

Slums as Expressions of Social Exclusion : Explaining the Prevalence of Slums in African Countries

mardi 26 septembre 2017

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One of the most enduring physical manifestations of social exclusion in African cities is the proliferation of slums and informal settlements. People living in these settlements experience the most deplorable living and environmental conditions. They are also excluded from participating in the economic social, political and cultural spheres of the city. This paper accounts for differences in the prevalence of slums among African countries. The empirical analysis identifies substantial inter-country variations in the incidence of slums ; and indicates that higher levels of income, greater financial stability and investment in infrastructure will reduce the incidence of slums and by extension— reduce social exclusion. Conversely, the external debt burden, high levels of inequality, unplanned and unmanaged urban growth, and the exclusionary nature of the regulatory framework governing the provision of planned residential land contribute to the prevalence of slums and squatter settlements— thus increasing levels of social exclusion.