

Mapping transitional urban forms The form of the in-formal in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Doctoral Program in Architecture. History and Project (34<sup>th</sup> Cycle)

## **Mapping transitional urban forms** The form of the in-formal in Sub-Saharan Africa



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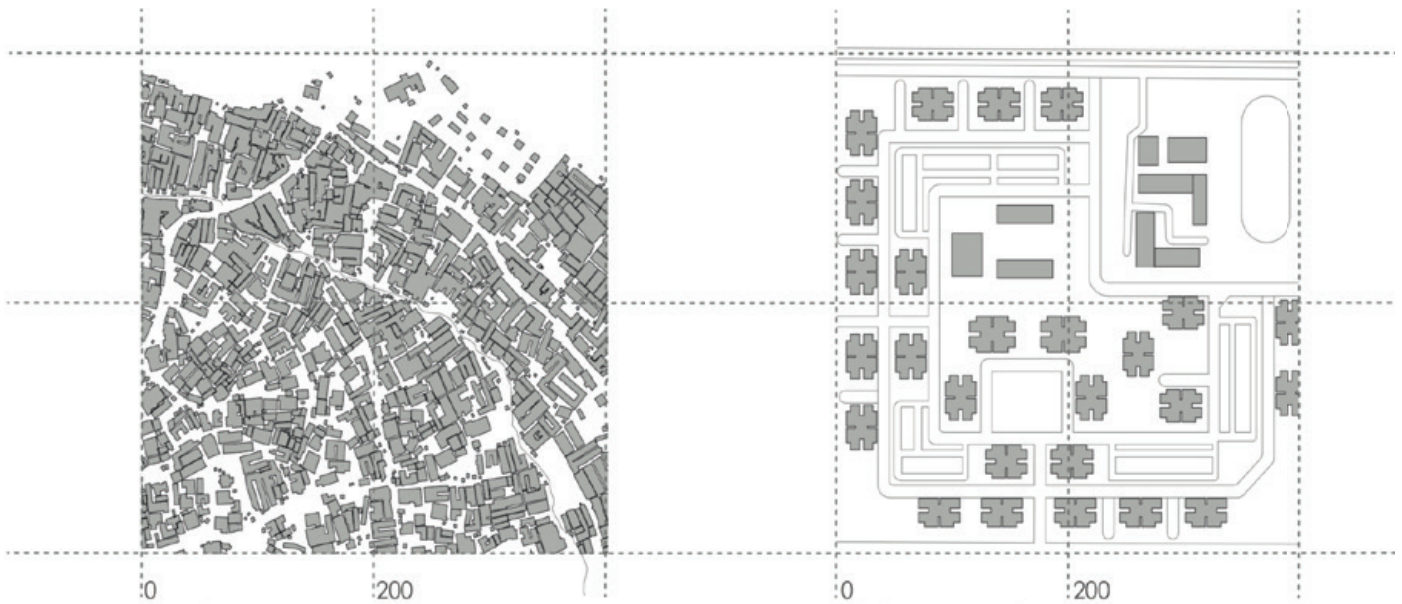
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## Abstract

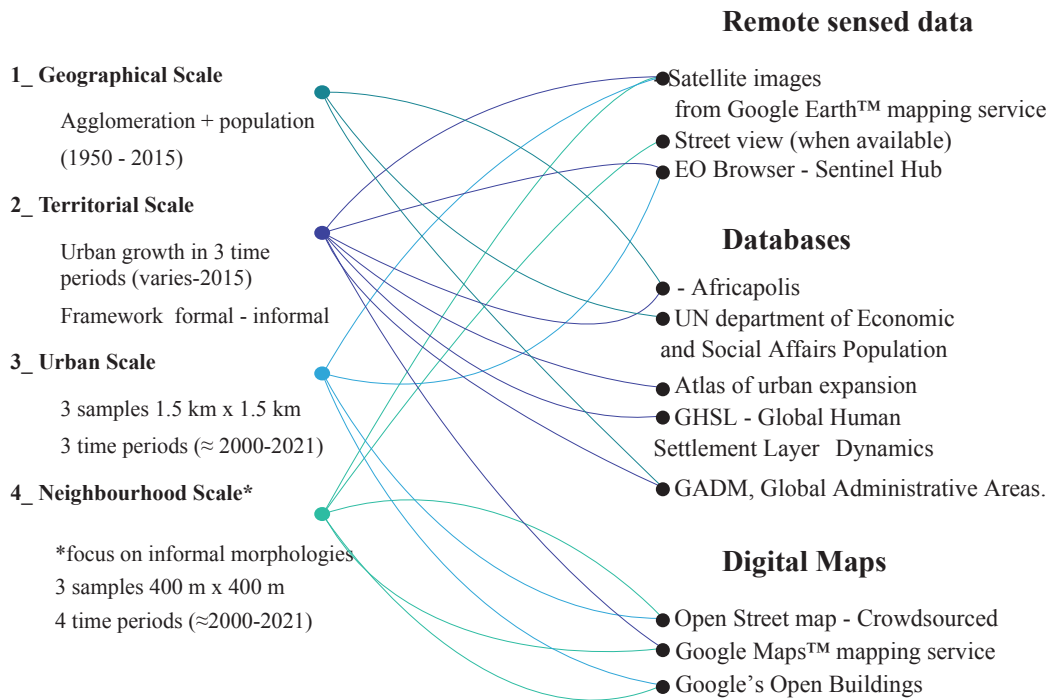
This work aims to highlight how urban morphology and mapping could be exploited as tools to create knowledge of urbanisation phenomena in rapidly urbanising settings. The research emerges from an interest in the spatial character of emerging morphologies and represents an exercise on urban form. In this sense, the study's research scope points to finding ways to clarify, in morphological terms, the phenomena of the formal-informal continuum with a focus on urban developments that are flourishing in Global South's urban contexts. **Is there a “form” in the informal? The work argues that there is and stands by that this form is in constant transition.** The conceptualisation of this form builds a frame to observe a type of urban space that depends heavily on collectivity. It is of interest of the work the urban forms, compositions and meanings of informal settlements and their portrait in morphological terms. The study revolves around three frameworks: a theoretical one, aligned with post-colonial theories and the “southern turn” that pushes to the use of cities in the Global South as examples where urbanisation can be contextualised; a spatial one that deals with the potentialities of Urban Morphology and an analytical one that allows using mapping as a generator of knowledge.

The scale of current and future urban expansion suggests that discussions about global sustainable transition will increasingly need to include aspects of urbanisation in the Global South. **A multi-scalar mapping operation is proposed in the work as a methodology that facilitates the observation of the phenomenon from remote.** The Global South and within this area, Sub-Saharan Africa, becomes a laboratory to observe contemporary urbanisation through spatial lenses. According to predictions, the African continent is urbanising faster than any other. Rapid urbanisation in this area is characterised by a prevalence of unplanned urban growth derived from the rise in the demand for housing, infrastructure, and services. The study maps samples taken from the most populated cities in Sub-Saharan Africa and those where informal settlements are projected to grow the most in the coming years, to illustrate the phenomena and analyse morphological traits in planned and unplanned dynamics in different scales. **Remote sensed data is used as a tool to gather information for the collection of the samples taken for analysis.** The study employs a comparative, diachronic reasoning for the samples and an analytical approach and deductive observation of material obtained from open sources. From the mapping operation, recurrences of spatial patterns are highlighted.

This type of study points to the creation of an atlas of samples that can lead to a better understanding of the ways in which morphological singularities function and develop. The reflections of the thesis point to highlight that while the maps produced at different scales do not provide a complete picture of the connections between morphologies and urban life; they can be configured as an important starting point to build a broader awareness of the dimension and presence of the phenomenon.



## EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE Open Sources

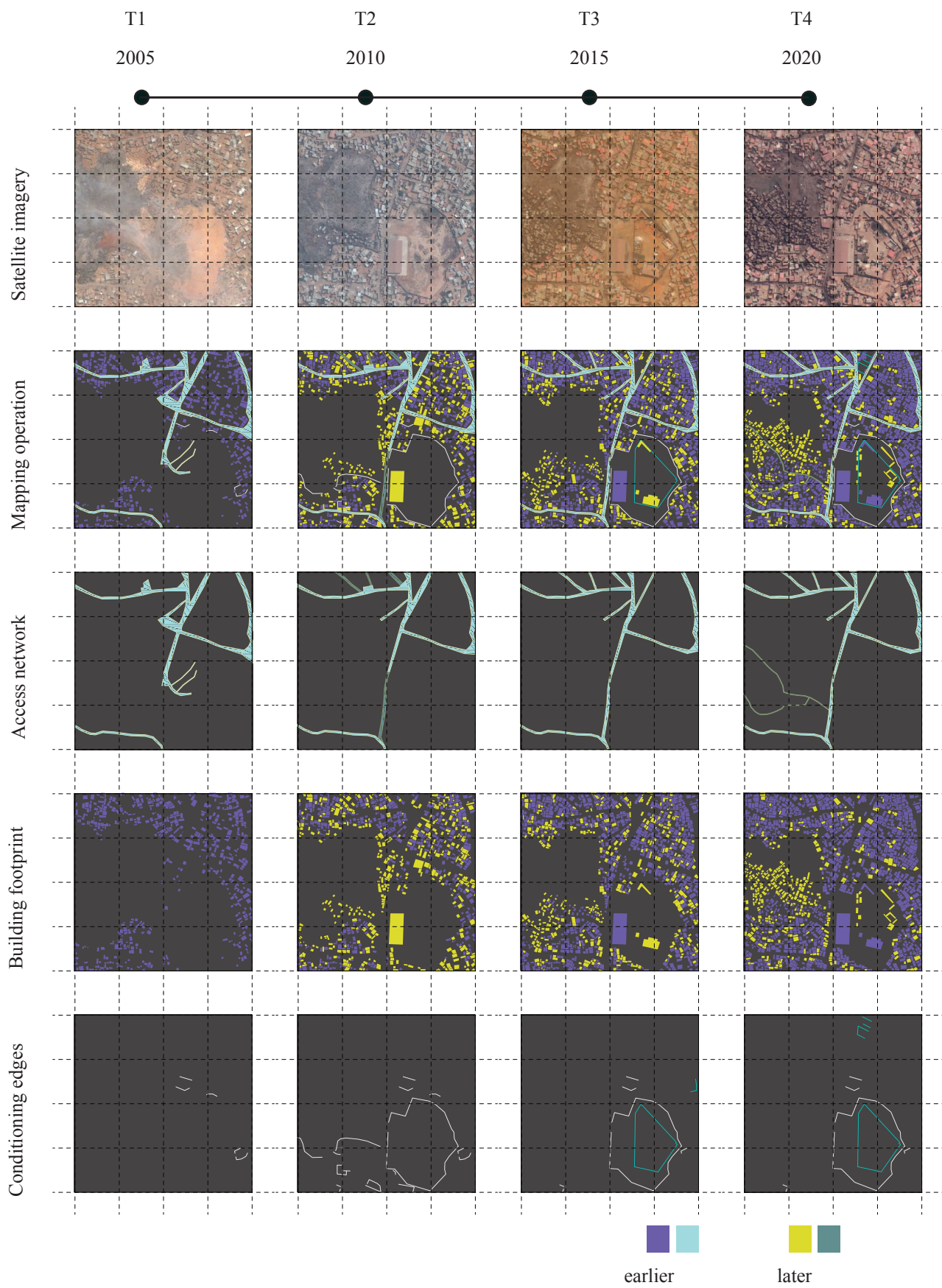


### DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS

Proposed methodology for mapping operation







Example of mapping operation at neighbourhood scale