

## 4. Research Design

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The review of material presented in chapter 3 reveals that Ethiopian cities lack adequate description and conceptualisation of local practices of urbanisation to serve local planning strategies addressing the quality of urban livelihoods in conditions of urban growth. Based on the research gaps identified in the preceding chapters, the topic of study is the relation of planning and urbanisation practice and rationales in Bahir Dar as one of the fast growing secondary Ethiopian cities. The chapter describes the methods selected to conduct the empirical work on this topic. Here, the propositions of the research, the research questions and the unit of analysis are introduced as the conceptual framework, while the criteria for interpreting the findings are described as the analytical framework.

### 4.1 APPLYING A CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

Due to the need for empirical data on the pre-defined question of rapid urbanisation in Bahir Dar, an adequate research methodology had to be chosen for this thesis. As the thematic field of study is open and unstructured meaning that the issue of urbanisation is not a clearly delimited topic, while reliable quantitative and qualitative data on Ethiopian urbanisation are scarce (see chapter 3), and no qualitative research has been done on the relation of urbanisation and planning for this context or location, the methodology should allow for a mix of qualitative methods to gather empirical material. This investigation on urbanisation and planning has few references to build on from African cities and needs to take an explorative approach. Since the presence of urbanisation in Africa's history for more than two thousand years has led to a wide variety of urban histories and urban practices (Anderson and Rathborne 2000: 1), it is plausible that conceptions of these should be "derived from the historical record and local frame of awareness" (Myers 1994: 208). According to Robinson, the historical comparative analysis that is committed and long-term avoids the danger of entering "a new round of imperialist appropriation of international urban experiences to service Western and other well-resourced centres of scholarship" (Robinson 2011: 19). In order to do

so, the interrogation of the historical urban development must try to recollect the pre-colonial accounts and go beyond questioning the plans of the colonial era. This holds especially true, as a thorough re-evaluation of modern urban development often did not take place neither in the former colonies in the course of regained independence, nor in Ethiopia as a country included in generalised accounts of “urban Africa”. From a historical view, patterns and urbanisation practices can be described as originating from multiple sources of action (Robinson 2011: 7).

A common stance to suit the above-mentioned requirements is to conduct a case study. To this understanding of urban development, the case study approach is suitable to generate local accounts and place them into the wider context of discussion. The case study methodology is sometimes described as an unsystematic approach but is elaborately defined as a research method by Robert Yin (2009). Yin (2009: 27) states that the research design of case studies requires a set of research questions, propositions of the research, a unit of analysis, a logic to link the data to the propositions and criteria for interpreting the findings. Following him, it is “an empirical investigation, that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”, while it also “copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (ibid: 18). In other words, the case study methodology is suited to research on complex processes, in which the phenomenon and context are intertwined, which applies to the phenomenon of “urbanisation”, the subject of this research. The overall aim of the case study approach is for the selected case to contribute towards a more complex and differentiated theoretical conception (Janowicz 2008: 270). In contrast to other ethnographic approaches or grounded theory, the case study explicitly relies on a theoretical background and propositions which are tested by empirical evidence (Yin 2009: 35). Consequently, however incomplete or generalised the theories related to planning and urbanisation in secondary African cities (chapters 2 and 3) present themselves, they can serve to discuss the findings of this research, which in turn can expand and nuance the theoretical accounts. Case studies have regained acceptance as a relevant research method in urban studies, despite some criticism of the approach. In quantitative research their importance is, indeed, low (Lamnek 2005: 302). While post-modernism did not engage in comparison, as categories of comparison could not be formed, case studies have recently regained popularity as a special form of conducting comparative urbanism in urban geography (Nijman 2007).

In order to extend the reach of the case-study findings to the needs of urban planning, the findings from the empirical work on urban development and urbanism are generally used to feed into theoretical discussions from which advice

for urban policy formulation can be developed. Thereby, the research faces the same dangers of fallacy regarding “scientism, developmentalism and universalist categories” (Nijman 2007: 1) as research in the field of urban geography. However, drawing from the critical theoretical proposals from post-colonial urban studies (see chapter 2.1), these can be identified and overcome in conceptualisations. The case study is, hence, meant to bridge the gap between theoretical discourse of urban studies and implementation of the new ideas in urban planning. The implicit comparison between site of best-practice realisation and implementation destination in policy transfer and urban planning can be exposed, as it currently does not rely on comparison of context and path-dependency, but rather on the similarity of problems and issues irrespective of the reason for their occurrence. This needs to change in order to make urban policy more effective and context specific.

However, the reach and restrictions of case studies have been discussed controversially. Yin traces the existing reservations towards the validity of case studies to the lack of rigor in past examples of case studies, the confusion of case study research with case study teaching and misconceptions on the questions of bias and generalisation. In response to the doubts, Yin (2009: 14-15) points out that the question of bias is inherent of other methods as well, while the question of generalisation can be answered in short, by declaring that the aim of qualitative case studies is “to expand and generalise theories (analytical generalisation) and not to enumerate (statistical generalisation)”. Bearing this possibility of bias in mind, the method can prove fruitful. As Robinson (2011: 5) states, the single case study is implicit, displays causality assumptions that are historic and specific but is not always comparative or theory-building. However, following the argumentation of Lijphart, she notes that the case study strategy “has the potential to be relatively unproductive for social science research, unless it consciously involves theory building”, but “when it does, it is an important part of a broader suite of comparative methodologies.” (Robinson 2011: 6).

For this research, the large uncertainty due to the lack of data has to be considered in the question of theory building in the sense that an exploratory case study approach has to be favoured. Despite the figures indicating a rapidly growing population, there was little material available on the issue of urbanisation so far. This thesis, therefore, marks a substantial contribution to the literature on the city. Since the set-up of this research aims to contribute to knowledge on urbanisation in secondary African cities by studying one case, the peril of theoretical unproductiveness can be avoided by substantially contributing to a discussion base for the location and allowing for the place to be set in the larger context of urbanising cities. This is named as a “revelatory case study” by Yin (2009: 49). The aim of the case study is to identify structures and typical processes that were previously not described and are manifested in the data, distinguishing the single case. Comparing the results of this single case study with the body of theory might produce new insights at the general descriptive level as also explained by Robinson (2011: 6).

This way, the case study can give “geographical explanations for path-dependency” (Nijman 2007: 2). This feedback into general theory requires openness towards the theoretical framework for the suggested modifications resulting from the empirical case study evidence (Janowicz 2008: 270).

For this thesis, criteria of describing the relation between different rationales of urbanisation consequently have to be specified. In order to describe this relation, the proposals made by Roy’s idiom of urbanisation are used as a theoretical reference point (see chapter 2.2), as well as the topics considered relevant in the same chapter. It is established how urbanisation practice is contextualised locally in Bahir Dar. To do so, the state of knowledge on the topic is retrieved and systemised, while data on typologies of everyday urbanisation is gathered to widen the account. The “idiom of urbanisation” is thereby considered aware of multiple accounts of urbanisation under the same conceptual framework and can account for competing rationales and interpretations in the sense of an assemblage. Also Patsy Healy advocates that the rich narratives of in-depth cases are most useful to promote trans-national reflection on planning ideas, more so than other common approaches in urban planning, such as best-case or systemised matching of context and planning experience (Healy 2012: 196). I consider this observation as crucial for the revision of the planning discipline’s constituting habitus of formulating policy recommendations and implementing designs. Only by moving away from looking at the success or failure of certain interventions in best-practice or bad-practice analyses and directing the view to the underpinning rationales and path-dependency related pre-conditions for the success of certain interventions, can adequate means of intervention be identified and policy transfer be successful. The case study directed towards these underpinning rationales and pre-conditions can contribute to a new system of urban typology as required by Nijman (2007: 2), which would be grounded in the specific attribute and not in the stipulated geographical category or developmental status of a city. This aspect concerning the normative consequences regarding institutional planning and everyday practices, their interrelations and competition forms a focus of investigation for this thesis. It seeks to shed light on issues regarding the multiplicity of state intervention and contradicting interests between different non-state actors. Nevertheless, Nijman states that “there is no single comparative method, but rather a plurality of comparative approaches, it is equally clear, that there are no universal or permanently fixed categories, but rather contextually variable and temporally dynamic typologies” (ibid: 5).

## 4.2 THE CASE STUDY SITE

According to Yin (2009: 91), the selection of the case and, thus, the unit of analysis needs to be systematic. The case study on urbanisation requires a location, which

should be bounded and in which these questions can be investigated. While, of course, its geographical and administrative delimitations change over time, this unit of analysis also includes the community of the settlement as a non-spatial aspect and the administration and other organisational powers of urbanisation in the location, even if they might be geographically situated elsewhere. From the case and its findings, abstractions can be made. With its own contingent and idiosyncratic development, the case study can serve as one of many cases to diversify the knowledge we have on the Ethiopian cities experiencing urbanisation and challenge generalisations made on African cities.

Due to the limited human resources available in a doctorate project, I had to abandon initial ideas of conducting comparative research with a multi-sited approach and decided on a single case study. Thereby, it has to be acknowledged that the comparative element of a single case study to general theory and national policy is implicit rather than the explicit comparative nature of multiple-case studies. The single case study is also limited in its capacity to establish typologies due to a lack of comparative material. For this a comparison with other case studies on urbanisation from the literature or future research would have to reveal particularities of the location and contribute to forming categories and typologies of urbanising cities. This is not possible within a single case. Neither can the general theory be expanded through the single case should the findings from the case affirm what is already known. However, a feedback into theories is possible, if the case can challenge the existing body of knowledge or make differentiations on the prevailing assumptions as a “revelatory case study” (see chapter 4.1.; Yin 2009: 49).

The criteria for the selection of the case study site have to be connected to the research theme (Yin 2009: 28). Wanting to contribute to questions of urban development under conditions of rapid urbanisation, the case study site should display a high development dynamic. From various possible locations in Ethiopia, Bahir Dar – the capital of Amhara National Regional State with a population of around 230,000 inhabitants, situated on the southern shore of Lake Tana – was chosen as the unit of analysis. Bahir Dar is located within an area around Lake Tana that has been selected by the Ethiopian Government to promote the formation of new settlement structures (RUPI 2000), and the settling activities in the area are thus expected to stay a political focus. Bahir Dar has a high rate of population growth, a high number of rural-urban migrants and a vast extent of spatial growth. Overall, the city is currently affected by a strong development dynamic. Bahir Dar’s size expanded from 297 ha in 1957 to 4,830 ha in 2009, an average growth rate of 31% p.a. (Nigussie Haregeweyn et al. 2012: 155). The built-up areas have increased almost tenfold from 80 ha in 1957 to 848 ha in 1994 (ibid), while intensely built-up land on the urban area of 1957 doubled in the period until 1994 from 80ha to 155 ha (ibid). The parallel rate of population growth in Bahir Dar between 1967 and 1994 was, at 7.57%, among the highest in the country (Golini 2001: 97). According to census data from 1994, 54.1% of the city’s population were migrants (Gebeyaw

Walle 2003: 97). An evaluation of the same census data shows that the rates of well-established population in Bahir Dar were lower than that of Ethiopia's city mean, which was 52.1% (Golini et al. 2001: 177) and indicates a relatively higher influx of people into Bahir Dar. The proportion of new in-migrants (less than five years of residence) in the population by sex was 24% of males and 23% of females. This is higher than the national average (20.7% for males and 18.7% for females, *ibid*). Thus there was a high share of recent arrivals. The influx of population into the city continued after this, if also at a slower pace. On the basis of data from the CSA, Gebeyaw Walle (2003: 39) calculated the urban growth rate of Bahir Dar to be 4.8% per year between 1994 and 2003. Bahir Dar's urban area is expected to double from 2012 to 2024, based on a linear population development and areal expansion projected into the future (Nigussie Haregeweyn et al. 2012: 153-154).

### 4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research presented here aims to gather data describing the constituting practices of urban development as a local result of a larger urbanisation process. The data is evaluated and directed at formulating a local concept for urban development based on the theoretical insights into the relation of urbanisation and the possible realm of planning in Bahir Dar. To define the scope of data collection and frame the outcome, a set of research questions was formulated to guide the investigation. A main research question is, thereby, broken into general research questions, which again are broken down into specific research questions. By means of this operationalisation, the fieldwork was conducted.

Exploring the urbanisation process in Bahir Dar bearing in mind the theoretical proposals discussed in chapter 2.2, the case study seeks to clarify the contingencies of urban development under conditions of urbanisation in Bahir Dar. To structure the account, a special focus is given on the relation between urban planning and different practices of everyday urbanisation to be identified in the course of the research. The thesis intends to describe how urbanity and urban structures are produced in the city as the result of the larger contextual conditions of population shifts to the city. It seeks to outline the implications for urban development encompassing actors from non-institutional and institutional backgrounds in the understanding of a "collective governance effort" (Healy 2012: 191; see chapter 2.2). The main research question to guide the investigation is formulated as follows:

How do statutory and everyday practices constitute urbanisation in Bahir Dar and what are the implications for future urban development?

The main research question is broken down into a set of four general research questions:

1. Which are the site-specific rationales of statutory planning in Bahir Dar and how do they produce and organise city structures?
2. Which are the site-specific rationales of everyday urbanisation in Bahir Dar and how do they produce and organise city structures?
3. How do the different rationales relate to each other?
4. What are the implications for future urban development?

The first two general research questions cover the aspects of “statutory planning” and “everyday urbanisation”. These first two general research questions guided the collection of empirical data from the case study site. These questions were in turn broken down into specific research questions. The field tools were selected by attributing the specific research questions to data/variables for which suitable field tools were identified to retrieve the corresponding material. The results are presented in the tables below:

*Fig. 3: First General Research Question Broken Down into Specific Research Questions*

Which are the site-specific rationales of statutory planning in Bahir Dar and how do they produce and organise city structures?		
Specific research question	Data/Variable	Field tools
How has the urban expansion been monitored?	Expansion/densification of built up area at the city-scale over time	Review of maps and aerial photography
Which planning documents have been issued and put to implementation in the past?	Evidence for planning strategies, projects	Review of archive material, expert interviews
Which planning documents are currently valid?	Evidence for planning strategies, projects	Review of archive material, expert interviews
Which phases of urban development can be identified in Bahir Dar?	Time periods, guiding principles of urban development	Literature and document review, expert interviews
Who is involved in formulating the valid planning policies?	Actors	Literature and document review, expert interviews
Which infrastructure projects and technologies have an impact on urban development?	Project impact, infrastructure contribution	Expert interviews, key-informant interviews
Are there clearances and/or resettlements?	Land-use conflict, relation between formal and informal regulators	Expert interviews

Image by the author.

*Fig. 4: Second General Research Question Broken Down into Specific Research Questions*

Which are the site-specific rationales of everyday urbanisation in Bahir Dar and how do they produce and organise city structures?		
Specific research question	Data/Variable	Field tools
Are there clearances and/or resettlements?	Land-use conflicts, relation between formal and informal regulators	Expert interviews
What are the benefits and options of choosing an urban lifestyle?	Evidence of changing living arrangements, identification of benefits and assets gained through individual urbanisation	Review of population data, in-depth interviews
Which are the livelihood strategies of newly arriving migrants?	Evidence for socio-economic diversification through urbanisation, forms of establishing in the city	In-depth interviews
What are the ethnic, cultural and religious distributions of population at the city scale?	Evidence for cultural diversification/clustering over time	Linking population data with spatial information from observation/mapping and historical sources
Who/what are the mundane regulators of urban development?	Data on actors (NGOs, churches, community leaders, party structures)	In-depth interviews, document reviews

Image by the author.

The analysis of the data collected was guided by the general research questions 3. “How do the different rationales relate to each other?” and 4. “What are the implications for future urban development?”, for which policy advice was then formulated in chapter 9 (see chapter 4.5)

## 4.4 DATA COLLECTION

As can be seen from the tables above, various sources of evidence were consulted for the case study according to the multi-tool approach suggested by Yin (2009: 102). The multi-tool approach for the data collection through fieldwork supports the display of various aspects of the selected case, while it increases the reliability of the results. Using the case study methodology, data is collected through documentation, review of archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and/or physical artefacts (ibid).

As already mentioned in chapter 1.2, the data collection began in 2009 with two short exploratory visits to Ethiopia. Consequently archive work produced the original designs for the first master plans for Bahir Dar from 1962 in the University Archive Darmstadt (Germany). In a three-and-a-half-month period of fieldwork in Bahir Dar in 2010, a systematic mapping exercise was undertaken with research assistants to understand the city’s layout and neighbourhood structure. Conducting a workshop on the question of regional development in the larger city network on

Lake Tana, organised jointly with the Bahir Dar University, Addis Ababa University and the ETH Zurich, established access to the network of professional planners. As a result of a contact made at the conference, there was an opportunity to sit-in at an expert hearing for the development of the Bahir Dar Waterfront Development Plan, organised on February 24th 2011 by the Canadian Urban Institute in Bahir Dar. A last round of fieldwork, in which in-depth interviews were conducted with residents in the sub-case sites, was undertaken in January and February 2013. The period of data collection, hence, spans from March 2009 to February 2013.

As described above, sources of secondary data were initially consulted. A first review of literature on urbanisation in Ethiopia revealed that information on the phenomenon of urbanisation is only starting to be gathered. Already working in a context of scarce secondary data, it turned out that a lot of the data has to be regarded as unreliable by academic standards. A lot of the material consulted contains incomplete, contradictory or unreliable data. Given a lack of alternatives, it can serve to give impressions of general sizes, even though it has to be questioned due to insufficient independence of coverage. This is not necessarily caused by bad methodology in data collection, but rather due to cultural and political interpretations of what statistics and mapping should cover. Thereby, the results can be presented to project certain aims rather than reflect a status quo. Moreover, the data available is very difficult to access. Where academic concepts assume institutionalised access to libraries, archives, statistical offices, etc., access to knowledge in Ethiopia is controlled socially to a very high degree. And even with good personal contacts, permission for access can change due to the daily constellation of gate keeping. Although the feasibility studies set up by various English companies in the 1950s, and the personal documentation of Guther's engagement to design a new city in Bahir Dar from 1962 (see chapter 5.3) could be obtained and were sighted in various visits to the archive of the Technical University of Darmstadt, and random material such as policy documents, statistical data from the administration and academic literature on the case study site were reviewed, the insights from the secondary data on the issue of urbanisation in Bahir Dar were limited.

The material would, therefore, have to be complemented by the collection of primary data from the field gathered under consideration of the local circumstances. As most material on African urbanisation comes in the shape of policy recommendations, references for field studies in urban development were not available. As such, the conventional approaches to data collection for urban planning projects quickly reached their limit:

Data collection was strongly limited by the political restrictions exercised concerning the work of NGOs, the press, publishing on the internet, freedom of speech and the reoccurring destruction of historical archive records in the realm of understanding knowledge as a power instrument. Under such conditions, access to decision-making networks proved difficult. Additionally, contact information on institutional members is difficult to retrieve for an outsider.

The cultural differences revealed certain implications academia makes towards the role of the researcher in society. Coming into conversation situations as a female “ferenji” from a university background occasionally triggered intense reactions and often prevented the distance necessary to permit gathering and describing information. On two occasions I was accused of spying for Egypt; on one occasion I was regarded as a spiritual being; there were various marriage proposals, and I was the subject of tourist scams solicited in supposed interview set-ups. Face to face with conversation partners, even from the professional field, certain anticipated patterns of rational professional behaviour were hence deviated from, questioning the feasibility of data collection in accordance with academic standards. Further, due to linguistic and cultural contexts, passing on knowledge is often conducted in an oral tradition, which has little in common with the communication assumed by empirical interview techniques. In Amhara culture, the word “no” does not exist and questions are not negated on the grounds of true or false. The concept of “Wax and Gold” as an Ethiopian hermeneutic<sup>1</sup>, as well as certain emotional or spiritual argumentation, clashes with western academic conduct of conversations, sometimes rendering communication in scientifically approved form (such as interviews) impossible.

In this sense, the acceptance of the concept of the researcher determines the quality of the primary data available. Under these circumstances, empirical work had to adapt to local conventions. Primary data collection, thus, proved time-consuming and had to rely on coincidence and opportunity to a strong degree. Readings of the built environment were conducted by systematically walking and mapping the entire built-up area. For the purpose of these cross-section walks, the built structure of Bahir Dar was sectioned into 26 areas on a satellite map, irrespective of the administrative boundaries of the city, so the peripheral growth and de-facto boundaries of dense urban fabric are included in the data collection. With the help of three research assistants – in this case students from Germany – information on the prevailing type of business activities, particularities of the neighbourhood’s residents, sites of interest and the building structure were documented. Conversations with locals during these cross-section walks helped gather information on the characteristics of the city’s individual neighbourhoods and were used to complete the notes.

Since obtaining information from experts in the field of building proved difficult due to their limited accessibility (see above), but also due to the custom of long waits for appointments and unavailability as a symbol of professional status, a lot of effort went into making contact with the professional networks to find expert interviewees willing to respond beyond politeness. In order to gain information on the projects of urban development, obtain plans and learn about planning practice, the possibility of organising a conference with the joint participation of Bahir Dar

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1 | For further reading on the concept see Levine 2014 and Girma 2010.

University, the ETH Zurich, the EiABC of Addis Ababa University, the Technical University of Dortmund and the HafenCity University promised to gather experts in the field by creating a discussion platform under the academic roof. For the thesis, this workshop helped build trust in my work and added contacts that were before not visible to me. As a result, seven semi-structured interviews with specific sets of questions for the respective interviewees were eventually conducted. The experts were interviewed in a random manner according to their willingness to openly voice their opinions on urban development issues.

For the description of variants of everyday practice, four specific neighbourhoods were identified as sub-cases and are illustrated in dense descriptions (see chapter 6). A final phase of fieldwork was conducted in the sub-case sites to conduct interviews with residents on their biographies of urban residence and their current living situations. The sites were selected to represent the planning periods identified in chapter 3. Information on periods before the arrival of the Italians is difficult to trace, due to the advanced age of informants from the time period up to 1935. Therefore, there is no sub-case selected specifically for this time period. For each of the following four phases from the arrival of the Italians, “imperial modernism”, through the “socialist period” to “decentralisation” under the current government, a corresponding settlement area is identified. Within the sub-case sites, in-depth interviews with residents were conducted with 22 inhabitants of the sub-case sites. The interviews were semi-structured in-depth interviews, in which all respondents were questioned on the same range of topics related to their urban life. Candidates were identified according to stratified sampling criteria. Four categories were set-up: male under 30 years of age, male over 30 years of age, female under 30 years of age, female over 30 years of age. The age-line is derived from the average age of migration, the most recent data available being from the 1990s. An orientation to the overall average age did not seem sensible, as this was as low as 14.1 years for the male population in 1994. The average age for migrants from the rural areas, however, was 31.7, while the migrants from urban areas were exactly 30 years old on average (Golini et al. 2001: 180). As no information could be obtained on the average age of the female migrant population, their age groups for the interview selection are based on the figures for the males. With these criteria applied, the range of interviewees is expected to span individuals of both sexes before and after the frequent age of migration decision. With both sexes questioned in equal number, different gender perspectives are expected to be represented in the in-depth accounts. In the areas with an evident mix of religions, it was attempted to interview representatives of the diverse religions as much as possible. They were contacted on the doorstep and interviewed in their homes, mostly over a cup of coffee.

## 4.5 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The material collected during the fieldwork and reviews forms the database of the case study (Yin 2009: 119). The criteria for interpreting the findings from the data collection are set by the analytical framework and form the case study report (*ibid.*). In this thesis, the analysis is guided by the general research questions (see chapter 4.3). Therein, the multiple sources of data mentioned in chapter 4.4 serve to increase the reliability of results in the analysis. For this purpose, the data is triangulated and converged to support the facts by multiple sources of evidence (*ibid.*: 116) throughout the thesis. The data from secondary sources, such as the archive work and policy review, is contrasted by the accounts from primary sources like the interviews, mapping and observations and vice versa, to establish if they are congruent in their argumentation or if contradictions arise. Contradicting accounts are noted in the case study report. To answer the research questions on the site-specific rationales of statutory planning and everyday urbanisation in Bahir Dar and how do they produce and organise city structures, the data collected in fieldwork is linked to the findings through the analytical approach of explanation building. This is guided by the first two general research questions “How do the different rationales relate to each other?” and “What are the implications for future urban development?”.

The aim is to set up a focused description of the relation between planning and urbanisation in order to find out, how the two can be integrated. According to Robert Yin, explanation building can be described as a particular type of pattern matching, where the aim is to analyse the case study data by building an explanation about the processes and relations examined in the case (Yin 2009: 141). The explanation of a phenomenon is thereby defined as the stipulation of “a presumed set of causal links about it or how/why something happened” (*ibid.*). This proposal is followed in this investigation. For this purpose the data is collected and coded in categories according to the propositions of the material. The explanation building analysis has a narrative form, but should reflect theoretically significant propositions for the case and the general theory (*ibid.*). Where applicable, rival explanations are discussed in this approach, intended to be ruled out by argumentation and meant to increase the probability that the case study is exemplary (*ibid.*: 187). The nature of explanation building is iterative and the final explanation may not have been fully stipulated at the beginning of the study. It, therefore, differs from the other pattern-matching approaches. Instead, the evidence is examined, the theoretical positions revised and the evidence is examined once again in this iterative mode (*ibid.*: 143-44). This procedure has similarities with the analytical method of open coding, but refers to theoretical propositions to build the explanations, rather than being a topic-generating venture (*ibid.*: 35). Explanation building regarding the research questions, therefore, is conducted in the manner of assembling a temporary, dynamic and incomplete account of functional organisation

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on a neighbourhood scale using sub-case sites that can be expanded and revised by future research findings. The outcome is a re-conceptualisation of current understandings concerning the phenomenon of urbanisation in Bahir Dar and the discussion of current theoretical proposals in the light of the empirical findings.

Using the second general research question on how to adjust the normative underpinnings of planning to suit the local conditions and requirements of urbanisation, the results from the empirical chapters are used to expand and adapt the existing theories to form new paradigms for local planning and to suggest instruments to adequately accompany processes of urbanisation in Bahir Dar. The insights identified in case-study research are, hence, linked to the objective of policy revision and a revised toolbox for intervention. The policy advice is, thereby, formulated as an extension and result of the discussion of empirical evidence in the case study report.

