- The government of Ethiopia adopted regularization, the global best practice recommendation; to govern the peri-urban land development and establishing land management and administration system. It had more complex political objectives. It was just a retroactive response that intended to curb the negative effects of the peri-urbanization process and ensuring the effective development of the city by freeing the peri-urban area from land-based rent-seekers. The short-run objectives were establishing an urban plan system for the peri-urban settlements and secure the tenure of 17916 plot holders and in the long-run, it aimed establishing local land governance system and protecting the peri-urban land from illegal and inefficient developments through abolishing the urban-land based rent seeking practices. The regularization campaign was double faced: urban planning and titling. The campaign introduced multistage activities: identification and registration stage, the planning stage, plots determination stage, registration and titling stage, and development permit stages to legalize and urbanize the already occupied land and overlooked the other issues.
- The regularization policy failed to bring the intended changes (only 36.5percent of the plot holders were registered and got the title deed; only 221 requested for development permits and none of the L/NDPs were implemented) and yield unintended changes (2864 new houses were built in 2015-2016) that drove the growth of peri-urban settlements. The rationales failed to recognize the peri-urban system and focused on the illegal land occupation aspects. The core-activities and the underlying embedded focused on urbanizing and legalizing the rural land had no room to consider the inevitability, transition and dynamics of peri-urbanization. They focused on formalizing, prohibiting and controlling than capability, inclusiveness and system development. The external forces were not considered while they had significant effects in affecting the change process. Finally, the policy resulted in more land transfer and constructions.

Conclusions

- The regularization program failed to recognize the peri-urban state as a SES and the inevitable subsystem of the city-rural region and focused on urbanizing the 'illegally' occupied rural land. It overlooked the underpinning drivers of the system and failed short of addressing the root causes. It inadequately considered the peri-urban transition and its dynamics that determined the type and efficacy of the response. It focused just on the negative effects and highly politicized. These resulted in a incompatibilities between the peri-urban system and the policy response, which in turn brought unintended results that further enhanced the peri-urban growth.

Recommendations

- Developing an integrated policy response that recognized the peri-urban system, proactively address the system holistically and in an integrated fashion on the basis of capability approaches and enhancing new forms of regional governance.