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Center for  
Development Research  
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Development Discourses and Urban Poor.  
A comparative study of slums in Islamabad and Brasilia

Risk in everyday life. Vulnerability and practices in flood-prone  
settlements in Monrovia

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**Islamabad** and **Brasilia** are planned cities, as well as embodiments of global developmentalism and the hall marks of urban development for the 21st century. Both cities are representative models of socialist and capitalist urbanism aiming to solve problems in the city in order to achieve hitherto 'development' for their respective countries. Pakistan and Brazil provide us with an interesting social-political arena to comparatively reflect on the very nature of buzz-words like 'development'.

#### Objectives

1. To understand the working of global development
2. To deconstruct the assumed neutrality of development, scientific processes and development rationales
3. To understand how development discourses shape the fate of urban poor in relation to where they live
4. To analyse urban governance and urban development in an era of free-market economy, market speculation and informality

#### Data set

- In-depth interviews with policy makers and technocrats
- Oral histories of old city residents
- Visual methods: photographs, mapping, and transect walks
- Observations and interviews with residents of slums
- Court judgements, court proceedings, eviction notices and eviction operations
- Media coverage of slums
- Policy and planning documents, maps, surveys and minutes of meetings

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**Monrovia** is a coastal post-conflict city in Liberia with more than 1 million inhabitants. It is challenged by rapid unplanned urbanisation and highly susceptibility to water-related hazards. Recurrent small floods, which are often overseen, introduce everyday risks and often trigger major shocks faced by poor residents living in slums along the waterfronts. The research focus is on social dimensions of vulnerability and exposure to risk, as well as on responses and strategies in West Point, Clara Town, and Doe.

#### Objectives

1. To investigate how practices and institutions shape flood risks in precarious settlements and understand how landscapes of risks are constructed by different actors
2. To investigate how flood risks are intertwined with other risks in precarious settlements and how that impacts agency regarding risk-taking and decision-making.
3. To analyse the different ways that risk and futures are imagined and constructed by different actors

#### Research methods

- In-depth interviews with residents, stakeholders and experts
- Observation and photo documentation
- Document review

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## ZEF IN THE CITY

Critical urban studies on everyday urbanity, citizenship  
and the governance of informality in the Global South

- Interdisciplinary Development Studies -







Waterfront Metropolis Abidjan. Between everyday urbanity, spontaneous urbanisation, town planning and real estate development

Politics of waste. Boundaries, contestations and everyday practices at a dumping site in Mumbai

The Mumbai Slum Movement. Self-organisation and mobilisation of dwellers in unrecognized slums

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**Abidjan** is a cosmopolitan metropolis of about 5 million inhabitants, which is located at the Atlantic Ocean and built around the Ebrié Lagoon. During the Ivorian civil war, many new settlements were established in an unplanned, demand-driven manner and the city moved closer to the waterfronts. Our research analyses social-political dynamics around waterfronts and studies how poor residents organise and navigate through urban space and residential insecurity.

#### Objectives

1. To write an ethnography on the settlement Adjahui-Coubé, which has spontaneously expanded on a peninsula in the middle of the metropolis after other settlements have been evicted.
2. To contextualise the Adjahui-Coubé case by analysing the historical and political interplay of everyday urbanism, spontaneous urbanisation, town planning and real estate development in Abidjan.
3. To analyse discourses around sustainable waterfront development, modernity and citizenship in Abidjan.

#### Data set

- Ethnographic census (591 housing units in 52 courtyards, 304 households)
- In-depth interviews with residents, community based organisations, experts, activists, real estate agents
- Participant observation and research diary
- Transect walks, photo documentation
- Newspaper articles on urbanisation (incl. Fraternité Matin 2011-2018)
- A study of wooden ferry transit to and from Adjahui-Coubé
- GIS and remote sensing

**Publications and activities:** [www.zef.de/project/WATERFRONT-METROPOLIS](http://www.zef.de/project/WATERFRONT-METROPOLIS)

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**Mumbai** is a highly populated, space crunched, coastal megacity which generates 9,500 metric tonnes of solid waste per day due to rapid urbanisation and increased consumption. The waste sector is witnessing significant transformation with private sector entry resulting in displacement of informal workers of the waste segregation and recycling industry. Going beyond techno-managerial approaches, the study focuses on the conflicts and emerging resistance to map how power relations are being reproduced in the city.

#### Objectives

1. To explore the politics of contestations and negotiations at the dumping ground.
2. To capture the different meanings of waste as perceived by various actors.
3. To analyse how socio-political processes shape the discourse of waste in the city.
4. To understand how power relations work around urban space.

#### Data set

- In-depth interviews with waste workers, slum dwellers, NGO workers, municipal officers
- Participant observation and research diary
- Focus Group Interviews with rag pickers and slum dwellers
- Participatory mapping
- Newspaper articles, court orders, policy documents, project reports, documentaries

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**Mumbai** is a deindustrialised metropolis of approximately 13 million residents with a vast informal sector. While politicians work on Mumbai to become slum-free, half of its population still resides in slums. The study asks how slum residents politically mobilise themselves to stay in the city and fight their eviction. The research shows strategies which are employed by people-without-paper against slum demolition.

#### Objectives

1. To delve into the practices of citizenship in so-called unauthorised slums
2. To elaborate slum demolition and how people facing it push a narrative of repression
3. To study how the slum residents resist their eviction and their tolerated presence
4. To trace survival and incremental strategies slum evictees employ through transforming themselves into an activist citizen

#### Data set

- Baseline survey (110 households)
- In-depth interviews with slum residents, activists, experts, politicians and municipal officers
- Participant observation and research diary
- Transect walks, social mapping, daily activity schedule, livelihood and skill matrix, seasonal calendar
- Focus Group Interviews with members of activist organisations, street-side/ naka workers and embroidery workers
- Newspaper articles, court judgements, government resolutions, policy papers, socio-economic survey, fact-finding reports and documentaries