

Abstract

Inner city renewal in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, leads to the eviction of thousands of slum dwellers and their relocation into government-built condominium units, multi-storey housing blocks that now dominate the city's landscape. This thesis investigates how living in these condominium units shapes economic, social, and political practices intrinsic to Ethiopian culture, with a focus on residents relocated from informal settlements. The aim is to explore new ways of looking at relocation dynamics unfolding in Ethiopia: ex-post, after relocation, and with an emphasis on the role of local government. Discussing the condominium model, a growing solution to informal housing and population mushrooming, and governmental approaches to its effects, it contributes to a still-fledged literature on the long-term effects of relocation. The analysis is based on six months of fieldwork in Addis Ababa, in the Jemo One Condominium area, with a collection of data through observation, residential experience, interviews in Amharic with the inhabitants, and surveys with the administration of the area. This thesis applies social capital theory to holistically cover several areas of life in the condominium, with Robert Putnam's (1997, 2000) school of thought as the cornerstone. The economic and social aspect relies on attitudinal variables such as norms of reciprocity, kinship structures as networks, and popular social capital practices in Ethiopia like *iddir*, *eqqub*, and *mahber* as risk-sharing mechanisms. On the other hand, the political aspect focuses on assessing power consciousness and proximity between citizens and the local government, i.e. the *woreda*, as main parameters, using the variant linking social capital theory. Locating the discussion within the temporal becoming of the country, this thesis demonstrates how living in apartment blocks has transformed economic practices for former slum dwellers, once linked to life-sustaining support networks, now scanty and falling short to meet their needs. At the social level, it shows how the same extended networks are unworkable in the condominium areas and further affected by class and ethnic frictions in the blocks, leading to a loss of practices such as *mahber* and *eqqub*, and *iddir* used predominantly for self-interest and as a gesture of cultural courtesy. At the political level, it assesses how the relationship between local government and citizens has been weakened to make room for a political body more interested in the object,

i.e. the apartment block, than the subject, i.e. its residents. The findings of this study suggest that, as an enduring housing solution in Addis Ababa, the experiences of living in the condominium warrants continued investigation to provide a fuller picture of their limitations and how these might be addressed. In this context, the thesis highlights the importance of examining local government as a link in promoting social capital, and strongly recommends its ongoing use for future research. Further work might explore more affluent and ethnic social actors' perspectives within the area for a more accurate and comprehensive picture.