"They think we can eat the condominium"

Chronicles of Economic, Social and Political Practices in Addis Ababa's Condominiums

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Cover photo: Photograph of a condominium in Jemo One Condominium, Addis Ababa, 22 November 2022. The images in this dissertation, where not specified, are the property of Rachel Dubale.

"Seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno,
are not inferno,
and make them endure, give them space."

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

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.

Abbreviations

IHDP: Integrated Housing Development Programme

EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

DIR: Development Induced Relocation

DID: Development Induced Displacement

IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons

Recurrent Amharic words

Ato: Mister

Tiye: Lady

Bunna: Coffee

Injera: Spongy flatbread made from grain millet

Mahber: Association; ritual meetings of Orthodox connotation

Iddir: Association initially established to provide financial assistance for funeral services

Eqqub: Rotating savings association used to pool and distribute money among members

Lakso: Funeral

Lemat: Development

Hiwot: Life

Eta: Lottery

Newari: Inhabitant

Techeray: Renter

Woreda: Local government; district

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Moving on to the field, I have in my heart thousands of people to thank and I hope that, in some way, this thesis will do justice to all the former residents of Woreda 7, who spoke with me and welcomed me into their lives. Among them, I cannot fail to mention my paternal family and, in particular, my cousin Sele; Sele, from the days when you pushed me to go to the *woreda* to the afternoons spent eating *kolo*, I cannot put into words the effort you devoted to helping me; besides blood, an incredible affection, devotion, and respect binds me to you.

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Homeplace

"Abaye,[1] why does granny live in a box?"

That's how the eight-year-old version of me, stuck in the 'why' phase, would naively question my father about 'the Box' that was housing my paternal relatives. A living room crammed with worn-out sofas, flanked by a single room equally packed with mattresses, and the kesel[2] *always red-hot and ready to warm the* jebena[3]*'s bottom. Separating the Box from the outside was only a row of metal sheets, on which the rain beat down insistently over the wet season. To access it, one had to walk down a long driveway, dodge the trickle of urine, follow a dirt track, and there it was: the Box. Back then, the Box housed Granny, Uncle Jeje, Uncle Dessu, Auntie Beshu, Cousin Mary, Cousin Samry, and — extraordinarily, for our few months in Ethiopia — me, my father, and my mother. Yet, every day, the Box proved capable of accommodating many more people, with neighbours stopping by for a chat, my uncle's friends enjoying sips of* tella[4] *on the sofa, and my friend Rita stopping by to play with the excuse of borrowing a couple of* injera[5] *rolls. It was among the most cramped places I had ever slept in, yet for me, having no relatives in my homeplace in Italy apart from my parents, the Box was a magical and memorable place; so much so that the sound of the constant rain was like a lullaby. Granny used to braid my hair, the atmosphere was always livel , no one – from the neighbours to the authorities – ever came to bother us, and one was never bored.*

As an answer to my question, my father scolded me and warned me to be quiet.

This incipit illustrates the thesis's backbone: the importance of (re)making oneself at home, and how, in the Ethiopian context, this intertwines with the values and practices of community life.

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[1] Father in Amharic.
[2] Coal in Amharic.
[3] *Jebena* is an Amharic word for the Ethiopian coffee pot used during the traditional coffee ceremony.
[4] *Tella* is the Amharic word for a traditionally home-brewed beer.
[5] Traditional spongy flatbread made from grain millet.

The concept of making home goes beyond a narrative tied to a physical place and instead refers to a process involving individuals and their continual homemaking practices (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Besides the presence of family members, the noisy, daily dialogues in a crowded living room and negotiations over the lending of, or demand for, *injera* rolls also made Granny's Box my home in my recollections. These fragments of life, tempered by nostalgia, have not only allowed me to navigate beyond the apparent difficulty of sharing a few, often-dilapidated, square metres with eight relatives, but have also transcended geographical spaces, given the factual location of my home in Italy, offering a sense of comfort. Nevertheless, such practices were fleeting, and I soon found myself unable to return to that Box.

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1940, p. 189) notes: "Home is where one starts from." Such belief is also where my thesis starts from, with the broader aim of investigating new collective ways of making a home, where, in the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, this is increasingly determined by "new geographies of movement and settlement" (Walsh, 2011, p. 516). This introductory chapter provides an overview of my thesis, examining the changing urban landscape in Addis Ababa, theoretical gaps in the study of relocation and its effects on citizens, the objectives of my study in filling these gaps, with its practical consequences, and finally discusses potential limitations incurred in this thesis.

1.2 "*Abaye*, why does Granny no longer live in the Box?" Addis Ababa's changing landscape

A couple of years later, in 2010, I would ask my father a diametrically opposite question: "Abaye, why does Granny no longer live in the Box?" After more than 50 years of living in the area, she and my relatives were forced to leave. This sub-chapter gives a brief overview of Addis Ababa's urban context and how relocations differentiated it in the last decade.

The Box, as I called it when I was eight years old, refers to a house situated at that time in *Woreda* – district - number 7, in the central area of Kirkos sub-city, in Addis Ababa. From 2010 onwards, that house, along with 1896 other *kebele* – whose meaning will be examined in

greater detail later - houses, 402 private houses, six rented houses, 51 privately run businesses, and 23 rented businesses in the area (Land Development Administration, 24 February 2023) were demolished to make way for development projects commissioned by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

Woreda 7 is one of many areas in Addis Ababa targeted by the state-led megaproject Integrated Housing Development Programme (IHDP), a housing policy initiated in 2006 by the Ethiopian Ministry of Works and Urban Development, with an emphasis on, among other things, mitigating urban slums areas in the capital and improving the housing supply for the low-income population (UN-Habitat, 2011, p. 10).

Regarding the former, it is worth offering a few remarks on the urban context of Addis Ababa. The city's topography is somewhat peculiar when compared to other African capital cities: slums are spread throughout the entire city, with no distinction between wealthy and poor neighbourhoods. This is in contrast to other cities in the Greater Horn of Africa, such as Nairobi or Kampala, where the distinction is more marked (Charitonidou, 2022). The main motive for such urban coexistence in Ethiopia's geography is attributable to a lack of a permanent colonial ruler: without settlers, there was no spatial division between areas inhabited by them versus those inhabited by the local population, challenging the old-fashioned dichotomy of 'the West,' the side with formal houses, against 'the Rest,' the side permeated by urban informality (Charitonidou, 2022; Larsen et al., 2019, p. 3).

What, though, can one consider slums? Apropos of this, UN-Habitat defines slums as any housing structure lacking a permanent and climate-resilient construction, sufficient living space, easy access, safe affordable and sufficient water, sanitation facilities, and security of tenure to prevent forced evictions (UN-Habitat, 2014). Moreover, Ethiopian Urban Planners classify any housing structures that do not comply with planning laws and standards as slums (Kassahun, 2015, p.172). It is no wonder my grandmother's house met all the requirements to be considered as such.

In the last decade, the population of Addis Ababa has increased by almost two million (Macrotrends, 2023). For years, the growing population has clashed with the limited space available, with some ineffective plans to expand the city boundaries; see, for instance, the government's attempts in 2014 to expand the capital's borders to the surrounding Oromia region (Debelo & Soboka, 2022; Záhořík, 2017).

The Ethiopian leadership hailed the IHDP as a vision for a city capable of accommodating this rapid population growth; its proposed solution was the construction of massive apartment blocks of four or more storeys in the peri-urban areas of the capital, designed to house large numbers of people and serve as the primary alternative to central slums.

Biruk Terrefe (2020) describes the current government, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, as leading to a considerable change in Addis Ababa's urban scheme because of its ambitious projects designed to attract the city's elite and the diaspora, in contrast to the previous housing provision, mainly meant for low-income people (p. 379). However, rather than frame this as a shift, I consider current city planning in the capital as a continuation of the IHDP: the programme freed up inner city areas, and, consequently, the current government fills these spaces with recreational projects. Indeed, it is amusing to point out that the Museum of Art and Science, the latest government project inaugurated in October 2022, now stands on the ashes of the former informal space of Woreda 7.

Furthermore, to this day, high-rise apartment blocks jagging the skyline stand out, showing a city continually growing vertically rather than horizontally. Their message is loud and clear: Addis Ababa's condominiums are here to stay.

1.3 Sociability within New Geographies of Settlement

Cities are built on social relations (Jacobs, 1961; Rapoport, 1990). What, then, are the implications of changing the urban shape of Addis Ababa?

To answer this question, this section deals with the statement of the problem, analysing pragmatic gaps in the study.

Focusing on single-storey houses — to date the most common form of housing in Ethiopia — scholars typically depict social relations in Ethiopia through associations such as *iddir*, *eqqub*, and *mahber* (Gashayie & Singh, 2016; Kassahun, 2015; Pankhurst, 2008). From early times — and some more than others — all these associations have involved a network of people who meet regularly to offer members economic, emotional, or religious support. Their main strength lies in stability, while their main challenge is mobility (Grootaert, 1998).

As a matter of fact, moving people to apartment blocks in distinct areas of Addis Ababa has challenged such structures of sociability (Yntiso, 2008). Using the wording of Robert Putnam (1993) to clarify the meaning of structures of sociability, "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordi-nated actions" (p. 167) are now threatened by people settling in condominium blocks. In my bits of records disclosed in the introduction, everyday life in Woreda 7, with its *injera* requests or residential meetings that involve drinking *tella*, embodies such sociability structures. This demonstrates how, in the Ethiopian context, low-income households usually pool financial re-sources to share economic burdens.

For citizens, relocating means leaving aspects of their area that sustained everyday life eco-nomically, socially, and politically. Academically, there is now a wealth of research regarding the consequences of the relocation of Ethiopian citizens. Even before the topic was in vogue, when the first apartment blocks were populated in 2013, Gebre Yntiso (2008), Alula Pankhurst, and François Piguet (2009) had already evinced that relocation had catastrophic effects on low-in-come people and on the informal networks on which they relied for survival. Sadly, it did not take long for a housing policy conceived as pro-poor by the government to be reassessed by scholars as a speculative action aimed primarily at creating a utopian, modern, slum-free city (Abebe & Hesselberg, 2013; Ejigu, 2015, p. 5).

Despite the recognition of relocation's disruptive effects, two research gaps remain: what happens to citizens after the relocation within these condominium structures and, secondly, what is the local government's role in the new areas? Recent attempts to fill these gaps by, for example, Almaz Mekonnen (2019), Negera Gudeta Adula (2020), and Terefe Alene (2021), take a rather generalist approach to the issue, carrying out an analysis of government policies in toto rather than focusing on the micro-level, which is more effective in the context of research in Ethiopia, a country divided administratively and ethnically into several hamlets, with the result that citizens interface daily with, at most, only one of them (Ayele, 2015). Consequently, existing research is outdated and one-sided, hampering our understanding of the challenges of citizens within apartment blocks, i.e. the economic, social, and political dynamics that influence their everyday lives and which, for this reason, deserve to be investigated.

1.4 Displacement, Relocation, and Amharic Terminology

Navigating the different definitions of relocated people can be complicated and confusing; therefore, this section aims to draw distinctions between the different terms.

The terms displacement and relocation describe two intertwined processes; hence they often feature jointly. The term displacement describes the movement of something, in this case a group of people, from their original place or location. As Michael Cernea (2000) notes, it could also involve the expropriation of productive lands and other assets to make an alternative use possible. Relocation, in this context, refers to the act of moving to a new place and establishing oneself there (Kloosterboer, 2019).

Hence, when discussing Development-Induced Displacement (DID), the term refers to people who are displaced specifically to make way for development projects. Correspondingly, Development-Induced Relocations (DIR) are the settlements and adjustments that these people must undertake as a direct consequence of such development plans.

DID people also fall into the broader and more recent category (Adula, 2020) of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), which, according to a non-legally binding United Nations High Commission for Refugees definition, applies to "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence (…) who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border." Nevertheless, since displacement takes place within national borders, people affected by DID do not fit into the refugee category or status, leading to reduced international and academic attention to their situation (Endeshaw, 2016).

The denomination resettlement, often used as a synonym of relocation as the meaning per se is "to settle again," mainly features in juridical literature related to migration and refugee topics. For this reason, the term is not employed in this thesis.

Interestingly, within the Amharic language, there is a literal and faithful translation of the definition of DID, namely, *Be Lemat Ye Tenessu Sewochi,* where *Be lemat* denotes the causal 'for development reasons', *tenessu* the declension of the verb *mennesat* alias *displacement*, and *sewochi* the subject, i.e. people. The literal translation could be the following: People Displaced for Development Reasons. More importantly, the presence of a specific spatial term to describe this phenomenon suggests how rooted the issue is in the Ethiopian context.

Moreover, my initial interviewees were keen to explain how, within the Amharic language, this definition differs intrinsically from *Ye tefenakelu sewochi,* which, despite having a similar meaning, is rather employed to designate the displacement of people whose home has been destroyed due to armed conflicts or natural disasters, such as earthquakes or hurricanes. Both DID people and *ye tefenakelu sewochi* are involuntarily displaced from their residence, yet the former seem to be in a more preferential position as they have residential alternatives — be it a plot of land, funding to secure a temporary unit, or a suburban condominium — unlike *ye tefenakelu sewochi*, who have nothing to fall back on.

1.5 Moving the Conversation Forward

This short section outlines the aim of this research, its objective, the research question guiding it, and the methodology used to accomplish it. This thesis seeks to move the conversation on relocation issues in Ethiopia and the effects of social capital forward, questioning the outcomes of living in a condominium model and local government approaches to social capital. It starts from the general assumption that urban and social transformation are woven together in the capital's new socio-political landscape (Planel & Bridonneau, 2017).

The relocation of, in particular, low-income people into condominium complexes has brought to life a new expression in Amharic — *ye condominium hiwot*, the condominium lifestyle in English. The condominium lifestyle has economic, social, and political effects on citizens' ways of living.

The main research question that shapes this thesis is:

How does condominium life shape the economic, social, and political practices of Addis Ababa's (relocated) citizens?

My sub-questions are:

1. How have the livelihoods of the people relocated to Jemo One Condominium evolved since leaving their former neighbourhoods?

2. How do condominium inhabitants, particularly those who have been relocated, forge new ways of living collectively in Jemo One Condominium?

3. What is the result of linking Woreda 1 with its residents in Jemo One Condominium? As previously noted by Planel and Bridonneau (2017), condominium spaces can serve as "social — and potentially political — laboratories" (p.26). In my case, the Jemo One Condominium complex, popularly known only as Jemo, located in the outskirts of Addis Ababa, is the urban space where I investigated new collective living practices and interactions with the local administration. To do this, I spent six months in Addis Ababa, from September 2022 to March 2023, during which time I collected data about living in the condominium in a different way. I spent the first month living in a condominium with my relatives; subsequently, I regularly visited and spent

time in the area, doing interviews, attending meetings, and going to government offices to gather information. This thesis is the fruit of all of these experiences and practices.

1.6 Building Home and Knowledge Inside Condominiums

The following sub-chapter delves into the significance of the thesis, ranging from the real-world value of the study to its more theoretical significance.

Moving and living in condominium patterns is the current panacea for population growth in Addis Ababa. When I asked, Eyob, one of my interviewees, "Do you think condominium living will be in vogue in the future?," he replied:

> Yes, many are being built and will continue to be built in the future. No young people want to move to *Koye feche*,[6] an area that could accommodate the whole population of Dire Dawa, but they are forced to live there. The problem of finding housing is an imperative problem in Ethiopia, especially in Addis Ababa, and without condominium projects it will be impossible to get to grips with it quickly.

Eyob's statement not only emphasizes the current popularity of the condominium model as a housing solution, but also highlights the extent to which the local population is aware that phenomena such as relocation will continue to take place. Shifting the conversation to what to do ex-post is necessary in the Ethiopian academic context because it provides clarity regarding a way of life that is now becoming established and to which citizens are forced to adjust.

Investigating new ways of performing and implementing collective practices provides a practical, real-world value to this thesis. A home, beyond merely the building - that is, the places, the people, and all the peculiarities that make a place 'home' - means everything for individuals. If the home differs substantially in form and in the people who live there, as is the case with condominiums, research on how to transform the relocation site into a real home is necessary to

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[6] Koye Feche is an area situated in the Oromia region where condominiums are being constructed.

help relocated communities develop new ties and support networks, thereby easing both the economic and non-economic burdens of life.

Regarding a more in-depth study on the role of the *woreda*, as reported by Van Noorloos et al. (2019), African municipalities will be crucial in the coming years for developing ways to implement an inclusive urban future that considers the needs and rights of all citizens into account. Transposing this notion onto my research means stating that the role of the *woreda* is crucial in safeguarding the interests of Ethiopian citizens. Researching and evaluating the work of the *woreda* can be categorised as what Ahmad (2006) calls "soft infrastructure"; that is, that set of local-level knowledge needed to define community needs and service provisions.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

There are several potential limitations related to this research. Chapter III discusses the limitations of the methods and methodology used. In this introductory chapter, I will only briefly mention the limitations in terms of sample selection and the limitations related to the epistemology of this thesis.

When I wrote my research proposal, I took it for granted that isolating my sample — the relocated people — would be easy once I got into the field. However, condominium realities are home to far more than this particular group; they also involve renters, people who have the financial capacity to buy a flat, and people who have won condominium units through lottery systems. Each of them perceives the condominium lifestyle in their own way. This broadened my subject of study and made my research a challenge on a representative level: How to give everyone's voice a fair space? To overcome this problem, I decided to use DIR people as my primary sample and to include other people's voices only in relation to them.

The relocated people themselves were not always prone to participating in the interviews. Although condominium life is rarely studied, especially in connection with *woreda*, the sample population may feel the contrary, and I acknowledged this during my fieldwork.

For example, during my research, a man refused to be interviewed because he claimed that he had been interviewed for no less than five different studies and that he had obtained nothing meaningful in return. Apart from respecting his wishes, I could do nothing but reflect on the significance of my study and how my position as a researcher may or may not have undermined the community.

Furthermore, there are limitations related to the social capital theory I use in my thesis. This theory is convincing in my study because it holistically covers different areas of life in a new context, so much so that it has been used in the most diverse disciplines: sociology, economics, politics, and, more recently, development studies areas. Nevertheless, it is precisely the application of social capital theory across different domains that increasingly renders it a catch-all concept. Consequently, pragmatic gaps arise in its conceptualization, leading to somewhat confusing interpretations of the theory, particularly when it is not applied in the field.

At the same time, the vagueness of the notion of social capital also causes problems with respect to measuring social capital and its operationalization in the field (Adam & Rončević, 2003, p.160; Lin et al., 2001). Humnath Bhandari and Kumi Yasunobu (2009) state that "more empirical studies and testing of the concept on the ground is needed to develop a commonly accepted definition and measurement indicators that can explicitly disentangle and quantify its effects on overall development processes" (p.481).

When applied to the African continent, such limitations magnify, and scholars must therefore approach the application of social capital in Africa with extreme caution. In fact, in 1990, when it began to be widely used, the theory was tainted by coloniality: by categorising norms, customs, and networks in Africa in the same way as those in the West, researchers often concluded that the notion of social capital only confirmed that the Global South lagged behind the North, where African norms appeared different from Western ones (Fine, 2004, p.47; Meagher, 2005). Fortunately, the application of the theory over the years has given rise to an updated, de-colonial version to the theory, resulting in more meaningful studies on the use of social capital in Africa (see Baliamoune-Lutz, 2005; Van Rijn et al., 2012).

Chapter II

Literature Review

Relocation's effects on people have been analysed through different frameworks, depending on which element is considered. The human capital theory studies how human capital, i.e. the skills and knowledge an individual has in life, is an adaptive driver for individuals navigating a new site (Mincer, 1974; Schultz, 1961). Similarly, cultural capital theory identifies how cultural capital, framed as a person's social assets, influences the integration of relocated individuals into the new setting (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Though valuable, such approaches are limited in studying a process such as relocation and its concomitant social, economic, and political effects on individuals. As such, relying on these approaches in isolation risks flattening the magnitude of the phenomenon.

Michael Cernea made a breakthrough by formulating the Reconstruction and Development Model, also known as Cernea's model, which comprehensively analyses residents' livelihoods, community structures, and network ties (Cernea, 1997). Nonetheless, it draws on research material that is quantitative rather than qualitative (Planel & Bridonneau, 2017, pp. 25–26). As a result, policymakers tend to adopt this research model rather than more holistic studies. The social capital theory is often considered the best framework for studying the complexities of the effects of relocation because of its multi-dimensional approach. From a theory anchored in sociology, it has touched upon disciplines such as economics and politics over the years. This chapter studies the trajectory that the social capital theory has taken, focusing on its social, economic, and political value, and touching particularly on linking social capital theory. The second part of the review focuses on analysing the theory within the African context, specifically the Ethiopian context, concluding with a conceptual framework for the thesis.

2.1 Social Capital: The Glue that Binds

The following part of this literature review offers a general definition of social capital theory and its influential three schools of thought. Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, first employed the term social capital in academic circles in 1986 to theoretically define:

> ... the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition or in other words, to membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248).

Giving social value to the definition of capital, at that time more intrinsic to the discipline of economics, seemed peculiar. The trick to avoiding interpretative ambiguities was not to equate social capital with economic and financial types of capital — working, debt, trading capital — but rather to consider it a broader principle in its own right: "the 'capital' in social capital" , states Tristan Claridge of the Institute of Social Capital Research, "is more analogous with tangible and intangible resources, benefits, productivity and savings" (2020, p. 1).

As coined by Bourdieu (1986), social capital theory conceived each individual as belonging to a network of persons or relationships, anchored to each other by the norm of reciprocity. It is worth clarifying that the latter can be traced back to the category first established by Karl Polanyi (1957) in the different forms of economic integration underlying the allocation of resources in society, i.e. market exchange, redistribution, and reciprocity. While market exchange and redistribution characterise modern human societies — the former in the redistribution of resources by the government, the latter in the regulation of the buying and selling of said resources — reciprocity dates back to pre-modern societies. Unlike market exchange and

redistribution, it involves the exchange of goods and services between symmetrical groups, i.e. with similar behaviour, and, as a result, it comprises non-market and non-hierarchical relationships. Its embeddedness in social relationships, however, makes reciprocal forms of exchange persist to this day (Polanyi, 1957).

Scholars of social capital theory have often mentioned the norm of reciprocity. This is because although academics conceptualise it differently, the wording of social capital theory has remained similar.

There are three leading pioneers of social capital theory. The first, as mentioned above, is Bourdieu (1986), who conceptualised social capital as belonging to an individual rather than to the collective. In contrast to Bourdieu, James S. Coleman, a socio-economically oriented academic adopting a functionalist approach, defined social capital as a combination of different entities working together within a social structure to achieve a particular end (Adam & Rončević, 2003, pp. 159–160). He paved the way for the second school of thought on social capital. While I stick close to Coleman in this thesis, it is the third school of thought, devised by political scientist Robert Putnam, that best suits this research; specifically, the contribution his studies have made to the nexus between social capital and institutions.

Therefore, the pivot of this thesis is the collectivist definition of social capital coined by Putnam, which he describes as "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions" (Putnam, 1993, p. 167). Furthermore, the author distinguishes three main social capital components, which will guide this thesis. The first component is the cognitive element and relates to values such as trust; the second component is the structural dimension of social capital, such as networks; and the third component is the relational dimension, i.e. the practices that values and networks are fundamental to (Patulny, 2004, p.3; Putnam, 1993).

In an attempt to offer a more comprehensive definition of social capital, more recently, Bhandari and Yasunobu (2009) concluded that the theory is closer to an idea rather than a tangible phenomenon. They describe it as being "particularly rooted on the notion of trusts, norms,

and informal networks" (p. 486). Likewise, the notion of capital, generally regarded as money, has expanded. Neva Goodwin (2003) subdivides capital into financial, natural, produced, human, and, finally, social capital, which can help the reader understand the latter. She states that these versions of capital produce flows of economically desirable outputs: financial capital facilitates economic production; natural capital, the resources available in nature, is used to achieve produced capital, i.e. a flow of goods or services is derived from physical assets; and human capital represents the productive capacities usually obtained through education or training. Seen in this light, social capital represents a common thread that allows an individual or group to range between these different types of capital (Goodwin, 2003).

To simplify, social capital encompasses those social elements such as norms, networks of people, and interpersonal connections that facilitate the mobilisation of other kinds of capital (Claridge, 2020). To give a sense of this theory, academics define social capital as the glue that binds or even holds a community together to achieve financial, natural, produced, or human capital (Potapchuk et al., 1998). Intrigued by my research, even before I got to the field, people would hesitantly ask me: "What is social capital?" and, to give a concise answer, I would reply: "It is the glue that binds us."

2.2 Breaking Down Social Capital: Form, Level, and Survey

As shown in the previous chapter, there is a myriad of interpretations of social capital. While this is an asset of such a theory, it also poses a limitation to it: to this day, there is no consensus in the literature. This problem will be discussed in this sub-chapter, along with parameters employed to avoid it.

Ultimately, Theda Skocpol (1996) highlights the paradox of this theory in an article addressed to Robert Putnam: "Ironically for a scholar who calls for attention to social interconnectedness, Putnam works with atomistic concepts and data" (para. 11).

Indeed, the vagueness of the notion of social capital also causes problems when measuring social capital and its implementation in the field (Adam & Rončević, 2003, p. 160; Lin et al., 2001). Attempts have been made over the years to break down the notion and define its parameters. The following sections present the main parameters functional for this thesis.

At the conceptual level, social capital has been distinguished according to its form. The definition of horizontal social capital represents ties between individuals in the same community, where the community can be understood as a "cohesive, integrated social system" (Merry, 1981, as cited in Schneider, 2006, p. 14; Warner, 2001, p. 188). In contrast, vertical or hierarchical social capital occurs between individuals from different ranks (Warner, 2001).

A further subdivision is related to the level of social capital. This is referred to as the micro level when it deals with the social capital of the individual, the meso level when it deals with the social capital belonging to a group or organisation, and the macro level when the social capital studied is that of a community or society (Claridge, 2018a). When applying this subdivision, care must be taken not to over-simplify the social environment under study, as the level of social capital rarely fits neatly into categories; in practice, it is more likely to fall somewhere in the middle (Claridge, 2018a).

Furthermore, guidelines and questionnaires have been created to make the measurement of social capital more feasible in the field. Among the most popular resources are the Instruments of the Social Capital Assessment Tool and the Social Capital Integrated Questionnaire created by the World Bank to collect social capital data at the household, community, and organisational levels.

2.3 Whom Does it Concern? Bonding and Bridging Social Capital

Just as the concept of social capital has been broken down into its horizontal and vertical forms, the approach to the theory has developed along similar lines, especially in institutional economics and agency-oriented sociology (Meagher, 2005). What, though, is the use of social capital in practice? And whom specifically does it serve? Delving into who mainly benefits from

social capital can explain why, at its core, the concept has relevance in academia, and why various disciplines, from sociology to economics, are increasingly invested in studying it. The section below describes the nexus between social capital and poverty alleviation and engages the reader with some of the approaches developed in social capital theory.

In 1998, Christiaan Grootaert stated in a World Bank working paper on social capital that social capital impacts poverty alleviation. Indeed, where resources to meet basic needs such as food are lacking, the social element comes into play and helps to sustain the livelihood of those in poverty. Elements such as solidarity, knowledge, and reciprocity are fundamental for surviving in contexts of risk and uncertainty (Claridge, 2020). In point of fact, social capital has an economic and rational value, grounded on the concept that human beings are rational beings, acting out of self-interest (Scott, 2000). Social capital theorists have traditionally followed a more rationalist and utilitarian line of thought. In *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (1993), a book on his research on the Italian peninsula, Putnam describes how, in contrast to Southern Italy, the flourishing social capital in Northern Italy, at least in its early days, did not originate from people coming together to "subscribe to romantic ideas of solidarity and altruistic community", but rather as a way to get by in life (Adam & Rončević, 2003, p. 1974). Skocpol (1996) derides Alexis de Tocqueville for his idealisation of "voluntary groups springing up de novo from below, created by individuals in small geographic areas who spontaneously decide to associate to get things done 'outside of' government and politics" (para. 2), stating that Tocqueville ignored the motive for such local spontaneity: necessity.

The economic and rational value of social capital has been expressed in the literature with concepts such as risk-coping and risk-sharing (Grootaert, 1998; Portes, 1998). In the first case, the individual rationally decides to rely economically on a network of people to cope with an event ex post, after it has happened, e.g. by asking for loans, emotional assistance, or solidarity (Yilma et al., 2014). In the second case, by contrast, the mechanism is collective, involving a group of connections that mutually and rationally decide to distribute the risk among the different

members of the group, usually ex ante, adopting informal insurance systems (Dekker, 2004; Dercon, 2002; Woolcock, 2001).

Bonding and bridging social capital are two criteria used in social capital theory, particularly to study social capital and its connection with economic value and poverty alleviation. Bonding social capital, also called close social capital, functionally delineates a social capital between people sharing commonality in some fundamental respects (Schneider, 2006, p. 5; Van Staveren & Knorringa, 2007), whereas bridging social capital occurs between people with varied backgrounds, e.g. from different social groups, social classes, races, and religions. In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (2000) uses the bridging and bonding distinction, asserting that bonding social capital is sufficient for people to "get by" while bridging social capital is essential for "getting through", thus establishing a kind of hierarchy between the two approaches. This is evident in contexts of poverty: when the social circle in which one lives lacks resources, it becomes necessary to mobilise other social groups — across classes, religions, or races— and build bridges between individuals who possess greater financial, natural, produced, human, or social capital.

However, the distinction is far from clear-cut since bonding and bridging social capital are not mutually exclusive. For example, it may be that "in groups from different ethnic backgrounds people may find others of the same age and sex with a common educational background and interests" (Edward, 2004, as cited in Claridge, 2018b, p.3).

Moreover, some scholars have described bonding social capital as "perverse social capital" (Baycan & Öner, 2022; De Souza Briggs, 2003; Putnam, 2000) because the grouping of people, mainly based on shared characteristics, risks aggravating the very faulty lines on which the world is (often) based on, i.e. race and ethnicity, social class, and gender (De Souza Briggs, 2003). For instance, white supremacy generates substantial social capital; however, one would refrain from calling it a positive societal outcome.

Moreover, the dynamics implicit in belonging to a group can also take their toll on those involved; restrictions on individual freedom or the endless demands for continued membership, e.g. constant requests for reciprocal favours in the name of the collective, can lead people to perceiving social capital as a negative force (Baycan & Öner, 2022).

2.4 How To *Get Ahead?* Linking Social Capital

Grootaert (1998) states that "social capital is no panacea for all impediments" (p. 6). Indeed, there is no certainty that bridging or bonding social capital is enough to lift people out of poverty (Claridge, 2018a; Grootaert, 1998; Schneider, 2006). So, is it really possible to *get ahead* of poverty? In the following pages, I will discuss the intertwining of social capital and institutions and the institutional approach used in social capital theory, namely, linking social capital theory.

Many believe that institutions are the key to lifting people out of poverty. Putnam was among the first to apply the social capital framework to institutions such as regional governments in field research. Putnam's study (1993), reported in the book *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, came following the regionalisation of Italy. It found that, in Southern Italy, the state and the newly created local administrations did little to promote social capital in areas where it was minimal. However, this was to their detriment, as the north of the country, rich in social capital, was clearly showing economic success following the introduction of this policy. Putnam warned: "Development economists take note: Civic Matters", emphasizing that the civic community is crucial and a key factor in economic success (Putnam, 1993, p. 37).

Putnam's book represented fresh inspiration for academics and policymakers studying how the state, as articulated in its institutions, can encourage or even generate social capital. Since then, scholars have sought to understand the extent to which institutions can help form social capital.

As Mildred Warner (2001) states: "Building and maintaining networks was not a natural given; it requires investment" (p. 18), and often, the most effective investors are the state, and its apparatuses, as they have access to considerable resources and power (Stone & Hughes,

2002). This investment involves sharing resources and power in various ways: by supporting pre-existing civic organisations monetarily or otherwise, or by investing in creating new ones (Grootaert, 1998, p. 18).

The Mexican state giving peasants means of transport, Peter Evans (1996) evinces, will enable them to reach peasants in other areas and to organise themselves for the production and exchange of goods, thus increasing their income (p. 1121). In a study on Spain, Laura Huntoon (2001) provides further evidence of the positive role of government in fostering social capital among immigrant communities. In the late 1990s, Spain nurtured the social capital of such communities by providing funds to associations and non-governmental organisations that invited participation from immigrants of different countries. These initiatives proved to be a crucial tool for reducing conflict both among immigrants and between them and the Spanish state (Huntoon, 2001).

On this basis, the linking social capital theory has gained momentum in studying the interactions between institutions and social capital, emphasising their connection. Linking social capital underpins the theoretical background of this study, and a detailed account of its function will be given in this sub-chapter.

The theory of linking social capital investigates relations between people's social capital and institutions, whose main actors are citizens and the state, including its apparatuses (Beteille, 1999). According to the theory, institutions can choose to influence citizens' social capital: if it is not yet present, to help develop it; if it already exists — whether strong or weak — to maintain or enhance it. Essentially, this is a process for citizens that institutions decide to engage with, depending on the level of social capital in a given locality. As citizens and institutions belong to different levels of the societal power hierarchy, linking social capital has vertical relations as its object (Claridge, 2018b). Whilst in bridging social capital, such differences can beoverlooked, in linking social capital power differences are an explicit and conscious component of the relationship (Woolcock, 2001): a state apparatus, such as a local government, is aware, in essence, that it holds a comparative advantage in financial, natural, or produced, human capital, assets that

often translate into power. Equally, citizens do not deny that they have comparatively less power in this context (Beteille, 1999; Evans, 1996; Warner, 2001). The theory posits that when governments recognize their power and act accordingly—by investing in the community and its social capital, effectively acting as a link—the benefits extend to less powerful or excluded groups, creating new economic opportunities (Claridge, 2018b, p. 4). Beyond economic gains, institutions can serve as catalysts between individuals who do not know each other but trust the common bonds fostered through organizational connections (Schneider, 2006, p. 12).

For linking social capital theory to be effective, the state and its institutions must align with democratic practices, in balance with civic action. Only by doing so can the state and its institutions be the controller, provider, catalyst, and facilitator of social capital (Potapchuck et al., 1998; Warner, 2001, p. 189). Otherwise, the addition of the state to the social capital paradigm risks eroding the very basis of social capital, i.e. society, resulting in the development of perverse social capital that suppresses dissent and limits opportunities for citizens' participation (Ante, 2008; Evans, 1996; Schneider, 2006).

In this framework, what are commonly issues of power, instigated by a monopoly of such by the government, are overcome and eventually become just *power* for grassroots partnerships in a new, local space involving citizens and government (Cornwall, 2002).

The diagram below summarises bonding, bridging, and linking social capital and the possible interactions between them.

Figure 1

Relationship between Bonding, Bridging, and Linking Social Capital
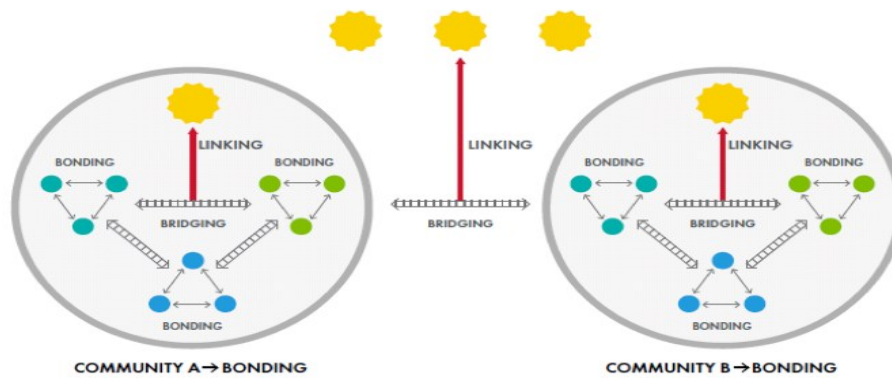
Source: *Mercy Corps*, 2017, p. 5.

Bonding, bridging, and linking occurs at different levels: both within a community (i.e. between individuals and different community groups) and between communities. For example, in Communities A and B three sets of three similar individuals bonded to each other, illustrated here by blue, green, or teal triads. Individuals and groups with bridging social capital are able to connect across divides with other groups or individuals in the community (e.g. blue triads connecting with green ones). Linking social capital enables these individuals or groups to connect to sources of power (represented here by yellow circles) within their community. A community can aggregate social capital communally — when community members are able to access bonding, bridging, and linking social capital equitably, and a community has strong relationships and networks that cross identity lines or move up hierarchies, which a community as a whole builds by bonding social capital. A bonded community can more easily bridge geographic or other divides in connecting with another community (e.g. Communities A and B have sufficient bonding social capital to connect with each other). Once connected, these communities are better equipped to organise themselves collectively, link with higher-level power sources external to their communities (illustrated by the three yellow circles above), and make demands of these sources (*Mercy Corps*, 2017, p. 5).

2.5 An Africanness of Social Capital

How has social capital theory, a concept conceived in the West, particularly the USA, been transposed to Africa? The sub-chapter below is an attempt to give an Africanness to social capital.

In the late 1990s, when social capital theory began to be applied in Africa, the lack of Western-like norms, connections, and customs only intensified the colonial regard for Southern countries as terra nulla, countries lacking social capital (Meagher, 2005; Roy, 2011, p. 314). As stated by Ben Fine (2004), "Africa [became] homogenised through contrast with the west and what is not" (p. 47). This assertion refers to the broader concept of colonial thinking about African customs during the European colonial era, in which colonialists denied the importance of indigenous values and practices —vieweing them as outdated and underdeveloped version compared to European customs (Mamdani, 2018; Roy, 2011) —and imposed their own social structures in the territories they occupied.

Turning the concept on its head, over the years, the emergence of more current and decolonial currents of study, such as southern urbanism (Roy, 2011), has disproven this western-centric notion. At the idiomatic level alone, many African societies have a myriad of idiomatic expressions mirroring components of social capital, such as interconnectedness, reciprocity, and trust.

In Swahili, a language widespread in East, Central, and Southern Africa, the expression *mkono nenda, mkono rudi*, which can be translated into English as "the hand that goes, does not go empty", indicates how a favour given, represented by the hand, will sooner or later be reciprocated by an equal favour. The expectation of a reciprocal contribution, of course, serves as a reminder of the previously highlighted hazards associated with social capital and the ways in which they can burden group members.

Moreover, the *Ubuntu* philosophy, which emerged in 1980, is a reflection of the concept of social capital as it simultaneously embodies interconnectedness, reciprocity, and trust, which has deterred enthusiasm in literature studies of social capital. The term literally means humanity in Nguni Bantu, a linguistic subgroup of the Bantu language mainly spread in Southern

Africa, but its notion refers to the broader concept of "I am because we are". If we must draw a

comparison with the West, then it would be that Africans are in favour of community life, in con-

trast to Western individualism, renowned for its Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, "*I* think and there-

fore *I* am" (Mligo, 2021, p. 11). For Africans, *Ubuntu* expresses community living and the desire

and need to invest in each other. Mligo (2021) explains that such concern "makes African sup-

press most pressing atrocities, such as hunger, poverty, isolation, or any other deprivations in

life" (p. 8). The power of caring for one another makes it possible to alleviate conditions such as

poverty. But even the *Ubuntu* philosophy, like the social capital theory, has a utilitarian ration-

ality at its core: the individual, as part of a community, does not put aside his or her own desire,

but understands that it is only by promoting the good of the whole community that he or she

will be able to achieve the greatest benefit (Lutz, 2009).

Likewise, Ubuntu philosophy, like social capital theory, is often vague. The trouble nowadays

is that "*Ubuntu* seems to mean almost anything one chooses" (Mligo, 2021, p. 9). The notion,

therefore, should be used with extreme caution.

2.6 Ethiopian Chronicles of Relocation

As the writer Dipo Falovin noted ironically, "Africa Is Not a Country". Every norm — legislative

or, as in this study, of possible reciprocity — must be contextualised. This sub-chapter provides

an overview of social capital in Ethiopia; the challenges it may be exposed to, particularly, when

people are relocated; and a historical overview of relocation in Addis Ababa.

Pertinently, in Ethiopia, and Amharic in particular, I found a metaphor for interconnected-

ness in the proverb *dr biyabr anbesa yasr*, translated into English as "when spider webs unite

they can tie up a lion". This idiom expresses how unity and connection can lead to greater things

that are unattainable individually.

Numerous studies show how social capital is necessary to alleviate poverty in Ethiopia.

Among the first, it is worth mentioning Degefa Tolossa (2007), who analyses how local

institutions, informal or otherwise, can improve food security in the rural communities of Ernessa and Garbi. He evinces how feeding arrangements such as *tassiga*, a ceremony where unmarried men scrape money together to kill an ox or bull and feed on it for over a week, are the mainstay of such communities' livelihood. More recently, Samuel Kassahun (2015) has investigated how the so-called brokers of social capital, i.e. *iddir*, *eqqub*, and *mahber* are essential to the livelihood of Addis Ababa's residents, with an accent on slum dwellers. All three represent voluntary and local community organisations (Planel & Bridonneau, 2017, p.39) whose presence seems unique to Ethiopia (Léonard, 2013). Today, one can find them in rural as well as urban areas and their existence is crucial for low-income people, providing access to the informal insurance market, means of support and credit (Grootaert, 1998, p. 4; Kassahun, 2015).

Iddirs were initially established to deal with emergencies related to funeral services and aimed to provide financial assistance to members through a collective fund (Bazezew & Chanie, 2015). Paying a variable, monthly amount, members of *iddir* are granted premium-based insurance and the cost for funerals is compensated. Nowadays, however, their function can be much broader, including a variety of actors who invest in the *iddir* for reasons beyond material assistance and funeral services, such as emotional help (Aredo, 2010; Pankhurst, 2008).

Eqqub is an optimal saving system. Each member contributes a fixed amount of money, and through a lottery system, one member at a time is entitled to withdraw the collected sum, helping them manage their finances. The *eqqub*, which is usually more restricted to close friends, relatives, or trusted colleagues than *iddirs* and *mahbers*, is underpinned by long-standing knowledge and trust (Gashayie & Singh, 2016).

Mahbers are organisations that usually carry a religious connotation, most often within the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian tradition, the country's major religion. Members meet periodically in a host's home to pray and receive God's blessings, with a priest leading the liturgical service (Ancel, 2005). Each gathering includes a banquet, or *diggis* in Amharic, with members taking turns to prepare food and drinks. Tradition holds that part of the food is shared with the needy in the name of a saint (Flemmen & Zenebe, 2016). Beyond their religious and charitable role,

mahbers also serve as spaces for exchanging information and providing psychological support to members. Moreover, *Mahber* resembles *senbet*, an organisation of members who meet periodically. However, the religious element is even more central in the case of the *senbet*, as membership is restricted to official parish members where the meeting takes place (Ancel, 2005, p. 100).

The tacit pact underlying trust-based networks and associations such as *iddir*, *eqqub*, and *mahbers* is that they rely on stable membership and, therefore, weakened by mobility (Grootaert, 1998, p. 8). Ethiopia is no exception to this trend: mobility puts a strain on citizens and their social capital.

Initially, this mobility was confined solely to the rural level, with several studies exploring the loss of social capital following large-scale foreign land acquisitions in lowland peripheries of Ethiopia, particularly after the 2008 world food price crisis (Hindeya, 2018).

Among the pioneers is Tsegaye Moreda, who investigates how, having scattered to different places, the Gumuz ethnic groups in the Benishangul-Gumuz region had to abandon traditional livelihoods based on access to natural resources, as well as the sharing of these among other villagers (Moreda, 2015, 2017).

Development practitioners have, rightly, classified such investments and their consequences as land grabs; yet, recent completion of the same in urban contexts fell under the broader concept of modernisation (Yntiso, 2008). Likewise, urban development has often been conceived as a quick fix to urban poverty, housing deficits, and inadequate infrastructure and services (Gebreegziabher, 2014; Van Noorloos et al., 2019). Paradoxically, comprehensive assessments that account for the perspectives of affected populations show the opposite as urban development is not always inclusive and integrative of citizens' needs and desires (Van Noorloos et al., 2019; Yntiso, 2008).

The first comprehensive urban strategy in Ethiopia was implemented in 2005. However, Ethiopians have a long-standing chronicle of urban settlement (Debelo & Soboka, 2022). Urban residents did not benefit from either the pre-Marxist revolution system prior to 1974 or the

housing policies of the Derg military junta, a Marxist-Leninist-inspired government that ruled the country from 1974 to 1987 (Erena et al., 2017; Gebreegziabher, 2014). Dawit Benti Erena et al. (2017) claim that Addis Abeba's population was forced to live in crowded areas legally under small-scale landlords control as early as the pre-1974 period. Regarding the Derg military junta, while it did accomplish gradual rent reduction, it also resulted in the government's direct engagement in the housing market: to the sound of the slogan "land to the tiller", the Derg appropriated land belonging to private individuals. Such a move did not prove advantageous for Ethiopian citizens, since, over time, the government's engagement began to closely resemble a land monopoly.

After the socialist government was overthrown, later governments, ruled from 1991 to 2018 by the coalition of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, initially prioritised rural areas as the nucleus of development policies, undermining urban city dwellers (Abebe & Hesselberg, 2013; Branch & Mampilly, 2015). By extension, Ethiopian literature at that time continued to focus on rural relocation while urban issues were left on the back burner. Literature on urban relocation in Ethiopia gained more attention from 2014 onwards (Pankhurst & Tiumelissan, 2014, pp. 1-2).

The urban populace and specifically the youth became a focus of attention during Ethiopia's 2005 elections. Addis Ababa was the epicentre of opposition to the EPRDF apparatus, with numerous strikes and protests led by young people, mostly unemployed, with "nothing to lose and everything to gain from participation" (Branch & Mampilly, 2015, p. 158). Hence, it is unsurprising that the EPRDF, led by President Meles Zenawi, switched its focus to an urban one in response to the post-2005 elections unrest (Fransen, 2008).

The EPRDF heralded infrastructure in the country as evidence of tangible city development (Mulugeta, 2020), though the population's perception of this, particularly the low-income fringe, was the opposite. In this context, the best-known project is the Integrated Housing Development Programme (IHDP), a state-led and state-funded programme elaborated in 2005 and initiated in 2006 with five main objectives: to increase the supply of housing for the low-income

population; to mitigate the expansion of slum areas; to increase employment opportunities for micro and small enterprises; to improve wealth creation; and to promote savings (Partnership for African Social & Governance Research, 2017). The evictions resulting from such programmes have opened spaces that the government, instead of allocating to housing, has increasingly filled with recreational amenities such as parks and museums.

Families living in slum dwellings were the main beneficiaries of the programme. When evicted, they were provided with three compensation options: financial compensation determined by an ad hoc committee; a plot of land; or peripheral condominiums, provided the occupants could demonstrate that they could pay 20% of the condominium and reimburse the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia for the 80% loan borrowed (Planel & Bridonneau, 2017, pp. 28-30). Those receiving land compensation occasionally sold their plots to rent condominium units closer to family members, making living in condominiums a favoured, though indirect, compensation method.

As a consequence of the IHDP, most of the beneficiaries, i.e. people living in central neighbourhoods such as those of the Kirkos sub-city, in dwellings considered slums, have been scattered throughout Addis Ababa, such as in distant housing condominiums, so-called apartment blocks, of four or more storeys located in different parts of Yeka, Bole, and Nefas Silk sub-cities.

2.7 Weighing Relocation

Does relocation truly benefit those it affects? The following sub-chapter explores the advantages and disadvantages of relocation, reviewing the literature related to relocation, particularly in urban Ethiopia.

There are advantages to living in condominiums compared to older housing types — mud and straw houses or single-storey buildings, which before the IHDP accounted for up to 95% of housing (Zewde & Schwab, 2022) — often lacking private bathrooms or kitchens. In terms of

hygiene and amenities, condominium units offer individual space for living, cooking, and bathing.

Yet moving into these buildings has come at a cost: beneficiaries lose much of their social capital, which, as noted above, is fundamental to Ethiopia's low-income class.

There is a wealth of research about social fabric loss following relocations in Addis Ababa. Gebre Yntiso (2008), Alula Pankhurst, and François Piguet (2009) started writing about the issue when it was still niche. They discovered that the process of relocating people from the inner city to new sites in the outskirts has disrupted the relocatees' business ties with customers, broken their informal survival networks, caused loss of locational advantage and jobs, and incurred high transport costs. Although the effects of such relocations also occur in the rest of the world, they are particularly notable in Addis Ababa, a city featuring not one but multiple business districts. Hence, people remain in their own "part of the city" to keep up with their businesses and livelihoods, making their economic activities less transferable and transactional (Fransen, 2008, p. 5),

In Addis Ababa, a city with one of the fastest-growing populations in Africa, the loss of social capital is likely to increase, especially since the condominium model is continued to be considered an effective housing solution to the mushrooming of the population.

Relocation impacts citizens' life economically, socially, and politically. Research on relocation in the Ethiopian context has correctly noted how these effects have strongly impacted the social capital of DIR people. However, these studies omitted what happens to such citizens after relocation. I am concerned with the economic, social, and political effects of living in condominium housing, with an emphasis on the role of local government in promoting social capital.

The 2000s produced evidence — not only in the West, with such studies as those by Evans (1996) and Huntoon (2001) in Spain, but also in Africa — of how local governments can foster social capital. This link has also been highlighted at a discursive level by African presidents like Uganda's President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, who has referred to access to social capital as part of his political campaign to eradicate poverty (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003, p. 1).

In Somalia, after the fall of Siad Barré's government in 1991, civil disorder and economic crisis ruled the country. Bosaso, a small village in Somalia, proved to be the exception thanks to a local warlord organising a security force and a council of clan elders, with support from and to local people's networks. In addition to fostering peace, this arrangement allowed the city to continue to profit from trade while the rest of the nation was at a standstill (Mubarak, 1997).

In a similar context, the local administration in a rural region of Zimbabwe trusted community networks and cooperated with them to manage the area's wildlife resources. Local government and citizens agreed on a procedure for sharing revenues and allocating responsibilities, establishing a space where they could collectively manage wildlife resources. Thanks to the increased revenue from safaris and tourism, they improved wildlife protection, increased social cohesion, and created new economic opportunities for the local community and the government (Grootaert, 1998, p. 12; Scoones & Matose, 1993).

In Ethiopia, literature on local government and its role in promoting social capital, especially concerning urban relocations to condominiums, still needs to be explored extensively. Alternatively, where scholars have addressed the governmental matter, they have tended to do so broadly, questioning the role of government as a whole. For example, Gezahegn Abebe and Jan Hesselberg (2013) evaluated the IHDP and the national government, asserting that, at that time, "service provision among selected relocation sites is poor and varies widely" (p.40) and disregarded the loss of citizens' social capital. According to them, the government could be accused of speculative urbanism.

As previously mentioned, local governments stepping into social capital is a process. As such, Abebe and Hesselberg's research, like many other studies, is justified, since it took place in the immediate aftermath, i.e. *during o*r *immediately after* the relocation, when not enough time had passed for scholars to detect the dynamics of the condominium context, particularly regarding social capital and the role of local government.

Although the relocated people had lived in their new apartment buildings for more than a decade, a considerable amount of time was required to analyse how the local government

reinvigorated their social fabric; consequently, more recent studies continue to adopt a general-ist approach to the link between social capital and local government.

Recently, the juncture between social capital and institutions has been the subject of exten-sive study. Almaz Mekonnen (2019) in her examination of livelihoods (lost), compensation, and human rights impacts, seems to hit the nail on the head when she writes that previous studies "gave less emphasis to its consequence on social capital and experiences to rebuild it" (p. 5). However, she does not diverge much from these studies, as her analysis of respondents' opin-ions of the government (Mekonnen, 2019, p. 39) focuses on the short term and on whether the compensation provided was adequate. Nothing, moreover, is said about how social capital can be re-created.

Negera Gudeta Adula's (2020) *The Case Study of Kirkos Sub City* (one of Addis Ababa's 11 sub-cities), puts the government on trial from a policymaking point of view and discredits it for disregarding legal frameworks when implementing relocations. An informant of hers inspires a local approach to the study of the condominium areas, stating that "the woreda officials prom-ised us a lot about our accessibility to social services but there were inadequate social services after we came here" (Adula, 2020, p. 5). However, the author decides not to elaborate further. Terefe Alene (2021) echoes the previous authors by investigating the loss of locational ad-vantages, focusing on infrastructural challenges after relocation, drawing the conclusion that the national government and city administration should do more towards the social capital of citizens, without providing any explanation on *how*.

2.8 Conceptual Framework on the Ground

This thesis seeks new ways of looking at relocation in Ethiopia ex post, and the effects on so-cial capital, by discussing the condominium model itself and local government approaches to so-cial capital.

The following part of this literature review describes in greater detail the conceptual framework of this thesis, meaning the use of linking social capital theory adapted to the Ethiopian context and its institutional framework, and its implementation on the ground.

Theorists of linking social capital theory have already suggested adopting a local-institutional approach to social capital. Evans (1996) explains that "the state contribution to social capital is general and from a distance" (p. 1120). Similarly, Zemelak Ayitenew Ayele (2015) describes nationally driven approaches on the matter as "remote (...) often uninformed about local needs, demands and particularities" (p. 185). As a result, such a top-down lens is inconclusive for studies of social capital. On the contrary, a decentralisation of the approach, taking, for instance, into account local government perspectives, is suitable for unravelling the combination and, indeed, the intertwining of the institution and social capital (Evans, 1996; Flora, 1998).

In both Putnam's (1993) and Evans's (1996) early attempts to add an institutional perspective to social capital studies, and in the work of the first real theorists of linking social capital (Grootaert, 1998; Warner, 2001), concepts such as the state and its apparatuses — government, regions, municipalities, or local governments — were used interchangeably, somewhat blurring the notion of a local-institutional perspective. To help us understand this, we turn to the current of everyday statehood. This concept seeks to go beyond the traditional view of the state, which can often feel distant or disconnected from how citizens perceive it. Instead, it aims to explore smaller, yet equally important, entities that people interact with in their everyday lives and perceive as just as official as the state itself, demonstrating 'the everyday practice of governance by individuals and groups, including both state-related institutions, whether legally designed or not, and other entities that shape citizens' experiences of governance (Jones, 2020, p. 47).

Linking social capital theory is the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis. In addition, to make dynamics at the local level feasible, I make use of the everyday statehood notion of state-related institutions to build the conceptual framework of this thesis. One can find many state-related institutions in a study of Ethiopia — a state that has formally adopted decentralisation as its pivotal institutional design since it transitioned from a military regime to civilian

rule in 1991 (Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2008). Ethnically, Ethiopia has eleven regional states and two autonomous cities, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. Each region is further divided into *zones*, and below each zone is a *woreda*, which resembles the political notion of municipal districts, but can also be employed to designate a specific geographical site. Below each *woreda* is the *kebele*, whose function and authority have now fallen into disuse and devolved to the aforementioned, especially in urban centres (Vértesy & Lemango, 2022). In sum, Daniel Mulugeta (2020) states that "there are multiple entry points, to say the least, for an ethnographic study of the state" (p. 36). Based on this skeletal apparatus, this thesis works within the state-related institution framework of the *woreda*, currently the best political institution in Ethiopia for revealing the encounters between citizens and institutions at the lowest tier of governance (Mulugeta, 2020). The *woreda* acts as custodian of utilities, for instance, the water supply, electricity, transportation, as well as other public needs and amenities, such as streets, parks, and open spaces in the neighbourhood (Stebek, 2013). To these obligations and duties, one could add local bureaucratic functions such as collecting local taxes, issuing identity documents, and managing agricultural development (Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2008).

At the structural level, the *woreda*, like the regions and the *kebele*, is divided into three bodies: an elected head of the administration; a council with an executive committee; and a sector bureau (Ayele, 2014; Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2008). After preparing and approving its budget, the *woreda* receives block grants from the regions (Shiferaw, 2007). Such a neuralgic organisation should avoid conflicts of interest: the council counterbalances the head of administration and this, in turn, is overseen by the committee. Moreover, citizens have the right to participate in every step of the development of projects (Shiferaw, 2007).

The main research question that guides my thesis is:

How does condominium life shape the economic, social, and political practices of Ethiopian (relocated) citizens?

These are my sub-questions:

1. How have the livelihoods of the people relocated to Jemo One Condominium evolved since leaving their former neighbourhoods?

2. How do condominium inhabitants, particularly those who have been relocated, forge new ways of living collectively in Jemo One Condominium?

3. What is the result of linking Woreda 1 with its residents in Jemo One Condominium?

DIR people form the primary 'unit of analysis' in my thesis. However, since the leading study site, the condominium area, is inhabited by not only DIR people, but also homeowners and, to a lesser extent, renters, I also widened the study to include them. As Putnam's social capital theory is the prime cornerstone of this study, the operationalisation of social capital is mainly concerned with behavioural variables and attitudes. It therefore uses values such as trust and reciprocity as norms, nuclear kinship and extensive kinship structures as networks, and *iddir*, *eqqub*, and *mahber* as popular social capital practices in Ethiopia. Since, as seen above, social capital affects the economy of people, especially low-income people, this framework serves to explain the economic effects of relocation. This thesis also takes the *woreda* administration as a second, micro level of analysis. I explore the level of governance practices using two main parameters of linking social capital theory: power consciousness, namely, the awareness of both citizens and *woreda* of their respective powers in the social context; and proximity, meaning the social closeness between the citizens and the *woreda*.

Finally, in presenting my data, I adopt a Processual Approach; that is, an approach that studies and analyses reality by relating the events occurring in a given context, in my case Ethiopia, and the becoming of networks (Abbott, 2016). Taking into account the temporal dynamics of social processes, it organises the data chronologically.

By doing so, it seeks to contextualise factors attributable to condominium life and, more broadly, those attributable to the broader Ethiopian context. Beyond Chapters I, II, and III, which engage the reader with my study in general, Chapter IV is my first real empirical chapter, where the starting point is not the relocation to Jemo One Condominium but the social,

economic, and political life in the old neighbourhood before displacement. Chapter V, on the other hand, unpacks Jemo One Condominium and the economic and social experiences of DIR people in the area. Chapter VI deals specifically with the social practices in Jemo One Condominium. Finally, Chapter VI analyses political practices in the area.

Conclusion

Chapter II has set out the theoretical and conceptual foundations of this thesis. The theoretical framework is the theory of social capital, a theory that, albeit criticised as vague for its multitude of interpretations, investigates several aspects of the effects of relocation on citizens. At the social level, it analyses the connections underlying social relations through values such as trust, reciprocity, and social practices. The latter can be used at the economic level to implement mechanisms such as risk-coping and risk-sharing, and, in some cases, to alleviate poverty. Relying extensively on the Putnamian school of thought, this thesis uses the linking social capital theory at the political level, a theory that proposes to see the role of government in social capital. Moreover, the main parameters this thesis considers are distinctions between horizontal and vertical relations, bonding and bridging connections, and, in the political case, power consciousness and proximity between citizens and local government. When transposed to the Ethiopian context, social capital theory is conceived in practices such as *iddir*, *eqqub*, and *mahber*, mechanisms of association aimed at supporting members in various ways. Such mechanisms were challenged in Addis Ababa by development projects, which resulted in the scattering of former slum residents across various locations, including the condominium that is the focus of this thesis. With the final emphasis on the role of local government, i.e. the *woreda*, a reality rarely studied in the literature about condominium living, the objectives, the implementation of the theory, and the structure behind this thesis are unfolded. Chapter III deals with the methods and methodologies used in this thesis during the fieldwork phase, and, afterwards, in analysing the data.

Chapter III

Methods and Methodology

We now turn to the methods and methodological framework used in collecting and analysing the data. The evidence presented in this thesis is based on a six-month field study (25 September 2022–25 March 2023) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Therefore, this chapter initially explores where the study took place, the people in the study, and the administrative environments considered. Subsequently, the chapter looks at how the information was analysed, including the obstacles encountered during the research and ethical reflections on my position as a researcher.

3.1 Addis Ababa as a Research Setting

This sub-chapter is dedicated to a short geographic and administrative overview of Addis Ababa, the city of the study.

Addis Ababa is the capital and largest city of Ethiopia. Because of its great size, covering an area of 540 km², and with an urban population of 5.5 million people (Macrotrends, 2023), Addis Ababa is administrated through divisions in addition to the traditional *woreda* districts. The capital comprises 11 sub-cities called *kifle-ketemas* in Amharic (Erena et al., 2017; Government of Ethiopia, 2023). The areas considered in the research are the sub-cities of Kirkos and Nefas Silk Lafto. The first sub-city, in particular Woreda 7, is used as a starting point for a process analysis of the modification of collective practices vis-à-vis condominiums.

Figure 2

Addis Ababa sub-cities
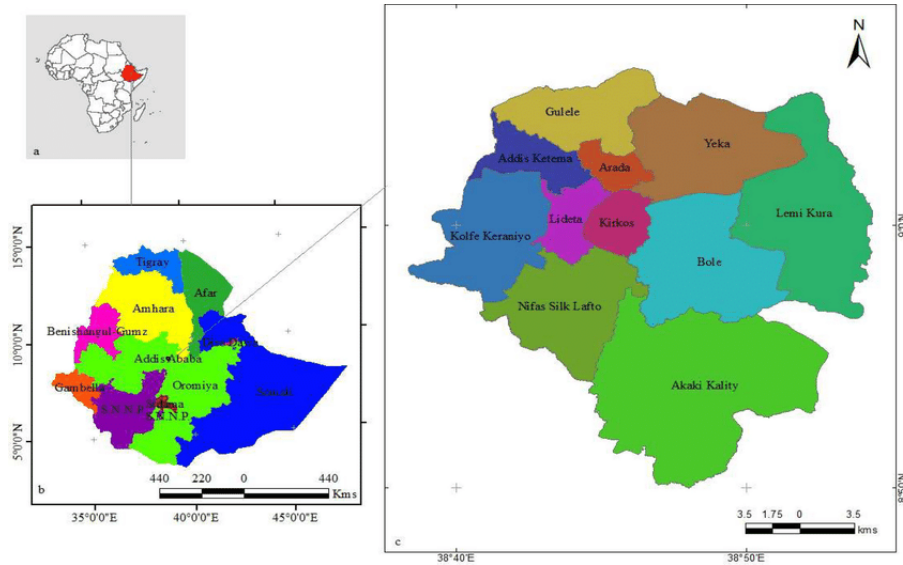
Source: Ayele et al*.,* 2022.

One major drawback of selecting Addis Ababa as a research setting is that it creates a blind spot for smaller cities in Ethiopia, such as Gondar or Awassa, where relocations to condominiums are also happening, and which have a more sizeable population, but remain under-studied. However, as noted in the literature review, relocation in Addis Ababa creates specific challenges for social capital because the city has multiple main commercial areas. Consequently, residents remain tied to a particular part of the city to run their businesses and sustain their livelihoods (Fransen, 2008), unlike in Gondar and Awassa, where there is only a single, limited commercial centre. Further research could assess whether the effects of living in a condominium are generalisable or specific to Addis Ababa.

3.2 Jemo One Condominium as Leading Site

Within Addis Ababa, the site-specific research is Jemo One Condominium, and this sub-chapter is concerned with that area. The research site is Jemo One Condominium, located in a southwestern suburb of the city, within the sub-city of Nefas Silk. The object of study is mainly the people who relocated to Jemo One Condominium and the unfolding of their lives in the area. To a lesser extent, the study includes the homeowners or renters living in Jemo One Condominium.

The area is administered by Woreda 1, and the relevant administrative departments and committees are also included as a further level of this study.

Completed in 2010, Jemo One Condominium is one of the first and largest condominium clusters created by the IHDP in the city (UN-Habitat, 2011). The condominium complex includes 337 residential and 50 blocks, whose roof area is 286 m² and 216 m², respectively (A. Kebede, 2015, p. 25). Jemo One Condominium also stands apart from its sister condominium projects, Jemo Two Condominium and Jemo Three Condominium, simply because of its scale: Jemo Two has 190 blocks and Jemo Three has 120. (A. Kebede, 2015, p. 26).

Figure 3

Jemo One Condominium location Map
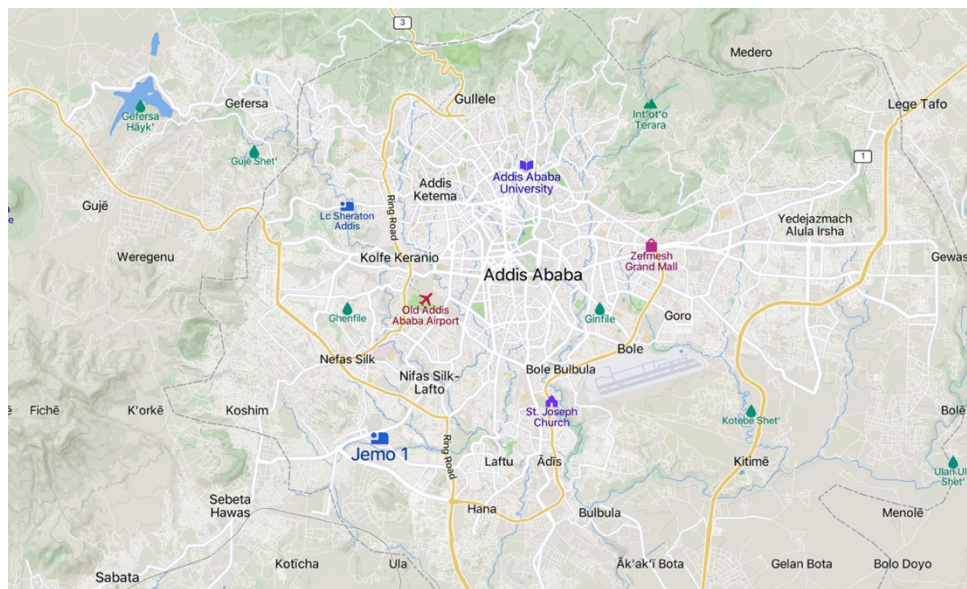
Source: Mapcarta.

3.3.1 Jemo One Condominium as a Meaningful Research Site: From the Early Times to the Present

Currently, there are 9.769 households in Jemo One Condominium, although there are no statistical data on the total number of inhabitants living in the condominium complex (Nefas Silk sub-

city, 22 November 2022). The implementation of development plans resulted in 826 persons

being relocated from previous neighbourhoods in the centre of Addis Ababa to Jemo One Condo-

minium (Nefas Silk sub-city, 22 November 2022).

Several factors make the location of Jemo One Condominium ideal for my research.

Firstly, I have prior knowledge of the area, as some of my paternal relatives live in Jemo One

and Three Condominiums. This was of great help, especially during the initial stages of my re-

search, concerned with observing and gathering the first respondents.

Linking social capital is a process that develops over a number of years. Thus, unlike Addis

Ababa's newer condominiums, Jemo One Condominium, one of the first condominiums inhab-

ited after the pilot project in Bole Gerji, offers an opportunity to explore economic, social, and

political practices that have been crystallising out over more than 13 years.

At the same time, the Jemo One Condominium has become increasingly popular among the

inhabitants of Addis Ababa: not only have a large number of people settled there, but other cate-

gories of city dwellers have moved into the condominiums by means other than displacement of

any kind (Zewude, 2016, p. 6). *Techeray*, the so-called renters in Amharic, can afford a large

monthly payment, and *be eta ye mettu sewech*, people who won a condominium unit through the

national lottery (*eta*), are increasingly populating the area. While the former stay in the area for

a short period of time, often renting units temporarily, the latter stay in the area permanently.

Consequently, Jemo One Condominium is highly innovative insofar as it mirrors the constantly

evolving economic, social, and political dynamics of the Ethiopian context.

3.3 Research by Observation, Word of Mouth, and Beyond

During six months of fieldwork, I conducted a cross-sectional study involving several stages or

strategies. What follows is a description of the steps followed for this process.

Firstly, I went to Jemo's *woreda*, Woreda 1, where I handed in a letter of support for my research, written by my supervisor and co-supervisor, in order to obtain permission from the authorities to study the area.

A few days later, once permission was obtained, I started my research. Since part of the investigation focuses on observable items (the condominium itself), the first month was predominantly ethnographic and during this period I lived in Jemo One Condominium, hosted by some distant family members. I conducted a slow profiling of the area at the local level in line with phase one of Urban Profiling (UN-Habitat, 2008), and a participant observation strategy to understand the living conditions in the area.

During this month, I also had the chance to apply, especially with my family members, the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, a qualitative inquiry oriented on developing a partnership between the researcher and the interlocutors "in an effort to investigate phenomena *with* rather than *on* the local populations" (Wiederhold, 2015, p. 607). The PAR method positions respondents as local experts, making them tour guides and storytellers. Through techniques such as transect walks (inherent to PAR), the researcher walks with community members, to "glean local knowledge" of the dwellers and the places visited (Wiederhold, 2015, p. 609). I was thus able to familiarise myself with the Jemo One Condominium while also giving, though informally, residents a chance to become familiar with me.

The next steps and methods of my data inquiry took place in the following months, albeit not chronologically, but often in overlapping order. To summarise, I used a mixed methodology to comprehensively observe citizens' actions, the local administration, and their possible interplay. The *woreda* personnel and their actions in the area were identified using convenience samples and further investigated through surveys. These surveys were composed based on the guidance of the Social Capital Assessment Tool and delivered to different departments of the *woreda*: the *woreda* in general (see APPENDIX 1); the electricity department (APPENDIX 2); the water department (APPENDIX 3); the garbage collection department (APPENDIX 4); the transport department (APPENDIX 5); and the sewage department (APPENDIX 6). The surveys were drafted

in English and then translated into Amharic with the help of a family member. Value surveys, delivered and collected one week later, are a valid tool for gathering data from officials (Patulny, 2004). In this study, their use allowed a fair degree of response from the staff — approaching 100 per cent — and it lessened the chance of an uncooperative attitude.

To finalise the answers to these questionnaires, I made two visits to the sub-city of Nefas Silk to access the *woreda* dossier, and one to the sub-city of Kirkos to obtain data such as the number of blocks, inhabitants, houses, and persons relocated to Jemo One Condominium.

As for the people of Jemo One Condominium, I initially used a purpose sampling technique, as I aimed first to identify the citizens relocated to Jemo. Once the first group was identified, I relied on word of mouth to widen my scope. The primary method used to gather information was to conduct and record semi-structured interviews. Interestingly, this was at the expense of the informants' expectations of questionnaires.

The research process resembled the following: visit an interviewee's house; conduct and record the interviews — amidst shouting, various interruptions, and *bunna* ceremonies, which I shall elaborate on later — and conclude by asking "do you know anyone else who now lives in the block and like yourself was relocated to Jemo?" Depending on the answer, I would then proceed (or not) to the house of the following interviewee. This allowed me to increase my sample considerably, as in the case of Mamush, illustrated in the graph.

Figure 4

An Example of Word-of-Mouth Effect

From one interviewee, Mamush, my scope extended, by word of mouth, to three other people. Moreover, the method of semi-structured interviews and word of mouth allowed for information to be obtained without putting the interviewees under pressure (De Vries & Beuving, 2015).

All stages were accompanied by a preliminary "chewing over of the data," meaning a reflection on the data gathered through a notebook used to record my observations and thoughts. Though I initially kept the notebook more for personal purposes than for the research itself, it later proved to be a vital and additional data source. Sections derived from my field notes are hereby marked in italics.

For instance, regarding my interviews in the homes of relocated people, I wrote on 13 October 2022:

What I love about researching other people's homes is that every home is different: some homes have lavish decorations in eccentric colours, others are more discreet. Huge 62-inch TVs are displayed on antique furniture, bare walls with cracks covered over. Walls with huge banners depicting missing figures, cupboards full of family photos, and pictures of people with or without degrees. In their own homes, the interviewees relax their muscles, and I sense that they literally feel they are in a protected bubble, their own, which I have the temporary privilege of being part of. And I smile as they tell me "make yourself at home" emphasizing the concept, i.e. feel free to be yourself. There is nothing like home. Home is everything.

Although the main interview venue, houses were not my only research location. "No field site is static, just as no research inquiry is static" (Gupta & Kelly, 2014, p. 6). Instead, my field sites were fluid places, which, while primarily in Jemo One Condominium, bring to life what George E. Marcus (1995) professed, preaching multi-sited ethnographies to capture "the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities" (p. 96). As such, I conducted interviews in the most disparate locations. Reading *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs (1961), I

was intrigued by how she described the movements of passers-by in Greenwich Village as an "'intricate ballet''; if I had to describe the intricate ballet of my research, I would speak of three distinct movements: one on the way to houses, where elderly people usually live; another on the streets, where I met middle-aged people going to or returning from work; and the last outside the house, in a pub or administration offices, to meet most of my young interviewees and the *woreda* and committees administration.

The 'while' of my interviews is equally important to mention: while peeling onions for the preparation of celebrations; while holding babies in my arms; while standing in the middle of a market tent — the examples of exceptional situations are endless. Integrating myself into the day-to-day activities of people and Jemo was necessary to obtain data. Yet, in the sub-chapter on limitations, I reflect on how unromantic and disharmonious my participation *with* and *to* the community was initially.

Moreover, as field research is an ongoing process from which one continues to learn, midway through the research trajectory, I had to re-adopt purpose sampling to obtain a more calibrated ratio of young, mainly relocated respondents. Since young people make up a large percentage of Addis Ababa's population, with 40% of the population under the age of 14 (Ethiopia People 2020), I predicted that a significant percentage of youngsters could provide great insights into the forging of practices in new collective arrangements.

Besides gathering young respondents, I added interviews with members of Jemo's committees. These people deviated from my original research sample but proved crucial in assessing the social practices in Jemo One Condominium.

In each research method, be it surveys or interviews, I made sure to obtain the respondents' permission, typically in oral form. In the case of interviews in particular, participants were informed that I would use an audio-recorder to facilitate the data storage. Furthermore, I made myself available for all sorts of inquiries on my research topic, assuring participants that they could stop the interviews whenever they felt like, and suppress the recording if needed.

3.4 Collect, Categorise, and Analyse

At the end of my fieldwork, I obtained six surveys from Jemo One Condominium's administration, which I triangulated using the data — numbers — found in the two visits to Nefas Silk. In addition, I conducted 38 interviews and three Focus Group Discussions, one of which was unforeseen (see section 3.7, 'Research methodology limitations'). 37 interviews and three Focus Group Discussions were conducted in Amharic, while one interview was conducted in English, at the respondent's request. In total, my sample size amounted to 50 people. The following tables provide a summary of the participants.

Table 1

Overview Participants Fieldwork

Total 50 participants	Interviews	Focus Group Discussions	Total Female Participants	Total Male Participants	Total Young Participants	Total Middle-Aged Participants	Total Elderly participants
	38	3	22	28	18	19	13

Table 2

Overview Interviewees Fieldwork

Total Probe	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
38 Interviews	17	21	38
YOUNG	4	13	17
MIDDLE AGED	7	7	14
ELDERLY	6	1	7

Table 3

Overview Focus Group Discussions Fieldwork

Total Probe	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
3 FGD	5	7	12
YOUNG	1	/	1
MIDDLE AGED	2	3	5
ELDERLY	2	4	6

Once the records were finished, I translated them from Amharic to English. After translating them, I classified them according to the format "Name_BlockNumber_Date," and then stored the data on Atlas.ti software. Once I had collected all the interviews and Focus Group Discussions, I divided the interviewees into categories such as "elderly", "middle-aged", and "young." The Ethiopia Central Statistics Agency considers older people aged 55 and over, middle-aged people aged 30 to 54, and young people aged 15 to 29. I used these parameters to divide my informants into groups.

I proceeded to analyse the contents by creating 23 codes, identifying, for instance, what the obstacles were in creating social practices in apartment buildings — represented by codes such as "architecture", "unfamiliarity", "tenants", "mix of different social classes", "ethnicity" — or qualitative distinctions, creating codes such as "social life in Jemo: positive perception" or "social life in Jemo: negative perception". Storing and analysing the data via Atlas.ti allowed an ordered view of the data and facilitated the analysis process, as I combined different codes to notice patterns, but also possible logical correlations, such as one between a negative perception of social life in Jemo One Condominium, the young age of the respondents, and the variable ethnicity.

When identifying people in the thesis, I used nicknames and not their real name. However, when explicitly requested by them, I used further nicknames provided by their interviewees,

such as Rebbash, which means annoying in Amharic. Throughout the thesis, I also made sure to further anonymise the identity of the participants if the topic touched upon was particularly sensitive, as in the case of ethnicity or drug use.

3.5 Exploring Unity in Times of Disunity

Each method and methodology has its pros and cons, and my research was no exception. In this section, I will discuss how the disadvantages experienced throughout the process turned out to be surmountable and therefore not crucial to the outcome of my research.

At times, the research methods proved to be quite challenging, even bringing a note of hilarity to my research. On 3 October 2022, I wrote in the field notes about the Participatory Action Research method that:

"as effective as it is in grasping as much information as possible, I sometimes spot far too much information, and without a notepad or recorder, it almost seems to fly by. Plus, Abel [a guardian of the area] walks way too fast!"

At other times, it was hard to stick to tête-à-tête interviews. Since the interviews often took place in homes, during *bunna* or lunches, family members, who had also been relocated, often joined in, adding their perspective to an interview. Initially, it was difficult to curb this interference, so much so that one of my first interviews soon took on the characteristics of a Focus Group Discussion, and I eventually categorized it as such. With time, however, I learned to maintain the two-way interview, expressly soliciting the interviewee's opinion and asking the other individuals to elaborate on their point of view in a separate interview.

In other circumstances the limitations related to the context in which I carried out research rather than to the choice of methods per se. Retrospectively, my research proposal devoted just four lines to the limitations of doing research in a conflict zone. I wrote that "Addis Ababa is currently [it was the end of June 2022] part of the 'Yellow areas' as reported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while a large part of the country is labelled as 'Red' because of conflict

reasons, leaving Covid-19 related ones aside. If the situation aggravates for either of the two scenarios, I am open to postpone my research or re-adapt it."

Today, Addis Ababa remains a Yellow Area, surrounded by patches of places coloured red, with, as I write, the latest tensions occurring only a week ago during the Victory of Adwa celebrations (March 2, 2022).

Addis Ababa is considered a protected bubble. Any conflict is on the fringes of the country, yet de facto blandishes the capital from time to time, if only in a non-material way. Thus, the complications of conducting research in situ in a conflict zone, albeit at intervals, is often underestimated. Indeed, it affected the conduct of my research in multiple ways.

From a practical point of view, several demonstrations blocked roads, making it difficult for me to reach Jemo One Condominium from where I was living.

The fluctuating reality of Addis Ababa being an area prone to conflicts also led to ethical considerations about my research. In my field notes, I discuss the ethics of "researching the general concept of unity in times of disunity" to reflect on the knock-on effects of my research. Although rare, it occasionally happened that the interviewees lingered regretfully on memories of their neighbourhood, openly mourning past and more cheerful times. This made me wonder how appropriate the topic was to investigate. After all, "[f]or traumatised individuals and groups, silence may be a coping, not just a survival strategy" (Goodhand, 2000, p. 15).

At the same time, countless enthusiastic responses from interviewees told me they were also recalling happy moments. I adopted a dual solution: I respected moments of grim silence when necessary, and equally accepted thrills of happiness.

Furthermore, the inhabitants, at least those of Jemo One Condominium, seemed to hover in an air of suspicion. Ultimately, "[r]esearch, like any other form of intervention, occurs within an intensely political environment and is unlikely to be viewed by local actors as neutral or altruistic" (Goodhand, 2000, p. 12). Especially in the early days, this attitude undermined my ability to conduct interviews. In a country where wars often have an intra-ethnic matrix, looking local and speaking the Amharic language has a slight advantage. Had I been a Caucasian, non-Amharic

speaker, perhaps I would have been less threatening in their eyes. I think that throughout my

fieldwork I was seen as politically significant, though generally in a non-threatening way, and

people approached me with high expectations, asking to be interviewed in the hope of a future

pay-off. This perception was reinforced by my being born and raised in the West — elements of

privilege that often translate into having status in Ethiopia. While, in the first case, the only solu-

tion to reach Jemo was —trivially —to wait, in the second case, I tried to make the role of my re-

search clear from the outset and often received a positive response, so that I could continue the

interview.

3.6 "In the end, you live inside development": Reflections From and After the Field

Social science researchers are continuously required to take stock of their positionality concern-

ing their research, particularly at the fieldwork stage (Holmes, 2020). What is somewhat ironic,

however, is how recently the very practice of devoting space to one's positionality, to the geo-

graphical and therefore *social* location from which one writes, has been criticised as ineffective,

especially from a feminist standpoint. This creates a Matryoshka-like effect: reflecting on one's

positionality requires one to not only describe oneself in context but also to step back and criti-

cally examine that very act of self-reflection, like nested dolls revealing layers within layers. In

this section, I will do so by shedding light on my positionality while avoiding the risks associated

with expressing it.

   Positionality is usually framed through the dichotomy of insider versus outsider. The term

insider is used to designate someone conducting research in a familiar habitat while the out-

sider carries research away from it (Adu-Ampong & Adams, 2020; Holmes, 2020). Each position

has its privileges and limitations. The insider has familiarity with the research site and people

and is perceived as having local knowledge, though local people might withhold information

from the researcher precisely because of this granted knowledge. On the other hand, the out-

sider lacks prior knowledge of the research site, but their position may be a door opener when

researching sensitive topics because of their perceived, less threatening role (Adu-Ampong & Adams, 2020; Holmes, 2020).

In my research proposal, reflecting on my positionality, I wrote that my position as a researcher was right in the middle of the track but that it might prevent me from being run over by the train.

This is because my identity and life trajectories blur the distinction between insider and outsider. Here comes the barrage of identifiers for my persona: I am a woman, I am black, *but* —is it really an adversative *'but'*? — born in Italy, but from Ethiopian parents, I am — I thought at the time — familiar with the Ethiopian research context having lived there; I speak Amharic fluently despite studying at a university in the West; and, all in all, I have been living most of my life on that 'side' of the world. In conclusion, my persona is a continuous negotiation of these labels, which may or may not give me the legitimate authority to speak *about* and *on* specific topics.

Writing a paragraph on positionality is increasingly used as an expedient scapegoat for every unethical error the researcher might commit in a community or geographic location. The section is framed to prove adherence to institutional and academic protocols, yet questions of power and advantages often remain unanswered. To avoid this, at least once the research is accomplished, it is necessary to reflect on what it means to speak *of*, *for*, and *with* others.

Can my mere virtue of being of Ethiopian descent and having family ties in the context give me the right to address and express myself on behalf of an entire community? The following is an episode I witnessed in Addis Ababa.

As we strolled through the streets, Hermiyas told me about a close friend who had been relocated from the central neighbourhood of Kazanchis to Gergi. "Le lemat," he said - for development projects. Then, with a wry smile, he added, "In your neighbourhood in Italy there is no such thing as being displaced for development, is there? In the end, you live inside development."

Perhaps said in admiration of Italy, perhaps in mockery, what Hermiyas' sentence suggests is that my position does not allow me to understand what being moved for development directly entails, though it does not deny me the opportunity to speak for others.

There are no simple answers on how to avoid harm when speaking 'in place' of others. Linda Alcoff (1991) recommends, for example, practising more receptive community listening rather than one-way talking in a rush to "teach rather than listen to a less-privileged speaker" (p. 24). I believe I have accomplished this.

However, in the act of writing or recounting, 'myself' will always mediate what is said or heard, providing me with a narrative (Borland, 2002), which will inevitably distort the integrity of the community (Alcoff, 1991, p. 20). This applies to narrative scholarship and, by extension, to my thesis.

Once the field research is over, sheltered in our tender homes, we have to ask ourselves: what have I given in return to the community I have worked with? And, how can my writing avoid undermining its struggles?

To this end, it is essential to devote a section of my thesis to the practice of 'giving back in a research setting'. The practice of reciprocity in social relations, not to be confused with charity, has been a prominent point for discussion in the social sciences. Here, I emphasise how much this practice cannot be discarded in research in the Ethiopian context, which has among its pivots networks of help and reciprocity. Indeed, several times my informants, talking about their *iddir*, told me that "even an offering, the smallest one, has value for us."

One might consider my mingling in 'mundane' everyday activities as part of 'giving back' to the community. Yet, I cannot deny how this, at least initially, was also done to make me familiar to the interlocutors and for my research. Clare Gupta and Alice Bridget Kelly (2014) outline different ways of giving back: from practical ones such as bringing food and money into a community to more 'theoretical ones' such as becoming an activist for community causes. 'Giving back' is broad and includes non-material sharing (Diver & Higgins, 2014). Yet, none of these is the

ultimate solution; on the contrary, it is up to each researcher to figure out what to do and how to give back.

In my context, this translated into both practical and non-practical actions. Thus, I was buying a plastic water bottle from a respondent who owned a shop, participating monetarily in an *iddir*, as well as maintaining the relationships created with the community and the participants by stopping by for a *bunna* or serving at a ceremony. Beyond the value of giving back to a community as a form of gratitude, I believe the practice has erased some of that veil of hypocrisy in doing social capital research.

Katherine Borland (2002) discusses extending the conversation with interlocutors after data collection (pp. 334–346). By engaging with participants in this way and seeking confirmation of one's interpretations, researchers can move beyond the limitations of their own interpretive authority.

There is a tendency to think that fieldwork, and thus interactions with interlocutors, ends the moment one goes home; in an increasingly digitised world, this is hard, if not impossible: interlocutors send a greeting message, when before it was a phone call or a little chat during a *bunna*, and continue, unintentionally, to contribute to my reflections. Even during the editing of my thesis, I aim and hope to include these contributions and carry on an ongoing reflection of my data and how I present them.

Conclusion

The data in this thesis are the result of different methods and gathered during different phases in Jemo One Condominium, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The first month was an ethnographic month, in which I familiarised myself with the environment by living there, more than ten years after my first visit, and observed and visited the place with local people. In the following months, I selected my participants, mainly by word of mouth, and interviewed them. Data were triangulated with visits I made to the sub-cities of Kirkos and Nefas Silk. The *woreda* and its staff, subjected mainly to questionnaires, were equally crucial in imparting insights about life in

the apartment block, as were the committees. In collecting data, the 'where' and 'while' were equally important, having collected data in several locations — inside houses, on the street, and outside — and during celebrations or sadder events. Although I tried to ensure the integrity of my research, I report in the last sub-chapters what it meant to do research with people affected by unpleasant events — be it relocation, war, or both. By doing so, I push the reflection further, promising to reflect on how I present and record data while writing this thesis. In the following chapter, Chapter IV, I examine the former informal areas of the people relocated to Jemo One Condominium, offering a peek into the old reality of the people to take the reader through the significance of the process of moving to the condominiums.

Chapter IV

Recollections of Living in Woreda 7

This is the first empirical chapter of the thesis. It deals, in a broad sense, with analysing the former places of the relocated people from different perspectives: architectural, economic, social, and political. Exploring all angles of the site is, in fact, a prerequisite for understanding to what extent condominium life is a turnaround for Ethiopian people. It should be noted that the interviews did not take place in the setting of the informal housing of the now-demolished Woreda 7 but in Jemo One Condominium. In Chapter II, I anticipate how the word *woreda* is used to express a municipality's political concept and to designate a geographical site. To assist the reader, the first sub-chapters locate the *woreda* within the broader concept of a geographical area, while the last sub-chapter deals with the *woreda* as a political reality.

4.1 The Former Whereabouts of Relocated People

Addis Ababa's sub-city of Kirkos is undoubtedly one of the capital's attractive summits. Diplomatically, Kirkos hosts national headquarters, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Innovation and Technology, as well as international ones, like the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Recently, the area has attracted tourists who, dazed by the hustle and bustle of the capital, can enjoy the peaceful oasis of Unity Park, the latest construction of Friendship Park and, inaugurated in October 2022, the Museum of Art and Science. Due to its popularity, over the years, the area has been the site of famous international hotel chains such as Sheraton Hotels and Hilton Hotels.

Its surroundings are popularly referred to as *Wucciguddai*, Amharic for Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheraton area or Hilton area. Correspondingly, its inhabitants are nicknamed *Ye Wucciguddai sewoch*, meaning "the people from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [area]," or *Ye Hilton sewoch*, meaning the "people from the Hilton [area]."

Although a diplomatic and political hub, this area had a high degree of sprawling urban informality; this district, which includes Woreda 7, was divided into four *kebeles*: 21, 22, 24, and 25. Beginning in 2010, the informal space was cleared out to make room for other urban development projects, which materialised nine years later in recreational venues like the Museum of Art and Science and flats that, given their high price, were probably intended for tourists. The following picture, Figure 5, is a comparison of the study area's aerial view in 2009 and 2023. In the first image, informal dwellings are sprawled across the area, while in the second image green spaces and new structures alternate sharply in the new urban landscape.

Figure 5: *Aerial Views of the area Pre- and Post-Demolition*

Adapted from *Google Earth*.

In the following sub-chapter, I discuss this space before its demolition, demonstrating the correlation between the spatial setting of the housing and the social space.

The informal housing environment, being characterised by single-storey houses built with mud or corrugated iron, leaning on each other, had little to share with the general, rather expensive style of the affluent side of the district. Toilets were mainly holes dug in the ground, while showers were outside and at a distance from the houses. It is difficult to estimate how many people lived in each house, and therefore in the *woreda*. However, Land Development Administration records (2023) suggest that each house hosted a minimum of five residents. I managed to meet a handful of them in Jemo One Condominium. I will expand on the context in which I

met them in the following chapters but here I present a reconstruction of the facts I gathered on this side of Woreda 7 in Kirkos.

Citizens themselves built the first houses in the area during the era of Emperor Haile Selassie, from 1930 to 1974. As Selemon, a former middle-aged driver from the site, now relocated to Jemo One Condominium, explained to me, "there was never a shortage of mud in the area", and, when a new house was needed, "we [the inhabitants] would dig it out of the soil that was still fresh from the rain and transports it to the place where we wanted to build the house."

Residents usually performed all the building tasks, except during a short period, from 1974 to 1987, during the Derg, when the government itself provided materials including nails, sheets, and workers to renovate existing houses or build new ones, so-called *kebele* houses, in an attempt to formalise and manage the spatial organisation of the country (Charitonidou, 2022; UN-Habitat, 2007). In fact, during the Derg, Ethiopia witnessed the creation of *kebele* (popularly elected neighbourhood administrations) and informal vernacular houses, which, to this day, are state-owned (Charitonidou, 2022).

The *kebele* were in charge of collecting taxes from the inhabitants, using the funds for the development of the neighbourhood itself, as well as settling legal disputes and leading cooperatives (Larsen et al., 2019; UN-Habitat, 2007).

Selemon was one of my first interviewees, but his statement was confirmed by many others. Regarding the area, Abel, a former student of the *woreda*, now 29 years old, was at pains to explain to me how "the area in which the houses in the old neighbourhood developed was narrow, and consequently, the houses were arranged in a disorganized manner, almost on top of each other." To fit into the tiny land space, the construction of the houses defied building regulations, blurring the boundaries between one house and another. Figure 6 is a floor plan representing an instance of the informal space next to the Sheraton Hotel, in Woreda 7, pre-destruction, which is circled to show the structure and organisation of the houses.

Figure 6

Section Planimetry of Woreda 7 in 2009

Adapted from *Land Development Administration*, 2023.

Nevertheless, the spatial setting of the housing was also mentioned as one of the benefits of literally living clustered together.

The setting of the 'old neighbourhood', as interviewees frequently referred to it, almost forced socialisation. Already in 1975, Michel Foucault foretold how the architecture and organisation of a physical space instil social behaviours among inhabitants. Effectively, non-verbal studies of the environment, such as the stream of man-environment studies of which Amos Rapoport is the mainstay, have shown how the built environment influences how humans live, to the point of affirming that "we are told how to behave partly through the environment" (Rapoport, 1990, p. 60).

At that time, inhabitants' behaviour, inevitably, was not very private. *Ato*[7] Ayalew told me that "in the old neighbourhood everyone knew everything about everyone, everyone knew what was in your *messob*." The metaphor of the *messob*, the basket where the *injera* is stored, explains how the physical closeness between households meant that everyone knew everything about

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[7] *Ato* is a form of address in Amharic, equivalent to Mister.

each other, to the point where your neighbour would know how much food you had stored in the household, the clue to your economic capacity.

Samrawit, a 23-year-old peer of mine, was the only interview I conducted in English. I had invited her for the interview, and her brothers encouraged her to respond in English, seemingly to show off, as it appeared to me, that their sister was highly proficient in the language. Samrawit was still a child when she was relocated to Jemo One Condominium, and she explained, seemingly amused, "[y]ou know, you couldn't even cry in peace because someone would hear you and ask *what's wrong? What's the problem?*" As she talked to me, sitting on Jemo One Condominium's pavement, with her glances and laughter and the '*you know*' clearly pronounced, Samrawit made me feel like an accomplice to an unpleasant and, at the same time, amusing memory: that of sharing a few square metres with many people. And yet, as I think back, the lack of privacy in a domestic environment, however annoying, showed how reassuring it was to find a shoulder to lean on and, even, cry.

The proximity of the houses was not only a source of emotional comfort but also a practical matter. As Samrawit explainex, "it happened that no one was home and could open the door for me, so I used to enter my house through the neighbours' windows."

The side of the Woreda 7, saturated with housing structures and people, demonstrates how urban space can shape the networks of sociability and, to a greater extent, how individuals react to a given environment (Rapoport, 1990). This fact is further confirmed by the words of Burtucan, an older lady now living in Jemo One Condominium, who explained: "In our neighbourhood, architecturally speaking, each house was leaning on the other and it was almost spontaneous to also lean emotionally on each other." Soon, building houses next to each other no longer demonstrated an architectural choice but rather a reflection of a cultural practice: the art of living together.

4.2 Engaging with "Off-Home" Economic Activities

"While the tourists at the Hilton enjoyed drinks by the pool, outside there was us, we were outside with equipment to clean their shoes, waiting for them to come out." This sentence, spoken by Laké, a former young inhabitant of Woreda 7, now living in Jemo One Condominium, paints a picture of the economic conditions of the inhabitants of Woreda 7's poorest neighbourhood and the contradiction between wealthy tourists and people living in scarcity in the area before relocation. This sub-chapter digs into former Woreda 7's residents' economic situation and reliance on the area.

The area of Woreda 7 was visited by the wealthiest Ethiopians and visitors, yet the same could not be said for the former inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Most of the inhabitants of Woreda 7, at least those living in *kebele*s 22, 23, 24, and 25, belonged to the low-income class and were generally poor. This can be broadly understood through parameters such as food insecurity and limited access to basic services, and all its socio-economic manifestations like hunger, poor sanitation, and social discrimination (United Nations). The area's social structure was, in a sense, maintained throughout the years because, as Selemon explained in an interview, "those, the few, who ended up getting rich, left the neighbourhood and bought property in other areas of the capital."

The cost of living was relatively low in those days in Addis Ababa (Gebremedhin & Whelan, 2008), and even more so at the informal site of Woreda 7. My interview data state that electricity cost three or four birrs[8] — this point will be explored later — while five cents filled five jerrycans of water and *shiro*,[9] one of the main dishes consumed daily by the population, was obtained for one birr. Albeit the country's economic status at the time was not ideal, monetary inflation was not influencing the Ethiopian economy as is the case now: to give an idea, from 2003 (the period to which the examples refer to) to 2021, inflation doubled from 13.7% to 26.8% (The World Bank, 2023).

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[8] To give the reader an idea, 1 Birr is currently 0.017 euros.
[9] *Shiro* is a famous Ethiopian stew made of chickpeas flour.

At the time, prices remained relatively stable, so much so that interviewee Zewdi, a young guy now settled in Jemo One Condominium, explained that, even twenty years later, he still remembered when the cost of shiro rose to one birr and fifty cents. We were at the Oldies Pub in Jemo One Condominium, a rowdy bar with a convivial atmosphere. He recalled, "I was twelve years old then, and I remember we started going around the houses with the injera plate empty, so that others, moved by love and compassion, would add the shiro to it."

One of his friends, Eyared, around the same age and with a similar childhood background as Zewdi, meddled in the conversation and recounted, "*Berebaso* shoes,[10] the only pair of shoes we wore all year round, were 75 cents, and I remember when they came to cost a birr."

He raised his hands to the sky, mocking his initial despair, and Zewdi and I laughed.

Zewdi's and Eyared's accounts, evoking memories of when they were both 12 years old, illustrate how prices did not fluctuate significantly then. Furthermore, they show how dwellers were impacted by variations of 50 and 25 cents, respectively, so much so that, in Zewdi's words, they had to turn to the other neighbourhood inhabitants to cope with price increases.

In terms of the neighbourhood's economic conditions, one can distinguish two pivots on which the inhabitants rested: the first, which I will now discuss, lies just outside the neighbourhood itself, while the second lies within it and, as Zewdi suggested, concerns the inhabitants of the district itself. The second will be dealt with later.

The economic life of Woreda 7's poorer residents was mainly based on the popular tourist sites established in Kirkos sub-city; being within walking distance of hotels such as the Sheraton or the Hilton had its advantages. Around the area, there were several fluid "off-home activities," to borrow the words of Habtamu Atlaw Gebre (2014), performed by adults and young people. Adults, mostly men, usually worked in the formal business sector, acting as tour guides, drivers for visitors, bricklayers to finish hotel rooms, and, occasionally, cooking in the hotel's restaurant sector. Sometimes, the formal work did not necessarily concern the hotel area but moved to factories also located there. Women were involved in formal off-home activities, too, albeit to a

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[10] Berebaso is an Ethiopian shoe brand.

lesser degree compared to men, for instance doing labour work at *Ye Kir Fabrica*, a well-known twine factory at the time.

However, everyday work was far more popular in the area, with young people being the main economic players in this setting and supplementing the family's income. Jobs such as *listro*, i.e. cleaning shoes, as reported earlier regarding the interviewee Laké, cleaning ambassadors' cars by lurking in front of hotels, or being a money collector in minibuses, were plentiful, and they allowed young people to earn money after school quickly, easily, and without any formal obligation to report the next day. In the cases of both formal and non-formal work, the proceeds did not suffer from any markdowns due to transport prices since every job was literally 'on the doorstep'.

Selemon's summary of the economic fortune of living in the neighbourhood is that "[i]t was a neighbourhood where many white people came, and many worked around them." In rare, but not impossible, cases, one could even have the good fortune to improve one's economic condition, like Eyared, who explained to me that:

> In the old neighbourhood I was a driver and *listro*, I also cleaned cars of Hilton's vacationers, in this way I met a white family who allowed me and my family to change our lives and support us economically and otherwise to this day. Since I met them, they made it possible for me to finish high school without having to work.

Interviewers reported further tangible locational advantages of Woreda 7. In those days, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs employees often did not to finish their catering food at lunch, and anyone outside the department could enjoy their leftovers. Thus, the poor inhabitants of Woreda 7 would go and collect these scraps. At other times, leftovers were accessible in the dumpster. Here is an anecdote from Zewdi about this:

> At home we had trouble eating the leftovers, we didn't like those, but the ones from the Ministry of Foreign Affair were a whole other story. There is a rumour going around, apparently a guy was looking through the rubbish one day and a gentleman on his way to the Sheraton, we lived right on the corner, gave him five birrs. Back in

the day with five birrs you could buy *ambasha*[11] or *injera*, but the guy with that money had bought himself a torch so he could rummage through the rubbish bins better. When asked '*Why did you do that?,*' the boy replied '*Well, much better all the good stuff I find here in the dumpster than the ambasha!*'.

In retrospect, I think Zewdi's interview had been one of the interviews where I cried and laughed the most simultaneously. While drinking a beer, he could not stop himself from sharing anecdotes, and I wondered if it had been him being a talkative person, me asking great questions, or simply a few too many beers in his stomach.

At once amusing and painful, his anecdote best illustrates the relationship between the inhabitants of the informal side of Woreda 7 and the area in which they lived. This area, or rather the employees working there, provided them with a job, i.e. finance, but also food, i.e. material goods. Now, one has to ask: What kind of relationship occurred between the working inhabitants and the area where they worked? Was it a unilateral relationship or one of multilateral dependence? If, on the one hand, the inhabitants needed the area for employment, on the other hand, one could argue that hotels and other working establishments concomitantly required, at least in those days, human capital, i.e. people to fill positions such as drivers, tour guides, and cooks. This suggests a form of multilateral and mutual dependence insofar as inhabitants and working establishments mutually need and benefit from each others.

Nevertheless, the future course of things brings a different answer. In fact, after the relocation of the inhabitants to the capital's suburbs, it was relatively easy to find new staff. As Selemon — who has the same name and age as the above-mentioned driver, except this Selemon used to be a chef at the Sheraton Hotel — explains: "All the people who worked around the Sheraton were relocated. There would have been 1,000 of us standing around, working around there. People from outside the district replaced us." This demonstrates that the inhabitants were not essential for the economic environment of Woreda 7, and were attached to the area by a unilateral dependence.

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[11] A type of Ethiopian bread.

4.3 Other Challenges and Issues: Indoor and Outdoor Living

There are other practical and locational advantages to explain the even more one-sided dependence these inhabitants had on the area where they lived. This sub-chapter offers a brief description of locational advantages located in the outdoors and challenges found indoors.

Citizens had varying degree of advantage depending on the proximity of their houses to institutional sites. Those fortunate enough to live near the ministries enjoyed nearly constant access to water and electricity, as these utilities were essential for the ministries' operations. Additionally, the location provided enhanced security: the area was patrolled daily to protect public figures, which also benefited the informal residents, giving them a sense of safety day and night.

While the area's security was to everyone's benefit, the same did not apply to water and electricity: those who lived more than a dozen metres away from the ministries experienced more intermittent access to basic services. Consequently, it was common for people to light charcoal and use it to cook outside (Zewde & Schwab, 2022). The impression that should emerge from the houses and, by extension, life back then is not that of a space confined to the indoors, but one that also encompasses the outdoors. This experience of outdoor life, arguably, is akin to Ethiopian everyday life in general. The following is an account of the experience of outdoor life:

While talking to Alice, a Rwandan friend, now living in Addis Ababa, we were discussing the differences between Kigali and Addis Ababa. She told me:

"One big difference is that in Rwanda it is hard to find even one or two people on the street, life happens inside the house, whereas here you can't even find room to walk because of how many things happen outside."

In fact, it is common to see Ethiopian people making use of outdoor spaces to roast onions, dry peppers, and grind spices and coffee (Zewde & Schwab, 2022).

Other factors contributed to the categorisation of the place as a slum. In terms of hygiene, besides holes in the ground for relieving oneself, the interviewees spoke of public toilets located

far away, with kilometre-long queues, and, consequently, alternative methods of coping with these shortcomings.

Zewdi told me:

> Sometimes we would buy a plastic bag and go far away to relieve ourselves. We used to call the bags full of excrement swings because the route they took, once used, reminded you of them: you had to carry them far away and swing them this way and that way to leave them, with nothing in your hand when you returned home.

The inhabitants' precarious economic situation contributed to their being labelled as low-income. Although the off-home activities provided some monetary sustenance, these were not enough for people to build savings.

The aforesaid also applied to activities performed within the neighbourhood, which could be defined as "on home activities" (Gebre, 2014) and represented the second mainstay of the inhabitants' economic revenue. Several people mentioned petty trader women who, while running the house, sold charcoal, homemade *tella*, but also dishes such as *injera*, lentils, or corn on the cob. Customers would go to the woman's house to buy each delicacy. Here, I would like to give space to one lady whose work was neither on nor off home. I met her during the Orthodox Christmas, at a solidarity lunch organised by the young people of the old neighbourhood, and she told me, smiling, how she used to beg at the shops near the Hilton Hotel for fruit that was about to expire, and then sell it for 50 cents back home. The fact that she was re-selling products sourced from more successful shops outside the home, yet still selling them within her own household, led me to coin the term "in-between activities".

However, petty traders on home and in-between activities were rounding up the salaries of husbands and children, rather than providing any real poverty relief.

4.4 Navigating the Former Social Capital

It is necessary to understand how the challenges I am recounting affected the lives of the low-income people of Woreda 7: How did the neighbourhood dwellers perceive these issues? In the

section that follows, I will explore such perceptions, arguing for the role and use of social capital in the informal portions of Woreda 7.

Certainly, hilariously describing the lack of space like Samrawit did, raising one's arms in mockery at past events like Eyared, or even recounting shortcomings such as toilets in joking terms as Zewdi did, may suggest that such structural or economic failings were bearable. The results of my research elicited some surprising responses. Of the 38 respondents interviewed, only six explicitly disliked their living conditions and stated that, all in all, they did not regret leaving the neighbourhood or want to return there. Of these six persons, four were young and had only vague memories of the old neighbourhood. The remainder, however, expressed regret and spoke of their former home with remarkable words of love. Although not entirely repre-sentative, this sample is significant in indicating the experience of the old neighbourhood and living conditions.

Displacement intensifies our emotional investment in memory (Creet & Kitzmann, 2014, pp. 9-10). In this sense, it is unsurprising that the ex-Woreda 7 dwellers I interviewed recollected past times with words of affection. To give an example, the mother of Eyasu (a young guy from the former Woreda 7), a lady in her seventies, spoke to me while preparing an excellent *bunna* in her condominium flat: "Even though there was misery, there was also love," and, clearing her voice, "in fact, love made it so that we did not feel poverty."

Rosy retrospection —the embodiment of the sentence "nostalgia makes everything look bet-ter" — or the fact that residents often lived in outdoor spaces — often coloured people's views of their living conditions: all in all, needs could be taken care of in the open air and showers could be taken in the public toilets located in Meskel Square. However, the fact that many resi-dents left the area as soon as they had earned enough money suggests a widespread aspiration to improve one's situation once the economic means became available.

Those who remained in the area faced the hardships collectively. Far from romanticising or denying the conditions of poverty, the words of the Eyasu's mother suggest that, under certain

social conditions, such problems can be ignored and sometimes even alleviated. Social capital played a crucial role among the needy residents of Woreda 7.

As for basic services, the lack of electricity, for example, was assuaged with a meter, its cost shared among many. Selemon explained:

> Only those with a little money could afford a meter, as it costs a lot to install. Once it was open, other houses would connect, and we would share a bill that cost two, maximum five, birrs to give to the owner.

The same was true for water, with the few people who had a water tap distributing twenty litres of water for ten cents. Often, the installation costs were paid for by a relative abroad, tremendous luck, or, in the case of my paternal family, an Italian family my father met at the Hilton Hotel, where he was a guide. Such sharing of electricity and water among residents, offered at a pittance, are examples of how mutual help solved the lack of basic services.

There were also other demonstrations of social capital at the time, which were mentioned several times during interviews. Many people brought up the role played by mothers in the neighbourhood as active members of networks, going so far as to recognise that "to the strong mothers of the old neighbourhood we owe everything good we have done," according to Eyasu, who was present while his mother prepared the *bunna*.

Stumbling upon the writings of bell hooks, I found that her chapter 'Homeplace (a site of resistance)' particularly resonated with what Eyasu had said:

> In our young minds houses belonged to women, were their special domain, not as property, but as place where all that truly mattered in life took place — the warmth and comfort of shelter, the feeding of our bodies, the nurturing of our souls (hooks, 1990, p. 383).

Social capital develops over time as people accumulate experiences, networks, and resources with age (McDonald & Mair, 2010). Therefore, it is unsurprising that people referred to mothers as the active part of their network. Indeed, the incipit at the start of this thesis does not present 'the Box' as the home of Uncle Jeje, though formally it was, but rather as the home of Grandma.

Women's identity was built around the domestic, but not in a passive, subjugated role (Hudson-Weems, 2019). Middle-aged ladies from the old neighbourhood, intent on preparing an *injera* or a *tella* to sell, did not spare themselves from taking care of other people in the neighbourhood, young or old, and provided those in need with food. On the street where Jemo One Condominium is located, my cousin and I met a man nicknamed Rebbash, which means annoying in Amharic, who used to live in Woreda 7 and stated "if there was no food, you would go to the neighbour and ask for a roll of injera, some *mitmita,*[12] without paying anything."

With most residents finding themselves in the same economic situation, the poorer segment of Woreda 7 fostered horizontal social capital between its inhabitants. Solidarity, trust, and reciprocity were cornerstones of the community. Many confirmed this. "We knew," said Lily, "That one day we might find ourselves hungry, and that same neighbour who once begged for food would not hesitate to feed us." In this regard, I recall a conversation with Zewdi, who confessed to me how, as a child, he preferred to go and ask his neighbours for food because he was given more than at home.

At the same time, the expectation among Woreda 7's former dwellers that they would receive food in times of shortage establishes an informal obligation and reciprocal bond (Ebaugh & Curry, 2000; Polanyi, 1957), although no one necessarily referred to this obligation as a burden.

Certainly, such social capital does not arise spontaneously. Firstly, the rationality of the inhabitants in adapting to an entrenched economic situation drove them to adopt individual risk-coping and collective risk-sharing mechanisms. A request to borrow food, for example, reveals an individual's way of coping with his or her own need. However, one also sees a risk-sharing mechanism in the Woreda 7 community's act of giving food: while having provisions, the group acknowledges and anticipates the risk of not having food ex ante, and, in accordance with mutual obligations and expectations, the group exchanges assistance within social networks.

Factors such as the structure of the neighbourhood further nurtured practices of social capital: being close enough to know what is in their neighbours' *messob* raises awareness of

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[12] An Ethiopian powdered spice mix.

someone else's needs; it entails empathetic understanding and, at the same time, facilitates the delivery of aid.

Crucially, time is an important injector of social capital. As described at the beginning of the chapter, Woreda 7's informal houses were built in the 1930s and most of its inhabitants lived there for more than 60 years before being relocated. Knowing people for such a long time consolidated high levels of trust in the community. As Burtucan told me: "It was the neighbourhood where we grew up and at the same time our neighbours raised us." The same neighbours coined your playful nicknames, like the aforementioned Rebbash, as one would between family members. Abebe, another young person relocated to the Jemo One Condominium, explained that "growing up together, we knew each other's strengths and weaknesses, but we accepted each other as brothers and sisters."

The community was therefore well beyond extended kin. Indeed, Burtucan's and Abebe's words bring to light another important demonstration of social capital: the fictive kin on which the networks sustained themselves. Naturally, marital relationships between the inhabitants developed over time — as Zewdi described, ironically, "it is a risk to be taken into account in living so attached" — but community members who were not bound by marriage or blood were equally treated as family members. As a result, relationships resembling family ties developed among the area's inhabitants (Ebaugh & Curry, 2000).

Primarily mothers, but inhabitants in general, took care of their neighbours' children as if they were their own. Researchers have called them "othermothers," female individuals with no biological ties to children but still performing activities usually attributed to mothers (Spruill et al., 2014). Eyasu described this attachment as follows:

> In the old neighbourhood, social life was good, everyone was family, there was no
> '*this is my house, this is your house*' talk, everyone was everyone's parent, everyone
> raised you and fed you and if you did wrong you were punished, you were pinched
> as if you were their child.

This is how the famous saying "it takes a village to raise a child" was portrayed in this side of

Woreda 7.

Moreover, having the support of the community when raising one's child had positive eco-nomic implications: it allowed families to save the expense of a kindergarten, and to carry out bureaucracy or daily chores freely.

Additionally, a fictive kin system and everyone knowing each other provided a sense of secu-rity in the neighbourhood. "Precisely because everyone was your parent," Eyasu continues, "you didn't even think about doing bad things." Young people were careful not to run around with bad company or engage in vices, restrained by the judgement of the inhabitants, who were considered their parents too. This type of social security embeds the concept that individuals are expected to act in a way that promotes the community they live in, even if that comes at the cost of restricting their freedom.

An illustration of this regard is a dialogue I had with a friend, Meron. From my field notes, dated 30 November 2022:

Looking for a house in Addis, I asked for suggestions from a long-time friend, Meron. Meron has lived in Lideta [Addis Ababa neighbourhood] for more than three years now, and she explains to me that the good thing about her neighbourhood is that it feels like a small family, but the bad thing is that…well, it feels like a small family. A little frustrated, she explained to me, that to avoid people thinking badly of her, she had to set certain limits to her action such as not inviting too many friends home, coming home early in the evening, not going out with random guys and so on. According to her, doing the contrary would give her peers and the neighbourhood in gen-eral the reputation of Ye duriye sefer.[13]

Meron: "You know how it is, Ethiopian society is very community oriented…"

Me: "…and getting out of the community comes at an uncomfortable price."

Not paying attention to people's judgements would result in disdain from the neighbours. For Meron, this could mean being cut off from the networks she had built in Lideta: not being able to

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[13] In Amharic, *durye* is an expression used for 'bad boy'; the translation of the sentence would be 'bad boy neighbourhood.'

ask for a food loan when temporarily out of money, not having someone to help with household repairs, or not finding anyone to carry her water tank, to name a few. This form of social security entails a degree of rule enforcement strong enough to exclude people from the social fabric; yet the young people at the Hilton never described it as a burden.

It seems, from these accounts, that this very form of social security kept the Hilton youngsters from taking a bad path. Alem, an older lady from the old neighbourhood, who now sells plastic utensils in the Jemo One Condominium, was keen to confirm this:

> My opinion is only shared by those who know it inside out. Those who grew up in the Hilton, the Hilton people, particularly the boys, are all considered from the outside to be bad boys with no prospects for growth. Outsiders often assume that, because they grew up earning money, the youngsters would spend it on cigarettes or alcohol. But they would never have done that, even if they wanted to, who would have allowed them to?

When it comes to loans, they were mostly in the form of food and only a few instances of monetary loans were reported. The most common informal financial support was typical of Ethiopian culture, such as *iddir* and *eqqub*. Concerning the former, I would like to make use of *Tiye*[14] Wodde's explanation, an elderly lady now in charge of a women's *iddir* in Jemo One Condominium.

Iddirs are usually divided with respect to gender, thus communities in Ethiopia often have a women's *iddir* and a men's *iddir*. The traditional function of the men's *iddir* is to do menial work, such as digging graves or pitching tents, while the women's *iddir* is usually kitchen work. Men's *iddir* reportedly have more finances, as they are usually an economic asset in the household; however, financial capacity is not an optimal measurement for assessing how effective an *iddir* is. Since women tend to have greater contact with the community than men (McDonald & Mair, 2010), their *iddir*s are usually more vital than men's as they involve an extended set of networks

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[14] *Tiye* is a form of addressing someone with reverence, the equivalent of 'Lady' in Amharic.

and functions that go far beyond financial assistance. I am now reporting the words of a women's *iddir*.

> In the old neighbourhood there was *iddir* for any circumstance. For joy, sadness, for everything. Once a month, the citizens gave a quota, freely chosen. We had a treasurer who would mark the quota collected, and these funds were used to buy the various utensils needed for the ceremonies: plates, glasses, pots for cooking food ... A lot of people would gather for the mourning in a tent, people would come from all over the country, and the mourner would prepare a list of the things needed, so with the money we would buy a lot of dishes and hand them out. After using them, the dishes would be washed and put down.

Underlining a daily life equally lived in the outdoor spaces, tents to accommodate visitors for mourning were pitched outside the houses for the first days of mourning.

Usually, the amount people were expected to contribute for a funeral was around 20-50 birrs each, depending on everyone's budget; these sums were often beyond the financial capacity of the women's *iddir*. However, *iddirs* went further than financial and burial assistance, eventually becoming social circles: where, in the case of women, one could learn to cook and, as Teshome et al. (2014) note, obtain a degree of social benefits. Ato Ayalew told me with a laugh: "In women's *iddir*, women usually talk about things they don't talk about in front of men, while us men we play cards, do bets". This kind of exchange of information in the *iddir* represents a crucial non-material resource for women running a business or looking for a job (Kebede & Butterfield, 2009).

Several people expressed that the *iddir* in the old quarters was used for reasons beyond funerals. In addition to confirming a change in the use of the *iddir*, as predicted by Pankhurst (2008), the emotional support they provided demonstrates how the inhabitants were extremely connected to each other, to the point that they decided to raise money far beyond the funeral custom. Indeed, the financial and moral support continued even after the moral obligation that

the *iddir* places everyone under during the *lakso*.[15] Mamush — a nickname — is a middle-aged

man in his forties who described the *lakso* ceremony to me:

> You slept together, cooked for the mourners, almost gave them constantly *gursha*,[16] and eve-
>
> ryone cooked *injera* for the mourners. Even after the three days of mourning, we continued
>
> to help them: if there was a need for clothes to be washed, the others took care of washing
>
> them. The pain passed quickly because we got through it together.

The amount paid also depended on the deceased.

> Tiye Wodde explained:
>
> Depending on the person who died, a different share of birrs is given, when it is the man of
>
> the house the share is higher, because the damage to the household is higher, while for a
>
> mother the share is lower.

Solomon Addis Getahun (2011) elaborates on the circumstances when a man dies. He explains

how, in Ethiopia, the man is traditionally considered the main economic asset of the household

and states that the effects of losing the man of the household are more significant than of losing

a mother.

Furthermore, my research revealed that, in the old neighbourhood, *eqqubs* were even more

popular than *iddirs*. Small groups would meet weekly and collect a modest amount of money,

say one birr, and, at the end of the week, one person from the *eqqub* would be randomly drawn,

given the amount collected, and they would use it as they saw fit. When asked why they pre-

ferred this method of saving, Selemon told me that "people trust the bank, but they prefer to

leave money in the *eqqub* because you are more controlled, you can't withdraw it when you

want because people won't let you until your turn and so they control themselves more."

As for the *mahber*, it embodied the very essence of the neighbourhood, and there was no

trace of any formality. Tiye Wodde concluded that: "In the old neighbourhood, there was no

need for an institution like the *mahber*, because life itself was *mahber*, it did not need to be

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[15] Funeral in Amharic.

[16] *Gursha* means mouthful in Amharic and describes the typical Ethiopian act of placing a morsel of food in someone's mouth to express caring for another.

institutionalized." Her words underscore an increasingly common discursive phenomenon in Ethiopia: the term *mahber* has shifted from its religious meaning and now takes on the holistic function of designating any kind of association (Ancel, 2005). So much so that the term *mahberawi hiwot* is the most popular phrase for expressing the traditional concept of communal life. In the case of Woreda 7, *mahberawi hiwot* was practised through everyday rituals such as drinking coffee together, as well as traditional celebrations such as Christmas and Easter, showing how the community voluntary invested, albeit unconsciously, in maintaining their ties (Wellman & Wortley, 1990).

It is challenging to categorise the *iddir*, *eqqub*, and *mahber* of the old neighbourhood as bonding or bridging types of social capital. Looking at the shared binder — the neighbourhood — as a sense of belonging, one could point to the former, where being part of that neighbourhood entails the same economic availability and belonging to the same social class. Yet, *iddirs* or *eqqubs* were not limited to people belonging to the same religion or ethnicity, with the latter perhaps being a more critical binder in the Ethiopian context. Viewed through the lens of ethnicity, it is crystal clear that Woreda 7 had a bridging social capital. Bridging social capital enhanced social cohesion in the area, and as one informant stated:

> There were no ethnicity problems in the old neighbourhood, next to me lived a *Tigrie*, behind an *Amhara*, on the other side a *Gurage* and so on. We were all mixed and ate and drank at each other's houses.[17] To have destroyed that neighbourhood is to have destroyed the unity between us.

4.5 Cooperating with the Authority: The (Non-) Role of *Kebele* and *Woreda*

Although bonding and bridging social capital grew organically in the study area of Woreda 7, this does not imply that everyone was living in harmony all the time; rather, embedded in the concept of community is the contradictory aspect that even when disagreement arises, communities remain in place (Chung, 2022). What follows in this sub-chapter is an account of such

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[17] Tigrie, Amhara, and Gurage are three Ethiopian ethnic groups.

disagreements, with a description of the role played by the *kebeles* and *woreda* in the neighbourhood, not only in resolving disputes but in a broader sense.

I was told of several moments when the harmonious picture was disturbed and when social capital seemed to be at risk.

Tiye Wodde laughed when remembering that: "There were constant disputes during the *iddir*: someone accusing the other of not working, who accused the other of ruining communal objects" and the quarrels could go on for hours.

Goshu — a nickname bestowed by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood — is a middle-aged guy I met on the street at Jemo One Condominium. I asked him if he had some time for an interview, and it turned out to be a quick tête à tête during which he disclosed that: "We used to call each other any epithet, even with heavy insults, but caught up in the anger of the moment, so to speak." As there was a sense of brotherhood, like Abebe said, it was easy to take it to extremes.

At times when social capital is put at risk, as in the case of disputes, according to the linking social capital theory, an institutional body can act as an intermediary to create, improve, or reinstate it. In this case, this institutional body is the local government. Yet, there is no evidence of how the local government acted as a link to social capital in Woreda 7. This is due to two factors, specific to the area of study and its respective *kebeles*.

Firstly, such quarrels did not pose barriers to social capital to the point of disrupting it. Goshu thus expressed that "they were quarrels so to speak," which did not weaken social capital; on the contrary, their resolution resulted in it being strengthened. Consequently, the preliminary motive for the government to act as a link is missing.

Furthermore, in cases where an intermediary was needed, the task was delegated to neighbours; as Goshu stated:

Precisely because we were all brothers, brought up together, we would fight, quarrel, and there was no need for an institution to settle disputes. If there had been a fight, the neighbour wouldn't have cared per se, but if forced to, would have tried to be a peacemaker himself. One would just scold the person.

The reason for this explanation can be attributed, in part, to the light-heartedness of these discussions, and the lack of consequences they had on social capital. But, more strikingly, the inhabitants and the *woreda*, when divided into *kebeles* 21, 22, 24, and 25 presented horizontal rather than vertical social capital relations. These smaller *kebele* constituencies allowed for accurate geographical representation, where each neighbourhood saw its peers, hence acquaintances, as local representatives. As a consequence, dwellers felt not only physical but also social proximity in their everyday encounters. Lily explained that "asking your neighbour for help to resolve the dispute, or asking a *kebele* employee, was the same." The presence of Woreda 7 residents in the *kebele* created an arena in which citizens demanded their rights effectively: seeing local representatives as one's peers, as people belonging to one's neighbourhood, therefore succeeded in building relationships of trust between them as well (Cornwall, 2002).

Now, one could ask: how did institutions perceive this act? Is it, as Meagher (2005) states, a context of "order without law"? Fasil, a former employee of *kebele* 22, said: "We never worried that the townsfolk wouldn't come to us and would sometimes try to solve disputes themselves, how could we? They were making life easier for us." Unfortunately, Fasil did not want to elaborate too much on his institutional role, perhaps fearing for his safety, so his sentence in this thesis provides only a glimpse. What it does show, however, is how citizens' involvement in dispute resolution was not perceived badly by the institution. On the other hand, the citizens themselves did not feel any pressure to reshape institutional arrangements. I found this a fascinating prospect during the summer months I spent living in Addis Ababa, Woreda 7: the possibility of living without enforcing laws, with all the attendant risks, but risking, on the other side, getting a pinch from my neighbour.

Although it is unknown whether such a relationship between citizens and local government applies to all constituencies in Ethiopia, it is fair to say that, in the days of the *kebele*, there was a noticeable closeness between citizens and local government. This concept finds expression in the words of Yilmaz and Venugopal (2008), who state that the *kebele*, of all local institutions, is the primary contact level for most Ethiopian citizens.

Interestingly many of my interviewees did not feel they needed the *kebele* or the *woreda* at the time we spoke; consequently, only a few interviewees mentioned these institutions. Nevertheless, those who did, expressed themselves positively; for example, Lily, a middle-aged woman, now living in Jemo One Condominium, pointed out that: "In the old neighbourhood the *kebele* was really proactive, as soon as you reported a problem they would come, if you shouted at any time they would come." Abebe explained that: "My *kebele* in the old neighbourhood was the best, you knew the people who worked there and they knew you." According to him, personally knowing local *kebele* officials made it possible to resolve bureaucratic tasks quickly. Such an account might lead one to speculate that the institution was conscious of its power when interacting with citizens: the public servant of the *kebele* knew that he or she enjoyed more privileges than the ordinary citizen and was willing to help him or her (Woolcock, 2001). Woreda 7 is a fitting example of how, once people become part of institutions, if they are able to remain close to the citizens, they can be an asset to the community (Patulny & Lind Haase Svendsen, 2007).

Eyared's words sum up this idea: "If you go to Kirkos, you can still see how there are people who used to live in Woreda 7 working." Indeed, when I went with my relatives to the sub-city to get data on the old neighbourhood, my cousin recognised some faces. This occurrence might lead one to believe that not all relocated inhabitants have been replaced, but the most obvious answer is that a civil servant in Ethiopia enjoys greater job stability than in other professions.

To eliminate the administrative fragmentation of the country, the Ethiopian government decided to merge all *kebele* functions with those of the *woreda* (Atnafu, 2017). This had implications at the discursive level and on the local closeness between local government and citizens.

In fact, on a discursive level, citizens' use of these terms offered an insight into the proximity between government and citizens. In interviews, the terms *kebele* and *woreda* were used interchangeably, not only with each other, but also with the broader term *mengist*, the Amharic for government. This can be explained by people's perception that these institutions are "the same thing", as more than one of my interviewees told me.

Far from implying that citizens cannot distinguish between different elective bodies, what the interchangeable articulation of the idea of local government and *mengist* shows is that, as the main site of contact with the government, citizens often recognise the work carried out by *kebeles* — or *woredas* — as the whole *mengist*, even though they are formally a sub-apparatus, merely a local government institution (Mulugeta, 2020, p. 130). Proximity to the *kebele* and, following the reform, the *woreda*, is the most feasible way for citizens to evaluate a monolithic and elusive government.

However, everyday articulation of the idea of *mengist*, *woreda*, and *kebele* made it difficult for me to discern between the different entities. When I asked citizens for their general opinion on the *woreda*, responses repeatedly featured *mengist* or even *kebele* instead. Notably, the term *kebele* is still in vogue to this day and is constantly swapped with *woreda* and *mengist*. I still remember when, trying to play along and ask what they thought of the *kebele* in Jemo One Condominium, some interviewees corrected me by talking about the *woreda*, underlining that they were well aware of the distinction, which was less clear to me. I, on the other hand, was only trying to contextualise my language.

The devolution of *kebele* duties to the *woreda*, which occurred when the inhabitants were still located at Woreda 7, somewhat constrained the physical and social proximity between the local government and the wider citizenry. In the old neighbourhood, this did not seem to have resulted in too many complaints. As Selemon said: "In the end, the *woreda* back then was just a slightly bigger *kebele*; you could still find your acquaintances performing functions." This may, in part, explain why both terms are used interchangeably. More importantly, the flourishing of bonding and bridging social capital did not require the proactive role of local government, that, from its side, did not force its presence as a link. Was this still the case in Jemo One Condominium, however?

Conclusion

The investigation carried out in Chapter IV makes clear the social implications of a particular structural form, i.e. living in single storey, attached houses, which results in the inhabitants staying close together socially. On an economic level, off-home activities, formal or otherwise, centred around the area's hotel or tourist venues, and were supplemented by petty on-home activities such as selling food, and, in one case, in-between activities, generally practised by women. However, such jobs did not provide the opportunity to save money, leaving people with low economic status. Some in the area, who lived only a few metres away from the ministries, benefited from advantages, such as constant water and electricity. Those who lived further away had to fend for themselves. In this muddling along, one can see the first practices of helping out through sociality: the lucky few who could afford an electricity meter or a water tap shared it with their neighbours at minimal rates. In the first place, these economic conditions led the needy inhabitants of Woreda 7 to create a network full of ties. Indeed, their side of Woreda 7 boasted flourishing social capital, anchored in time, and practised with respect for solidarity, trust, and reciprocity. The *iddir* was an expression of bonding since everyone was from the same neighbourhood. More distinctly, it signified bridging social relations because it involved different religions or ethnicities. Such social capital made the social setting of the area like that of a family. A family that, if quarrels happened, proved to be strong, and whose social capital was not particularly affected. It is here that Woreda 7 not acting as a link comes in: the status of the social capital was so strong that it was not necessary. Moreover, the *kebeles*' agents were Woreda 7 dwellers, neighbours, who acted in favour of residents and used their position to benefit those who did not have access to power. Rather than vertical relations, they practised horizontal relations, and the reforms that led to the grouping of *kebele* functions with those of the *woreda* did not change the practice at the time. Chapter V sets the stage for Jemo One Condominium, and the evolution of economic, social, and political practices in the new setting.

Chapter V

Unpacking the Current Site of the Déplacées: Inhabiting Jemo One Condominium

This is how the reader is catapulted into Jemo One Condominium. No transition chapter is planned; this thesis will not dwell on the methods used to relocate people. This decision is not only motivated by the fact that academics such as Adula (2020) or Alene (2021) have adequately documented the topic, but it is, above all, a narrative device employed here to familiarise the reader with the feelings of the people in the process of being relocated. Abebe and Hesselberg's (2013) interlocutor stated that he felt like "moving out from the warm armpit of a mother" when relocated (p. 46). My interviewees reported similar feelings of separation from a missing home, symbolised by sentences like: "Being relocated was like being born again." Surprise and disorientation. This is how the relocated people felt, and perhaps the reader now, too. This chapter immerses the reader in the cluster of condominiums as spaces where the lifestyle of Ethiopian people changes, particularly that of relocated people. In the first part, it familiarises the reader with the new architecture, after which it studies the new economic context of Jemo One Condominium, local experiences of modernity in the new practicalities, and social aspects of the condominiums.

5.1 Shared Spaces, Unlived Spaces within Blocks

It was 2010 when the informal space of Woreda 7, no longer divided into *kebeles* due to the reform, was earmarked for destruction under the IHDP. At that time, 23 rented businesses, 51 privately run businesses, 403 private houses, and 1896 *kebele* houses were targeted in this *woreda* (Land Development Administration, 24 February 2023). When asked "where have their inhabitants gone?", an employee of the Land Development Administration in the sub-city of Kirkos stated that it was difficult to give a definitive answer. Most people have been allocated condominiums in Akaki and Oromia, as well as the Yeka, Bole, and Nefas Silk sub-cities. "However, this is only a rough estimate since, as you know, methods of compensation are constantly being

exchanged, some people rent their flat unit in Akaki's condominiums, move to closer locations, and so on," the employee explained to me. Therefore, one should not assume that the 826 DIR people in Jemo One Condominium all came from Woreda 7; on the contrary, this is not the case. My interviews attest to this: 38 people out of the 50 interviewed came from Woreda 7, and, precisely because most of them moved into the condominiums after selling the land they received, it is likely that not all 38 people are counted in the 826 registered in Jemo One Condomoinium's *woreda* as DIR people.

Being relocated to condominium complexes brought about several changes for people. In the following pages, I will present the location and architecture of the Jemo One Condominium complexes, exploring the correlation between the spatial setting of the housing and the social space.

What is meant when referring to condominiums?

To illustrate this, one of my earliest remarks on Jemo One Condominium and a map of the place are apt.

On the 3 October 2022, I wrote in my field notes:

Jemo is full of people; I think this is the first thing that struck me. Roads — which, compared to the last time I came, over 13 years ago — are now swarmed with people, cars, bajaji,[18] gari.[19] I feel like I am constantly exposed to external stimuli, physically — whatever kind of gas invades the air, and it sure smells — and mentally. To be completely honest, I feel like I am in a jungle — I know, I could have found more decolonized adjectives to describe it.

The area of Jemo One Condominium is an assemblage of several condominiums. Each set of condominiums is divided into blocks (Block 129, Block 130 and so on), each containing 6 to 12 buildings. Each building, divided into four or more floors, has a nickname. The buildings form a rectangle whose centre is a collectively shared garden and parking lot. A continuous stream of people fills this middle space, and helplessly there is me, unable to move coherently in place.

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[18] A three-wheeled motor vehicle popular on the outskirts of Addis Ababa.
[19] Horse-drawn carts.

Figure 7

Jemo One Condominium Aerial View
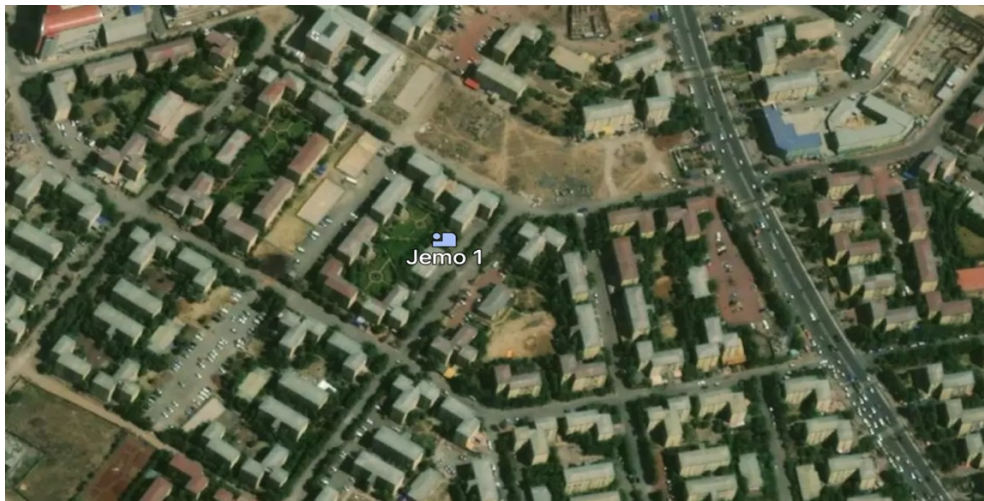
Adapted from *Mapcarta.*

I was overwhelmed when I arrived, unable to make sense of myself during that hustle and bus-
tle. The feeling of chaos that I experienced was exacerbated by having lived the previous year in
the Netherlands, in Leiden, a much quieter town than Addis Ababa.

The condominium complexes created within the IHDP represent collective living arrange-
ments (Planel & Bridonneau, 2017, p. 5), places that would constitute co-housing practices
(Charitonidou, 2022). Spaces like the communal garden are potentially dedicated to Ethiopian
community practices as the government attempts to respond to cultural requirements (Ejigu,
2015). However, the inhabitants do not perceive them as such. It is "difficult," Hannah began, "to
define an empty square in the middle of these concrete blocks as meaningful space for socialis-
ing." Hannah is a distant relative of mine; she was 29 years old. She was pregnant at the time of
the interview, and I will discuss her situation more extensively in the next chapter. Her inter-
view, among many others, was a constant barrage of sarcastic jokes and rhetorical questions,
which, I admit, I could not always answer.

As claimed by Cornwall (2002), investigating the process of space-making, there is no guar-
antee that a practical space can then be translated into a lived space: "Spaces may be created
with one purpose in mind, but used by those who come to fill them for something quite

different" (p. 9). At Jemo One Condominium, the communal garden is an unfilled space; at best, its surroundings are used for cars. The following is a picture representing this space.

Figure 8

Outdoor space in Jemo One Condominium

Retrospectively, I think this is why I felt the communal space to be inhabited by a continuous stream of people: in my initial encounters, no one had any real place or reason to stop — much less for my interviews.

The spatial setting of Jemo Condominium is vertical, with four to six floors. Each floor has three or more flats, comprised of between one and three bedrooms.

While in the old neighborhood, doors were often open, laminated, and often dilapidated, in the new one, doors are always shut and have grills. The implication of such a small gesture, however, showcases something far beyond mere conviviality (Zewde & Schwab, 2022). This is confirmed by the inhabitants. Tzega, Hannah's mother, explained over a cup of *bunna:* "Every-one lives their own life, closing the doors. No one would open, even if you would knock very hard." If, on the one hand, the design of the apartment block allows for a more private life, on the other hand, it does not make it possible for people to get together and socialise. People have told me of at least two incidents where an older person died, and it took three days before someone, moved by the smell, forced open the — obviously closed — door and saw the tragedy. I am not sure whether it was the same older person or two different ones, but what needs to be emphasised is the extent to which such facilities prevent sociability in the community.

Charitonidou (2022) writes that by relocating people in these housing structures, "the role of commoning practices and the public or shared spaces that facilitate these practices has been underestimated or even overlooked" (p. 1350). In this case, it is the Ethiopian government that has miscalculated. Similarly, Nelson Mota (2015) accuses the government of disrupting vernacular social and spatial practices (p. 11). Yet, Charitonidou (2022) recalls how the Addis Ababa Grand Housing Program, integrated into the IHDP in 2006, published two guides to help condominium dwellers adapt their mentality to the new condominium lifestyle (p. 1349). However, the author concludes that these were not adequate.

I want to extend this assertion point and bring citizens into the discussion. The feeling I got from talking to some relocated people is that they also downplayed such practices and only realised the loss later.

"We thought the apartment building would be a success, we said '*wow, we're going to live in houses with everything, in big buildings*' and instead here we are." Laké laughed as he spolke the sentence and rolled his eyes as if to indicate irony. Indeed, not all dwellers were unhappy about the relocation to apartment blocks. Some people, especially the youngest, were intrigued by the amenities of the condominium, and, initially, having a private kitchen with a cooker, and a bathroom for oneself was welcomed.

However, the reality of life in the condominiums turned out to be quite different: water and electricity were intermittent at Jemo One Condominium and did not allow citizens to enjoy their facilities. Consequently, this made people miss their vernacular social practices: "There was a need for a *mukecha*[20] to pound coffee, as for those who had a grinder, this was unusable without electricity. But the noise would annoy other neighbours, unknown to us," said Tzega.

Nevertheless, they knew their social practices would never return — or, at least, they would never be the same.

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[20] Ethiopian wooden mortar for grinding coffee.

5.2 "Here in Jemo, life is expensive": Untangling Economic Life in the Condominium

The architectural change that relocatees experienced when moving to condominiums, particularly to Jemo One Condominium, also had implications for their income-generating activities (Charitonidou, 2022, p. 1355); this will be analysed in this chapter. The following section will discuss economic life in Jemo One Condominium, presenting new income-generating practices in the area and contrasting these with previous ones.

Addressing economic life in the area involves looking at actors beyond relocated people. As mentioned earlier, DIR people are only a tiny portion of the inhabitants present in Jemo today, although it should be noted that Jemo One Condominium's *woreda* apparently cannot provide an accurate estimate of the population. New actors continue to move into the area: people who have voluntarily decided to settle by directly buying a flat or winning it through the lottery, renters, and farmers from the surrounding area, i.e. the Oromia region, who generally rent a unit.

These actors, driven by different reasons to move to the area, belong to different social classes. Laké described that:

Many of us have left, and those who have stayed do so because they do not want to readjust to a new context, saying '*once I leave, where can I go?*' and here they are, to a life where in order to afford things they give up eating. And the neighbour next door instead eats, drinks, enrols his children in whatever school he wants.

Laké's words exemplify a number of important themes. Firstly, he testifies how, indeed, for some, the apartment block they were allocated was a temporary choice: many moved out over the years. Others preferred living in apartment blocks, although Laké described the choice as being driven by inertia and a fear of another new context to adapt to. This would ultimately lead to a life of renunciation on the part of the relocated person, as opposed to that of a neighbour, presumably a person capable of paying for the condominium unit without bank loans, who has no financial worries for his family or offspring.

The upper-middle class and lower class coexist within the Jemo One Condominium; the separation, albeit fictitious, in Woreda 7, where the more affluent moved in or remained confined to residential areas, is swept away.

I will discuss the social implications of this coexistence of social classes later. What must be kept in mind in this sub-chapter is how, depending on social class, the inhabitants of Jemo One Condominium perform different jobs.

Different social classes means different perceptions of the cost of living in the area. While a wealthy neighbour seems not to suffer considerably, those who have been relocated to the area apparently struggle to live there.

Rebbash exclaimed that "Here in Jemo, life is expensive, rent is expensive. In the old neighbourhood, with 500-600 birrs you could support a family of five, here even 20000 birrs is not enough for the same family. It's heavy!" he sighed, continuing, "Now, to go out, you always have to have birrs in your hand." According to the latest data, recorded by Trading Economics (2023), the living wage in Ethiopia is 5090 birrs per month (roughly 87 euros per month), a figure that is insufficient to support an entire family, as Rebbash's case shows. The metaphor of birrs in hand indicates the need to go out with a wad of money for every eventuality. After all, who would come to your aid if you did not have it?

Occasionally, some interviewees refer to Jemo One Condominium in positive terms. Having previously introduced Mamush, I would like to say a few words about the context of our meeting. Mamush was cutting brushwood in the communal garden and initially he mistook me for a neighbour when I approached. The accent in my Amharic quickly gave me away, and he replied in the affirmative when I asked him if he had moved to Jemo One Condominium as the result of development projects being built at his previous home. After explaining my project, he agreed to be interviewed and invited me to his home, where his wife was waiting for us while she roasted coffee beans.

Mamush clarified that he viewed the condominium in favourable terms, he said that "it is no longer the idle life it used to be, I cannot support myself by doing the bare minimum."

The impression I got is that some relocated residents blame the Jemo One Condominium site for the high prices in the area. This point of view is partly justified, as per Mamush: "Prices are more expensive because the price spent on fuel to transport goods here is added." Indeed, the peripheral location of the site has led to an increase in goods coming from distant market areas such as *Merkato*, Africa's largest open-air market, located in Addis Ababa. The time and costs involved in delivering products to Jemo One Condominium has been added to the original price.

These two factors are ascribed to the peripheral area of Jemo One Condominium, however, Ethiopia in general is witnessing price inflation. Indeed, Selemon, the driver, a friend of Mamush, was convinced that tough economic conditions were part and parcel of living in Ethiopia. As mentioned in the previous chapter, factors such as inflation at 26.8% (The World Bank, 2023) have a detrimental impact on a wage that does not increase consistently. The lack of foreign currency and war in the North of the country do not help the situation either. However, there are aggravating factors for those relocated to the Jemo One Condominium, including additional expenses, such as transport, a mortgage to be paid to secure the house, and a private electricity supply, no longer divided among many. Selemon connected me with his mother, Tiye Turuye, an older lady; "if you want to find out about social capital, you have to ask her," he quipped. Having been given the floor and block number, I knock on the door. I named her son as a connection, and, whether it is my hopeful air or the respect she felt "towards a woman who studies," as she says, she agreed to an interview. When I sat down on her couch, I was on my third *bunna* of the day.

Tiye Turuye had a resigned air as she explained that "here, we have too many additional expenses. We live by saying *temesgen*." The expression *temesgen* in Amharic indicates thanksgiving to the Lord and, in Turuye's words, it expresses a life of hardship and survival thanks to the Lord's help.

How do those relocated cope with their new expenses? Where will people meet again in Jemo One Condominium? What of the off-home, on-home, and sometimes in-between activities mentioned previously? First, I will focus on the economic activities offered or found in Jemo One

Condominium by the DIR people. Secondly, I will analyse the economic activities offered and created by a wider pool of actors.

As the condominiums filled up with relocated people, it was clear that the facilities were incomplete. Abebe and Hesselberg (2013) report that it is a habit to transfer residents to condominium housing when 20% of its construction still needs to be completed (p. 37). In fact, young, relocated people found economic opportunities in this scenario. Eyared remarked: "We young people did a lot of finishing work, like finishing Jemo's houses, painting, running errands, selling some items." However, such work was occasional and only ever meant to be temporary.

The off-home activities previously engaged in, such as cleaning cars and shoes, were not out of the question; however, in 2010, they could not be found in Jemo One Condominium, still sparsely populated apart from relocatees. As a result, for many years, the pivot of economic life was still the old neighbourhood and the businesses revolving around that area.

It was only in the last five years, when the price of transport became too high, that young people abandoned these activities, no longer participating in supplementing their parents' salaries.

The adults who moved their work to Jemo One Condominium had a more successful outcome, demonstrating a fluidity of off-home activities, albeit different from previous ones. These jobs were implemented by the citizens themselves, and not by the government. Selemon — the former Sheraton chef, not the driver — believed that "the *mengist* has not created new job opportunities here. The same thing happened in Piassa, there was a vegetable market, which was then relocated, and now the people who worked in the vegetable market have become thugs who rob." His opinion suggests that the economic effects of relocations in Jemo One Condominium are similar to, or less aggravated than those experienced in other areas of Addis Ababa, for instance, the Piassa neighbourhood.

For some, having created economic opportunities for themselves, finding a different job and attracting clientele to this new area, has given them self-confidence. Goshu told me, almost proudly, "I am now an estate agent, I find houses for people who ask me, and sometimes I even

hire a maid for them." Goshu's occupation suggests he managed to create a new network of people and acquaintances in the area.

Having detached themselves from the old neighbourhood in terms of work, "some have tried to create jobs here, such as the porter in a hotel, being an estate agent, some do office work and so on," explained Eyared. These jobs have that bureaucratic formality that previous jobs lacked.

This formality is also visible in the search for a job: "Finding a job is not straightforward, in fact, there are several steps: first you have to get to know the person via mobile phone, then the person calls you, and after an evaluation decides whether you are right for the job," he told me.

As for on-home and in-between activities, these were lost instantly when relocating. Alem commented on this: "I used to sell lentils. Here I couldn't." The impossibility is mainly due to two factors: the need for acquaintances in the area, for trustworthy customers, and the architecture of the apartment block. Activities such as selling delicacies used to take place on the ground floor, a ground floor that is now often inhabited by other apartments or everyday shops. The interview with Alem took place under a plastic tarpaulin, where she sat on a stool selling plastic kitchen utensils. Indeed, the amount of plastic tarpaulins occupying the streets of the area intrigues me up to this day and makes me think that however many vernacular practices have been lost, everyday Ethiopian life — the mess, the crush, people running all over the place — continues to exist, if only outside the condominium blocks.

Alem is one of the few ladies I interviewed who managed to find new employment. In addition to young people, many women, especially older ones, remain unemployed to this day. One example is Burtucan, who stated: "In the old neighbourhood I used to work, and now here I am supported by my sons and daughters who work." She confirmed Getahun's (2011) argument that, in the absence of a job or husband, Ethiopian tradition expects children to provide financial support to their mother. Nevertheless, what happens to those who have no family? Zewdi responded, the tone of the conversation suddenly turning serious: "Sometimes, you find old people who had a decent life in the old neighbourhood begging here."

Jemo One Condominium has had a diverse economic impact on its inhabitants. As mentioned earlier, some people have been able to find exploitable opportunities in the neighbourhood, especially as the number of inhabitants in the area has increased. The relocated inhabitants themselves also recognise this, like Daniel, a young man from the former Woreda 7: "I am convinced that here, by studying the market, you can be productive by setting up your own business and opening some kind of activity." Serkalem, a girl who now works as a nurse, confirmed this: "You have to ask people in the neighbourhood how the market is and evaluate. Now that there are more inhabitants in Jemo, the market has improved, and the possibility of making money is there." Those with the economic capacity can then set up their businesses, opening shops or restaurants, despite high competition between businesses. Those who fail, however, can register with the *woreda* and wait to be drawn via a lottery system.

I will now make a brief excursus on the experience of Eyared, a young man already mentioned in the previous chapter, in particular for having had the good fortune of meeting a Western family that supports him financially to this day. This acquaintance meant that Eyared had the financial means to open a car wash in Jemo One Condominium and thus he was able to offer a positive experience of job opportunities in the area from a youth's point of view:

> Jemo is better, it gives you a chance to grow and not stay fixed in those 3-4 regular jobs like in the old neighbourhood. Here, meeting new people allows you to get in touch with new ideas because it is only by knowing and exploring new points of view that you can grow. Sometimes ideas that in the old neighbourhood were small here turn into big ones, whereas in the old neighbourhood, at the most, I cleaned a car or two, here I got the idea for the car wash as there are many more cars concentrated in the area, this fuelled my thinking.

Eyared's case had the potential to be a source of inspiration for others — a narrative of growth, opportunity and hope found in Jemo One Condominium — were it not for the fact that his mother, Alem, the woman selling plastic utensils, denied the existence of her son's car wash.

What does this piece of conflicting evidence teach us? One might think that perhaps Eyared told me a half-truth to make a good impression or to feel important. Alternatively, it could be that Alem is not actually aware of her son's achievements. Speculation about their personal situation aside, what is most appropriate to say is that Eyared's words, whether acted upon or not, show that relocation to Jemo does not necessarily have to be a negative experience, because interaction with new people, the very basis of bridging social capital, opens the mind to new horizons and possibilities. According to Wassie Kebede and Alice K. Butterfield (2009), having connections outside the usual networks brings new ideas and reinvigorates standard economic ways of thinking. However, one needs economic assets to bring innovative ideas to fruition, as may be the case with Eyared.

Furthermore, such businesses rarely generate a steady income as they struggle to attract a stable clientele. Jemo One Condominium is increasingly filled with renters, who generally remain in the area for a maximum of one year. As a result, Eyob told me, "[t]he hand brings food to the mouth, but that food is only '*yeelet gurs*,' a bite for the day, and that hand does not know whether it will bring food to the mouth in the days to come."

On another note, it seems that the rural youth from Jemo's surroundings, including the Oromia region, see more economic opportunities in Jemo One Condominium than in their hinterland, which no longer consists of arable land (Moreda, 2023). Overall, the economic experiences of different inhabitants of the area inform us that it is difficult to evaluate the economy in Jemo through dichotomous categories such as 'good' or 'bad'; rather, it is essential to first identify 'who' defines it as such. Indeed, from the perspective of relocated people, the assessment tends to be less optimistic.

5.3 Other Challenges and Issues: Local Experiences of Modern Housing

The condominium structures envisioned in the IHDP were, among others, intended to cater to the Ethiopian citizen by offering facilities other than in the slums; commodities such as a

bathroom inside the flat and a private kitchen. As explained earlier, some people welcomed the eviction positively for this very reason. However, the reality on the ground did not look so different from what the citizens were forced to leave. They were confronted with a lack of facilities at Jemo One Condominium. The following part of this sub-chapter describes these issues in greater detail.

Tiye Turuye's words hit hard: "People think condominium lifestyle is a modern lifestyle, we thought so too, but it is not the case." Just like in the old neighbourhood, water and electricity at Jemo One Condominium are intermittent, coming at different intervals.

I talked about this with the first people who relocated to the area in a Focus Group Discussion: "The lack of water is heavy, yesterday it came back during the night and we spent the night collecting it. It came after a week. It was better before." They discussed the fact that, initially, for some people, it was worse or the same as it was now: "Then there was a time when it got better." From people's recollections, derived from the processual approach, I reconstructed the following chronology of the efficiency of the water at Jemo One Condominium: in 2010, when there were only a few inhabitants, water was absent. Indeed, it was only installed after incessant requests from residents. Subsequently, as the areas became populated, the water supply improved but remains sporadic. Ashebir Kebede (2015) confirmed that "six months of water consumption data of Jemo I collected from AAWSA Mekanisa branch shows that only 30% of the demand is supplied to residents by the municipality at private water pipes" (p. 29). Lily clarified that:

Water comes once a week, randomly, and it is even more difficult if you live on the upper floors. In the old neighbourhood, on the other hand, it was always there, at the most, it would disappear for a day and come back around ten o' clock at night. Here, on the other hand, there is not even a precise time when the water comes, maybe it comes at night while we are sleeping or during the day while we are at work. To know this, we leave the tap on so that as soon as we hear the roar of water, we know it has come, or we keep the shower running as it gurgles as soon as the water arrives.

When water is present, citizens try to collect it, leaving a *bermel*, a barrel in Amharic, under the shower, though there is no guarantee that the water will be enough for the rest of the week. Figure 9 is an illustration of a bathroom with a barrel inside the shower.

Figure 9

Condominium's interiors: kitchen, bathroom, bedroom
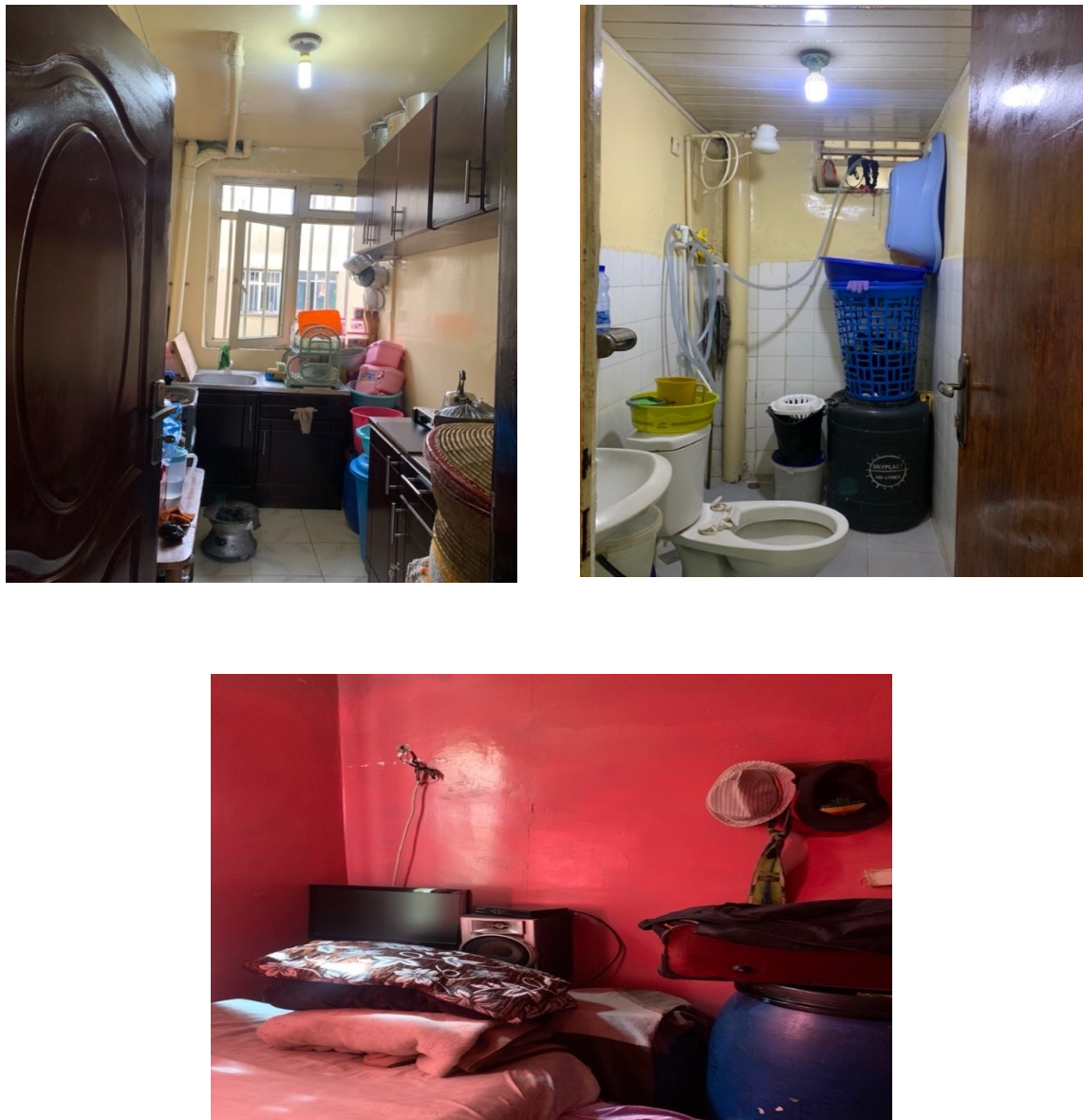
Sara, who worked at the general office of a Jemo One Condominium block, and who I will mention again in the final chapter, explained that "[i]f there is no water, each block has a cistern,

ours should support 10000 households. We distribute it to make it last until next week. If it runs

out before the water returns, we buy *gari jerica*."

Wandering around the blocks of Jemo One Condominium, it is peculiar to find majestically

sized cisterns at the corners of the condominiums, as one can see from Figure 10.

Figure 10: *Cistern of one of Jemo One Condominium's blocks*

Gari carrying *jerica*, jerrycans of water, are also regular features on the streets of Jemo One Con-

dominium (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Gari *carrying jerry cans of Water in front of Jemo One Condominium*

Both of these solutions come at a price; in the case of the cistern, this price is set by the block, while five litres of *jerica* water cost 25 birrs.

Charitonidou (2022) states that there are three different aspects related to the problem of water shortage in Addis Ababa: "first, its cleanliness; second, its accessibility; and, third, its management" (p. 1354). Indeed, water is a national problem, and the inhabitants of Jemo One Condominium are aware of this. Johannes, a committee member, an organisational body I will discuss later, described it as follows: "Water is a problem that affects the whole city."

However, it is clear that the inhabitants of condominiums feel the burden even more, especially in terms of hygiene problems. "We should have a daily right to water because we have toilets in the house, and how else can we get rid of the physiological needs?" Sara urged. This lack of sufficient infrastructure should be considered when addressing the issue of pro-poverty housing programmes in Addis Ababa (Charitonidou, 2022, p. 1354). If not, one might jump to the conclusion that the government's IHDP was more about impressing than enabling.

Residents speak in slightly more favourable terms about the electricity supply than they do about water. It seems to have been absent when the first DIR arrived and then gradually improved with the arrival of more people, although it is difficult to make a meaningful estimate. From my memories of the time I spent at Jemo One Condominium, I recall days without light

and afternoons brightened by the TV working at my relatives' homes. The main problem with electricity relates to prices. To use Laké's words once again: "Electricity is not divided into many, *ye gara mehbrat*, but it is owned by each flat and you can use it as much as you want, except that now 300-500 birrs is not enough for your personal meter." Laké highlights how an economic problem such as the cost of electricity, but also of water, can no longer be tackled with the kind of cooperative solution used in the past. In fact, in apartment blocks, the electricity meter is private and installed free of charge by the government. Trivially, candles are the most popular solution to the lack of electricity.

The high number of people in the area has also put a strain on public transport, which is not performing optimally. That said, compared to the past, when public transport was almost absent, nowadays you can get anywhere from Jemo One Condominium. According to Burtucan:

Transport is very good compared to other parts of Addis, you can get to *Piassa*, *Merkato*, *Mexico*, *Saris*, *Hyatt*,[21] the problem is just the number of people, but that's all. Before, you couldn't get here quickly, you had to make a change at *La Gare*, then they would drop you at *Jemo Michael*[22] and from there you had to take a *bajaj*. It started to decline five years ago.

On a good day, it took me only an hour to get from Jemo One Condominium to Kazanchis, in the sub-city of Kirkos, by minibus, making only one change in Mexico. One hour is overall an efficient time to cover over 12 kilometres in Addis Ababa. The difficulty lies in the endless hours of queuing to wait your turn to get into the minibus: the amount of buses is minimal compared to the number of inhabitants in the area. In addition, hours of queuing weigh particularly on people who have to be at work at seven in the morning.

Johannes spoke of water, electricity, and means of transport as problems common to several areas of Addis Ababa, if not the whole country: "I would speak of thieves as Jemo's real challenge." The area's insecurity is a pressing problem. Whereas in the past this previously isolated

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[21] Neighbourhoods of Addis Ababa.
[22] Jemo Michael is a church neighbouring Jemo One Condominium.

place was threatened by hyenas, nowadays, the source of insecurity is people from the area or elsewhere.

Laké reported that:

> In the old neighbourhood you could come back even at midnight, at one or two o'clock, there were no security problems, whereas here after ten o'clock I am afraid of who might be behind me, of what they might do to me, because we don't all know each other, we don't know who is dangerous and who is not.

The thefts range from the most petty, like stealing clothes hung out to dry, to demands for mobile phones or money.

In fact, I have been in direct contact with delinquency at Jemo One Condominium. I reported it in my field notes of 26 October 2022:

> *At first light, around 4 a.m., we approached the church for* misgana.[23] *Apart from me and my cousin, only two men were on the road. Suddenly, a car passes by and stops a little further on. They grab the older man by the neck and — I imagine — ask him for money. At this point, my cousin picks up a large stone and signals to throw it at them to scare them off, shouting "Leba! Leba!"* [24] *A little further on, a watchman hears and runs to the rescue. The frightened thieves leave without stealing anything from the older man!*

Laké's words and the experience I witnessed show how not knowing each other, exacerbated during times when Jemo One Condominium is almost deserted, contribute to unsafety in the area.

Finally, the last incommodities to mention relate to the architecture of the condominiums themselves. Firstly, there are problems related to shared terraces: frequent fights between neighbours over whose turn it is to hang clothes, their cleaning, or even objects falling from the upper floor to the lower ones.

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[23] *Misgana* is a kind of prayer in the Orthodox Church.
[24] Thief! Thief! in Amharic.

Moreover, for some, not living on the ground floor can result in a life confined to their room. The four to six flights of condominium stairs put older people and people with disabilities, especially physical disabilities, at a disadvantage. Here is a conversation about the issue in a Focus Group Discussion. Abraham and Henok are two middle-aged gentlemen employed in the private sector. Their testimonies, collected in a Focus Group Discussion, are among the few that I was able to schedule in advance:

Abraham: There hasn't been a study done on how to integrate the blind, crippled people of the relocated people into the condominium structure.

Henok: That is clear. I know a crippled person who never left the house because he lived on the fourth floor without a lift and had no one to help him, or to carry him to the ground floor.

Abraham again: You are right, from this point of view, no study has been done on how to help them or even facilitate their lives. My neighbour is blind, and once she started asking for help, and her husband immediately came running to her rescue to take her to the ground floor saying, '*besides me, who does she have?*' There are various examples like this. We have such problems in the condominium, and it seems evident that condominiums are buildings made on the spur of the moment. There should at least be lifts.

Although one could specify before relocation whether one had relatives with physical disabilities, a ground-floor flat was not guaranteed, and some interviews suggested that bribery could secure one.

I would therefore like to end this sub-chapter with a reflection on the power of money and how this is reflected in the context of Jemo One Condominium. One wonders why people keep moving into the area in the face of all these incommodities. Day after day, the neighbourhood becomes more and more appealing, especially for those with more stable incomes. The reality is that wealthy residents are able to overcome these issues: 'privileges', to say so, such as having a house on the ground floor, securing five litres of water for 25 birrs, having a private car, and

reinforced shutters to prevent thieves from entering the house, make life in Jemo One Condominium more pleasant. But just for some.

5.4 The Social Incommodities of Jemo One Condominium

Practical problems such as a lack of water, insecurity, endless queues for transport, or the lack of lifts are not the only issues that relocated people face. At the same time, Jemo One Condominium presents social challenges. The section below delves into such social challenges, establishing the framework within which social capital is located.

As already explained, Jemo One Condominium accommodates several types of people, who can be categorised as follows: *newari*, the Amharic translation of permanent inhabitants; *techeray*, the so-called renters, including former peasants from the Oromia region; and finally, *be eta ye mettu sewech*, the people who came to Jemo One Condominium after winning the lottery. In fact, this lottery system is now the central condominium allocation system: citizens register at the *woreda* with a valid ID, after which they wait for the raffle and, if they win, they make a down-payment to the sub-city. In the last registration round, dating back to 2013, applications for apartments were offered on the basis of a 40% downpayment and 60% to be repaid to the bank over 15 years (Planel & Bridonneau, 2017). Such economic criteria make Jemo One Condominium mostly feasible for the middle or upper-middle class, whose savings enable them to participate in the registration and, if allocated a unit, to afford the down payments.

The frequency of interaction is an essential fuel for social cohesion (Zou et al., 2018). However, Jemo One Condominium's social context fosters neither frequency nor interaction per se: people's constant coming and going makes it difficult to get to know people. Eyasu confirmed this: "We have been here for 12 years now, and we still don't know our neighbours. Everyone lives with the door closed, they are all strangers." Sara said about this issue:

Since there are more and more inhabitants in the neighbourhood, you don't know everyone anymore and the questions to get to know each other '*Who are you? Where are you from?*'

fade into the background. And if you see a thief stealing something, you as a neighbour don't interfere, there is no solidarity anymore.

This continuous turnover of people affects human sociability at Jemo One Condominium. When people get to know each other, it is usually only temporary. Mimi (the nickname she identifies with) is a middle-aged lady who was not exactly enthusiastic to participate in an interview with me at first. Mamush introduced me to Mimi: as soon as I asked him if he knew any other relocated people in the area, he speedily invited her to his home. The interview with Mimi was full of anger, though not towards me, and I was not surprised when she said: "I don't get on well with practically anyone here in the block." She continued:

> I'm used to saying things to your face, and if you're not okay with it, that's your business, because that's how I did it in the old neighbourhood. I had started doing courtesy greetings and drinking *bunna* with some neighbours here, but after a while, people get annoyed by something I say and the tradition ends.

Though it may not always be a question of character, as in Mimi's case, many people confirmed the lack of sociability.

My interlocutors revealed a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the *newariewech*, the inhabitants, see no point in investing in social relationships with tenants who are likely to move out in a year or two. Conversely, the tenants feel they have no need for such contact. One explained to me: "What do I need it for? I won't stay here permanently, sooner or later I will leave." The temporariness of the social context influences both groups to not invest in social ties.

Secondly, for others the problem is one of mistrust. Eyared exclaimed:

Now it occurs to me! Many may not want to help because they are afraid of being misunderstood. Like, if you see a lady with lots of shopping bags, you might be afraid to approach her offering to help her if you don't know her, because the mistrustful lady might think you are a thief.

In a way, Eyared's view embodies an economist strand of rational choice, in which a lack of information concerning other people undermines trust (Patulny & Lind Haase Svendsen, 2007, p. 34).

Sometimes, interviewees compare this unfamiliarity to moving abroad, to the West. Not only does not knowing anyone remind them of such experiences – usually imagined, since few had ever been outside the country - but the comparison is reinforced by the individual lifestyle pushed in the condominiums. Mamush asked me a rhetorical question:

> You know the people who move abroad, to the West, and find themselves alone? That's kind of what happened to us when we came to live here in Jemo. Even the lifestyle seems like that of people living abroad: you eat for yourself; you live for yourself.

Confronted with his question, I wondered whether unfamiliarity is indeed characteristic of a western lifestyle. On balance, I would say yes, but not in a negative sense: it is more likely that, as Eyared said, this unfamiliarity sparks a reflection of one's position and how an act of kindness, such as helping a lady to fetch her shopping bags can, on the other hand, be perceived as unsolicited interference by strangers.

Such a Western stance is replicated in the context of Jemo One Condominium. In a way, the area challenges the idea of *ubuntu*, of collectivist African unity as opposed to Western individualism. Indeed, such a dominant view has been considered too static in combination with a transforming African society. Alex B. Makulilo (2016) describes how "Ubuntu is no longer an order of the day in Africa as it used to be many years ago" (p. 194). Consistently, self-autonomy is manifesting in Addis Ababa.

However, some describe this individuality in favourable terms. Mamush himself said that he enjoyed not being known and the lack of acquaintances in the neighbourhood:

> This neighbourhood gave me a chance to change, to think about myself and go to university, whereas if I had been in the old neighbourhood, I would have been lounging with my other friends at dead-end jobs or even doing nothing; one day I would have spent it sitting with

one of my friends, the other with another, and so on. Being relocated and divided has therefore helped and improved us.

Although the rules of reciprocity generally did not weigh on the inhabitants of Woreda 7, Mamush reported how the emotional and physical closeness of the network burdened his growth opportunities.

Furthermore, he demonstrated how the social effects of relocation can open up opportunities. However, his story is one of many, and only a few people have come out of the break with existing social ties helped or improved. Many young people who moved to Jemo One Condominium find themselves addicted to drugs like *khat*, a flowering plant that releases its substances by chewing on it. It is interesting to include my own experience in this statement. At the beginning of the fieldwork, moving from one house to another, I collected a majority of older respondents, who often remained in Jemo One Condominium due to lack of work. It took me longer to find young people, and only later did I realise why: young people, rather than staying at home, experienced Jemo One Condominium more from the outdoors. And occasionally, the outdoors involved young people chewing *khat*. When asked, "do you think this is due to a lack of work in the area?" — pointing out the many free hours at their disposal — many agreed, stating that a more significant correlation should be made between the lack of social security and the possibility of reinventing oneself, albeit negatively. "Not knowing anyone here pushes you to have these addictions, there is no one who controls you or knows you," stated one *khat* user; another said: "People who don't know you care little about you, there is no social control so that they care about what you do and you care about their opinion." Therefore, it is easier to fall into such vices. It takes a village to raise a child, but Jemo One Condominium has no village to rely on; at best, expensive daycares.

Furthermore, there are factors related to a dweller's different status, particularly whether they are an owner or a renter. One of the IHDP's goals was to increase housing ownership. Besides decreasing the pressure on the precarious housing in the capital, it was anticipated that

owning a condominium could lead to positive social effects. When I asked Selemon: "What did it mean for you to achieve the title of a homeowner?", his response was immediate: "It gives you happiness." Yet, the adverse social effects of the prototype condominium owner have material-ised in Jemo One Condominium and require a reflection beyond the economic outcomes of being a homeowner (Charitonidou, 2022, p. 1359).

At the core, condominium owners are defined as those who obtained their homes through relocation, proved they could satisfy the down payment, and had the economic capacity to pay immediately or had won the lottery. The latter group, in particular, according to Johannes, have no respect for anyone:

> They do not think '*I have to speak quietly at certain times of the evening because I might dis-turb someone,*' they raise their voice and if someone says something to them, they reply in kind, claiming that the space is theirs too.

Tenants cannot make the same claim, as they are temporary owners of the space; though they can afford a 10,000 birrs monthly rent, which makes them a more affluent category than relo-cated persons.

Indeed, even though many relocated people have obtained their flat and thus also have the status of condominium owner, renters and those who gained the house through direct payment or a lottery discredit them because of their prior social-economic background. On a narrative level, I recorded an episode in my field notes of 19 November 2022 that demonstrates this:

> *While walking through Jemo with Sele, we meet an acquaintance, who is asked, "Were you moved for development purposes?", to which he replies "No!", as if with disdain, embarrassment. "You were the one moved for* lemat*, development, I won this place via* eta*", via lottery.*

This anecdote highlights the different narratives around being part of a place one has chosen, obtained by lottery, or has been forced to live in, i.e. by being relocated.

Moreover, tenants and owners have populated the area over the past five years, spicing up the reputation of Jemo One Condominium as 'a cool place.'

Here is another field note about it, from 9 January 2023:

As I went to print my interviews' table overview, I started talking to the girl – editor's note: young - who was printing, and when I said that my main sample was relocated people in Jemo she said "But how? Are there people who have been relocated there?", amazed: "I would have never expected it. Jemo is an abtam — *rich in Amharic* — *neighbourhood!"*

The presence of middle-income or high-income earners in Jemo One Condominium contributes to the area being classified as high-end. I remember how, in my first ethnographic month, when talking on the phone to a friend of mine about my research, I mentioned how water and electricity were scarce in Jemo, and this led my friend, born and raised in the West, to conclude that what I was experiencing was a delicate situation of impoverishment. Talking about my daily vicissitudes without giving a generalised context led my friend to the wrong conclusion. Jemo One Condominium features situations of impoverishment, but only for some. What I described was only part of the bigger picture. Consequently, I am now mindful of how my words can be interpreted 'from the other side of the phone'.

The most realistic portrait of the area is the coexistence of different social classes, as mentioned in the previous sub-chapters. However, coexistence does not presuppose support between classes. As stated by Laké:

People who were already poor in the old neighbourhood, here are even poorer, bent over by life. There are also middle-class people, and wealthy people, and the differences in social classes make everything different from how it was before, where we were all of the same social class. And this mixing that there is here in Jemo of social classes is not good: the rich only think of themselves, and in my experience, they don't want to support those who are poorer or recreate a supportive social fabric. The houses, especially of the well-to-do, remain with their doors closed and all secrets are kept inside, all troubles are solved.

The relocated people see the middle and upper classes as adversaries rather than potential partners. As reported by Boix and Posner (1998), although perhaps one could quote Marx and the class struggle, inequalities — social, political, economic — affect cooperation among potential cooperating partners. This is because "to maintain their political and economic privileges, the rich will manoeuvre to undermine any collective efforts that the poor may undertake to better their lot" (Boix & Posner, 1998, p. 688). They refer to Putnam's (1993) study in Italy and state that, compared to southern Italy, the flourishing social capital in northern Italy is, first and foremost, due to an economically equal society: in the south, social life at the local level:

> [C]ame to be ever more dominated by a landed aristocracy endowed with feudal powers, while at the bottom masses of peasants struggled wretchedly close to the limits of physical survival. Such deep-rooted social inequality was in stark contrast to the situation in the towns of northern and central Italy, which constituted, according to one author cited by Putnam, 'oases amidst the feudal forest' (Boix & Posner, 1998, pp. 688-689).

Finally, ethnicity and its politicization influence people's sociability in the area. Although opening up this topic in the Ethiopian context would be to dwell on historical, economic, and social factors, it is worth noting how being relocated to the capital's frontiers has shifted relocated people's perception of ethnic identity and ethnic divide, and interfacing with the neighbouring ethnic group.

While the latter is nothing new for relocated people, as their old neighbourhood was ethnically diverse, nowadays those relocated to Jemo One Condominium are particularly conscious of ethnic divides. One person explained: "A lot of peasants come here from Oromia, which is a bordering ethnic region, and they feel more important than us." Though the old neighbourhood is an important binder for young, relocated people, it is not perceived as such by some inhabitants of Jemo One Condominium. Being born in the capital grants young relocatees the label of *ye Addis Ababa lig*, the children of Addis Ababa in Amharic, which, as an independent city, does not translate into any particular status or, moreover, ethnic group.

Such effects are replicated in the Jemo One Condominium and experienced by those who have been relocated to other outskirts. "Those who have been relocated to Hyatt, wherever they have been relocated, face the same difficulties as Jemo, the same story. Geographically, Addis Ababa borders Oromia, so it is similar," it was pointed out.

Such opposition between belonging to an ethnic group or being excluded from it because of being born and raised in the capital creates social friction. This partly explains why relocated people, unable to assimilate into any ethnic group, tend towards their urban identity as children of Addis Ababa and, specifically, of the Woreda 7.

In his doctoral dissertation, Getahun Fenta Kebede (2015) analyses how different ethnic groups in Ethiopia have varying proportions of networks: The Gurage, for example, have extensive ethnic connections but outperform in education and employment compared to the Amhara and the Oromo. The latter have inter-ethnic networks, albeit weaker than the former, and finally, the Oromo have more homogeneous networks, whether in terms of ethnicity, educational background, or employment. Kebede's study therefore gives us a first clue as to why interfacing with several ethnicities is complicated in the Ethiopian context. Yet, this did not seem to be the case in Woreda 7.

Extrapolating the issue to the country as a whole, and in light of recent events, could explain why the ethnic divide is particularly felt in Jemo One Condominium. The relocation of slum dwellers to the condominium in 2010, happened in the context of rising ethnic tensions and conflicts in Ethiopia. In 2015, an escalation of ethnic grievances about economic and political reforms engaged various ethnic groups in the regions, from the Oromo to the Amhara (Lyons, 2019). Coming to power in 2018, the current government was initially welcomed optimistically as an opportunity for the country, which, it was hoped, would be ruled to the sound of *medemer*, the Amharic for 'synergy' between ethnic groups. However, since then, ethnic identity has become a pressing national issue, with the war in the North being the culmination of the escalating tensions between ethnic groups. Consequently, what Jemo's relocated people are experiencing nowadays can also be seen as a result of the rise of the importance of ethnic identity in

Ethiopian society. Talking about one's ethnicity is a sensitive issue. "Here you are always on the alert: who is this person, where is he from, be careful what you say, especially in ethnic terms," an informant told me.

According to Josh Ishiyama and Post Basnet (2022), the three most "politically important ethnic groups" out of 80 ethnic groups in the country — Amhara, Oromo, and Tigrayan — now feel more connected to their own ethnic identity (from 13.6% in 2013 to 23.6% in 2021), while their feel much less Ethiopian (a decline from 54.7% in 2013 to 31.3% in 2021) (p. 90). The Amhara respondents reported more support for a national Ethiopian identity. At the same time, Tigrayan and Oromo expressed greater ethnic than national allegiances, prompting the authors to conclude that "outside of the Amhara community, Abiy Ahmed's call for *Ethiopiawinet* may fall on deaf ears" (Ishiyama & Basnet, 2022, p. 90). While, in some cases, being without ethnicity may seem a privilege, as it avoids politicisation, in the current context, it proves to be less advantageous for relocated people than belonging to a particular ethnic group: "Here, in Jemo, it only works by ethnicity," affirmed one DIR boy, "and we don't have an ethnicity."

Conclusion

Chapter V assessed the effect of living in apartment blocks on people's lives, specifically that of relocated people. Architecturally, condominium living has seen a loss of Ethiopian social practices, from food preparation to a general getting-together; instead, the shared spaces of condominiums have been filled with cars. These structural changes have also led to the loss of in-home and in-between petty trade activities, i.e. selling food, as people or everyday shops occupy the ground floors. On an economic level, relocated people continued to engage with income-generating activities from their former life in the old neighbourhood for a long time, until the price of transport stopped their return to the area. It is clear that there is a rise in the cost of living generally. At the same time, new income-generating off-home activities have arisen, such as working for private companies or self-employment. The chapter then discussed the modern amenities offered by the condominium, such as private kitchens and bathrooms. This revealed

that, in reality, intermittent water and electricity hinder this experience, at least for those who, like most relocated people, cannot access water by paying for additional barrels. The lack of public transport and lifts to upper floors were equally mentioned as pressing problems, emphasising the insecurity of the area. Finally, the melting pot of the area was considered, both from a social point of view, considering the influx of affluent people and renters, and from an ethnic point of view, emphasising the Oromo ethnic farmers and how, in the general context of the country, ethnic and political divides further affect people's sociability. The cohesion of social and ethnic groups leads to a multidimensional view of the Jemo One Condominium area; some residents are happy with their new life and others, including a number of relocated people, cannot find any tangible benefits from it. Chapter VI analyses the effects that the factors studied here, from the architectural to the social ones, have had on the social capital of the Jemo One Condominium.

Chapter VI

The Status of Social Capital: Adapting to Jemo One Condominium

As discussed in the previous chapter, citizens of Jemo One Condominium do not perceive or use the communal areas of their apartment blocks as shared spaces. Moreover, living in the block of flats did not deliver the modernity or quality of life that the relocated people had been promised, due to, among other things, water and electricity shortages. In contrast, there were significant changes at the practical and social levels. Factors such as unfamiliarity, the mingling of different social classes, and ethnic divides influenced DIR people's willingness to interact with the other residents. Under these circumstances, one question arises: What motivates relocated people and other residents to build social practices in Jemo One Condominium? And, if successful, how do they manifest such practices? This section reveals the foundations and realisations of social practices between actors in Jemo One Condominium. The reader must pay attention to the spatial distinction drawn between 'inside the blocks' and 'outside the blocks', both still within the site of the Jemo One Condominium, as this spatial variable will delineate the chapter. The first part of this chapter focuses on the social capital created within Jemo One Condominium's blocks. In contrast, the second part is dedicated to social capital created outside the blocks but still within Jemo One Condominium's areas, as the motives in this case are different.

6.1 The Convergence of Social Practices between Relocated and Affluent Inside the Blocks

Since most relocated people are still in poverty, social capital is needed in Jemo One Condominium to alleviate the situation. Relying on old networks of people daily is hard, as Jemo residents are now removed from their former area and disaggregated by relocation. Therefore, there is a clear need for a new social fabric to emerge within Jemo One Condominium.

Trust lubricates the community's networks (Bell, 1998, p. 12; Putnam, 1993, p. 3). As a result, establishing trust, at least at a minimum level, is necessary to build social capital within Jemo One Condominium's blocks. The coexistence of different social classes presupposes the emergence of a purely vertical social capital, and one wonders, as the respondent Laké or academics such as Boix and Posner (1998) suggest, what is the driving force that attracts the better-off to enter into dialogue with the less well-off? This sub-chapter investigates such motives.

I argue that, within Jemo One Condominium's blocks, necessity pushes its inhabitants to overcome mistrust and social differences; if, on the one hand, relocated people are in greater need of social capital, as they are in economic hardship, on the other hand, more affluent people can also benefit. I will delve into this latter aspect in the following pages.

Necessity is the common thread of reciprocity at Jemo One Condominium. "I don't often ask for a roll of *injera*," said Lily, "but if I really have to, I don't mind asking my neighbour." When hunger kicks in, it matters little whether the neighbour is a renter or wealthier than you. At the same time, renters tend to keep to themselves because they perceive little use investing in temporary solidarity relationships. However, this attitude is to their disadvantage. Eyob explained that "[n]ot socialising is to your detriment. The harm is great," suggesting that the renters' choice was not advantageous as, when adversity strikes, no one will help as they did not cooperate with people.

Similar to Eyob, Abraham referred to people who had died at home and lain alone for three days: "These people didn't open up socially to anyone," he explained, "that's why people didn't care that much about them."

Few of the previous cornerstones of social capital found in the old neighbourhood have been consolidated at Jemo One Condominium. For instance, trust is relatively weak inside the blocks. Roger Patulny (2004), drawing on Eric M. Uslaner's work, distinguishes between generalised and particularised trust. The former is normative and is based on the ethics of making a sacrifice, such as leaving aside fears about unknown people, to achieve something positive: "If we lack information (…) we must trust, or else any kind of action would be impossible" (Patulny,

2004, p. 5); the latter is based on the knowledge and experience of the people one interfaces with, and is recorded to be more stable than generalised trust. Currently, the trust inside the blocks trends more towards a generalised trust, with relocated people taking the risk of trusting individuals in an attempt to improve their precarious economic conditions.

However, for the more affluent, the driving force behind trust is more intrinsic to *Ethiopiawinet*, i.e. to their Ethiopian identity. Here, a quote about the *messob*, by Ato Ayalew, is illustrative: "In the end, whether the neighbour's *messob* is bigger than mine or not, it still contains the same thing." No matter how different the economic capacities of the inhabitants in Jemo One Condominium are, symbolised by larger and smaller *messobs*, they are ultimately linked by their *Ethiopiawinet*, represented by the *injera*, a typical Ethiopian meal.

The life course of a human being pivots around two main events: birth and death. In the Ethiopian context, to celebrate the former and mourn the latter, the *iddir* and, in a broader sense, the *mahber* become fundamental risk-sharing mechanisms. "No one," said Tiye Wodde, "can think of surviving without at least one of the two." As for the *eqqub*, I have seen or heard no trace of it, presumably because its main ingredient is missing: long-standing knowledge and trust (Gashayie & Singh, 2016). Tiye Wodde establishes that "Mahberawi hiwot is a tradition of the Ethiopian culture." The upper classes at Jemo One Condominium are aware of this and contribute the bare minimum — a membership fee — to secure the assistance of credit groups in the case of loss or, occasionally, more joyful reasons such as a birth.

The downside, mentioned by many DIR respondents, is that the *iddir* has lost the holistic character of the old neighbourhood (Pankhurst, 2008) and is increasingly taking on the appearance of a practice — a fee — paid for symbolic purposes. Compared to the pre-established community, these instances of social capital make relocated people more vulnerable to economic burdens while wealthy people can rely on their economic resources (Dekker, 2004), as seen in the case of the lack of water.

Tiye Wodde explained to me that "I, as well as Tiye Etenesh, have to participate in the *iddir* because we know that being old, it is easy for something, an illness or worse, to happen to us,

and we will need everyone's help." Both Tiye Wodde and Tiye Etenesh support the rational motive behind *iddir*s in Jemo One Condominium: the ladies are aware that their age makes them more prone to frailty and they view participating in the *iddir* as a moral obligation. In the next sub-chapter, I will further explore the *iddir* within Jemo One Condominium.

The *iddir*, however, is not the only thing seen as an obligation to share risks; norms of reciprocity seem to have the same value and, in the Jemo One context, burden the inhabitants. While the exchange of *injera* in Woreda 7 presupposed a more protracted, open-ended loan, nowadays, the clock is ticking. Using Polanyi's (1957) distinction between generalised reciprocity, where the expectation of an exact return is not a primary concern, as in the case of Woreda 7, there is now balanced reciprocity, where members keep track of the value of exchanges to ensure fairness. In this regard, I would like to recount an episode, documented in my field notes, concerning my relative Hannah.

On 8 December 2022, I wrote:

Sometimes beautiful things happen in fieldwork, actually, beautiful things happen in life, and in this case it was my relative who gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. As I was sitting in the apartment talking to her, I was intrigued by how all our relatives expected many people to come and visit the house — "As mum is a very active person in social capital and iddir, *always helping everyone, we expected in return that many people would come and pay my respect after birth", recounts Hannah. This did not happen, the cost of living is expensive in Addis, with absurdly priced children's clothes, and equally embarrassing is the possibility of turning up empty-handed, ergo, people do not come to visit.*

This episode highlights several elements. On the one hand, self-interest behind social capital is evident within Jemo One Condominium: Hannah's mother is active in the *iddir*, and, as a result, she and her family expect that her commitment to the community serves their interests. On the other hand, the episode shows that the pressure to reciprocate in Jemo One Condominium is

so strong that, if residents cannot bring food or other gifts for the baby, they simply avoid visiting altogether, leaving Hannah and her unborn child without the traditional show of respect.

As previously noted, there are also practical incommodities related to architecture that influence practices related to sociability. Such architectural changes influence to a greater extent practices of social capital embedded in the Ethiopian culture. Rapoport (1990) states that public open spaces are not just places where people walk around but act as social and cultural markers for humans. In the empty outdoor space at Jemo One Condominium, dwellers cannot remake older funeral practices. When there is a funeral, one cannot pitch a tent in the garden but instead must rent a *cominal*, a condominium room designed specifically for mourning. However, the *cominal* represents an additional expense that *iddirs* have to cover.

Finally, there is another fundamental shift related to the practical and social factors of Jemo One Condominium. These factors are at the essence of the differences in social capital dynamics after relocation.

Condominium design has stimulated an individual lifestyle, which is consolidated by the mistrust associated with the continuous arrival of new residents into the area. For relocated people, these elements are reflected in the social capital: the network of relationships has changed from a fictive kin system to a nuclear kin system, with most people now only trusting their family (Ante, 2008). Trust in other inhabitants is displayed only on rare occasions, typically in times of need.

At this point, I would like to report on a preliminary error in my research. When I was still drafting my research, I reported on a demonstration of social capital observed on my first visit to Jemo One Condominium, when it was still semi-inhabited. At that time, the lack of light in the area and the fear of hyenas meant that relocated families returned from the market, then located far away, in small groups and arm in arm, believing that a group was more difficult to attack. I still remember my cousin's elbow pressing on my hip when, on one of my summer visits

to the capital, we returned in the evening arm in arm, her hands full of bags. Bored, I would prod her for all sorts of reasons on that long walk and she threatened to call the hyenas to eat me.

This example demonstrates an informal solution of using the network to secure a primary need, namely, safety. Moreover, it also shows how this need is secured through a nuclear kinship, i.e. family members. Even if they had wanted to, they could not have been supported by the previous fictive kinship, as it was scattered all over the capital.

Thirteen years later, however, with the arrival of renters in Jemo One Condominium — whether buyers, lottery winners, or peasants from Oromia—a fictive kinship system has yet to develop within the blocks.

Not finding the answers I had hoped for in the early stages of my research, I was heartbroken. It was only after time that I realised, quite simply, that the absence of fictive kin did not imply a lack of social capital. Rather it had not yet evolved and remained purely nuclear kinship. Besides regular events, like funerals and sometimes birth festivities or marriages, dwellers largely relied on their family members. As Eyob told me, "I have my mother and brother, and we get by like that." This system emulates the ethos of amoral familialism, coined by Edward C. Banfield (1958), a social structure whereby the individual relies exclusively on the nuclear family. The conditions of poverty are a crucial reason for the lack of pursuit of common goals by the citizen who, having nothing, cannot afford the mistake of extensively trusting other people and being disappointed (Banfield, 1958). Nevertheless, for the rest of the inhabitants of Jemo One Condominium, previously mentioned factors such as class differences, with wealthy people relying more on individual strategies to cope with other vulnerabilities, or ethnic bias undermined its creation.

On 13 October 2022, I wrote in my field notes that: "*In their own homes, the interviewees relax their muscles, and I sense that they literally feel they are in a protected bubble, their own.*" This illustrates, among other things, how important the home has become to those within Jemo One Condominium: it is no longer a box full of people, but a familiar and private bubble, where they enjoy ceremonies such as sharing coffee on their own.

6.2 The Instance of *Imawaish YeSet Iddir* Inside the Blocks

In the previous chapter, I outlined the rationale behind the formation of social capital within Jemo One Condominium, explaining the nature of trust, the norms of reciprocity, and the system of affinity typically found in the area. I mentioned the *iddir* as an expression of these elements within Jemo One Condominium; however, this sub-chapter will further explore *iddir* in the area.

To this day, even at Jemo One Condominium, older people continue to hold the responsibility for social capital.

Ato Bantayehu is an elder DIR; he explained the *iddir's* organisation as follows:

The series of *iddirs* in the condominium symbolise our desire as Ethiopians to want and need to come together. The *iddirs* here are different because we participants are different: different ways of relieving ourselves of pain, tastes, closeness. In the old neighbourhood, on the other hand, because we were close, we were together, and consequently with similar ways of living.

It is not necessarily the case that every block has *iddirs* and, if there are any, that the inhabitants know how to reconcile the different ways of being; indeed, this apparently remains a difficulty inside Jemo One Condominium's blocks. However, those blocks that have succeeded in creating social capital show it with pride. Here is how Tiye Wodde, head of a women's *iddir*, considered it:

Here in block 149, there is an *iddir*, where money is collected for problems such as loss, illness, marriage. You buy gifts etc with that money, at least in this block (…) but every block is different, and so is its *iddir*! (…) Block 149 is made of 12 blocks, and there are two types of *iddir*: one for men, one for women.

Tiye Wodde explained that in Block 149 "there are 150 people, and out of those only 40 are part of the *iddir* for men, and 16 to 20 women are part of the *iddir* for women." These figures show that out of 150 people only a maximum of 60, i.e. less than half, are voluntarily invested in the

iddir. Those who are not are renters or, in the case of two people, wealthy and not interested in the area's social life. In such cases, their misfortunes are not ignored, but it is likely they receive support from people from afar. This support is probably minimal, no more than three days.

Additionally, of these 60 people in Block 159, the majority have invested in the men's *iddir* and, consequently, this group has more money. However, greater financial capacities do not necessarily translate into strong *iddirs*, as seen in Chapter IV, since, in addition to money, a successful *iddir* requires social and daily commitment.

Members of women's *iddirs* interviewed within the area confirmed this. One morning, I met Hiwot, the manager of a women's *iddir* in Jemo One Condominium. Hiwot and the other ladies were busy peeling onions for a celebration. Hesitantly, I approached and asked if I could help, and I was initially met with a look of distrust. Then, agitated, I mentioned that some of my relatives used to live in the area, and a lady excitedly said that she knew my great-aunt; she then invited me to sit with them and peel onions. The few outdoor spaces at Jemo One Condominium are hardly used. But Hiwot and the other ladies (see Figure 12) have permission from the block administration to prepare food in front of a rented room.

Figure 12

A Group of Women iddir peeling onions

Once finished, although tired, I wrote down everything I could remember in my field notes.

Hiwot explains:

The neighbour asked us to help her with a celebration concerning her sister's engagement and we are helping her without being paid. One cannot force one to participate in iddir *for joy reasons, but only in times of sorrow. When we moved to this neighbourhood, we started the* iddir *because it was needed. Before, when we started, we were 18 women, now we are about 20. But there are many tenants who as precarious and non-stable tenants in the area are not interested in the* iddir*.*

In her women's iddir*, the obligation to participate is only reserved for reasons of sadness.*

She continues to clarify the rules to me:

One used to be included with a monthly fee of ten birrs, now the monthly fee has risen to 30 birrs. Of those 30 birrs, ten are usually used for funeral purposes, while the other 20 are kept to buy things for the celebrations. 1 up to 5 days of the calendar are dedicated to collecting the money. When an inhabitant dies, they give us 3000 birrs to take care of the funeral traditions. We put up the rest: lentils, onions, oil. For three days, seven women of the iddir *take care of*

preparing lunch and cleaning the dishes, while another seven take care of preparing dinner afterwards. Then we make tea and bunna*. All this with the* iddir*'s money.*

In addition, all iddirs *usually have a bank account, of which two persons from the group are appointed treasurer.*

Another lady continues in her place: "The iddir *of men is less strong. They don't do the cooking, they don't give any support to the person affected by the misfortune, except to carry the stools on which the people in the* cominal *will sit."*

After that, the conversation shifts to a less explanatory level, and two ladies are shocked by Hiwot's revelation: "The other time, while cooking, an electrician fixing the aerial said to me 'I smell some food celebration, can I have some?'" Hiwot quietly handed him a plate of injera *with* missir wet.[25] *who concluded that the modesty of earlier days was gone.*

Even in the iddirs *of Jemo One Condominium, albeit in a minor way, one can find benefits beyond their primary function. One particular example comes to mind which, though more the exception than the rule, I feel it is worth mentioning: at the funeral of a wealthy household, it happened that such members, seeing a woman from an* iddir *working, were positively impressed by her dutifulness and they later hired her to work as the family's cleaner.*

Later, when we finish chopping vegetables, Hiwot invites me to her house and shows me the perfectly guarded rules of her iddir*. She gives me permission to photograph and employ such rules in my thesis.*

Figure 13

Outdated Rules of Iddir *Membership*

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[25] Red lentil stew.
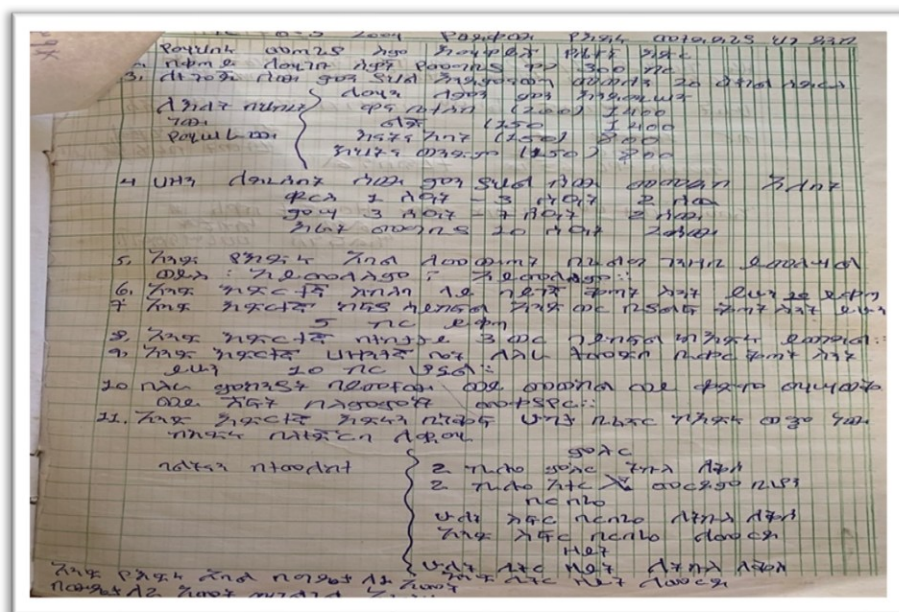
Rules underpinning *iddir* membership (6 May 2011)

1.   The name of the *mahber* [association] is "*Imawaish YeSet Iddir.*"

2.   Each member pays an entrance fee of 300 birrs.

3.   To a person who is affected by grief, we give the following amounts:

Per day, we cooperate and give according to their position

Person affected	Previous payment	Updated payment
Head of house	200	1400
Son	150	1400
Father or Mother	150	800
Sister or Brother	150	800

4.   Number of people we send for the mourner:

Breakfast from 7 am to 9 am - 2 people

Lunch from 9 am to 1 pm - 2 people

Dinner from 4 pm onwards - 2 people

5.   Will a member who wants to leave the *iddir* receive back her payment? She will not be refunded the payment.

6.   How much is the fine if a member does not attend a meeting? The fine is 10 birrs.

7.   If a month passes and a member has not paid the monthly fee, how much is the fine? The fine is 5 birrs.

8.   If a member does not pay for 3 months, she is kicked out of the *iddir*.

9.   How much is the fine if a member misses her shift in the mourning household? The fine is 10 birrs.

10. If a member is unable to attend to her work, she must find another person to replace her, let us know beforehand, or swap shifts with another member.

11. If a member creates problems, she will be kicked out of the *iddir*.

Regarding food:

2 kilos of chickpeas for a recent loss (*tcus lakso*)

2 kilos of lentils for a recent loss (*tcus lakso*)

2 kilos of berbere for a recent loss (*tcus lakso*)

2 milk/cans of berbere for a recent loss (*tcus lakso*)

If (*mrdo*) outside the house

1 tin of berbere

Oil

2 litres of oil for a recent loss

1 litre for a distant loss

A member is obliged to work for one year, after the first one it is not obligatory.

The legend above is a personal translation of Figure 13. I have converted the year of the Ethiopian calendar — 2004 — with the Gregorian calendar, 7 years ahead, hence 2011. In addition, I have translated the Ethiopian hour count — sunrise — to the Western one — midnight — so 1 am corresponds to 7 am. Figure 13 shows the first regulation drafted in 2011 by the *Imawaish*

YeSet Iddir, which translates into English as the "Compassionate Women *Iddir.*" I will only dwell on a few points as it is an outdated version of the current *iddir* rules. If the person concerned is the head of the house, the payment changes from 200 to 1400 birr. The most coherent explanation for this is that as the number of *iddirtegnoch* (members) increased, so did the *iddir*'s income. The members of the household — son, father and mother, brother and sister — all refer to the kinship of the household head. In addition to demonstrating a noteworthy organisation, these rules expose how the women's *iddir* provides more than just financial support to the affected person: from breakfast at 7 am until dinner, the members undertake to cook and help the mourning relative. Another significant difference is the distinction between *tcus lakso*, literally warm mourning, to represent the loss of a close relative living inside the household, and *mrdo*, a more distant loss, such as the death of a brother or sister living outside the home. Figure 14 represents the *iddir*'s most recent rules.

Figure 14

Updated Rules of Iddir Membership
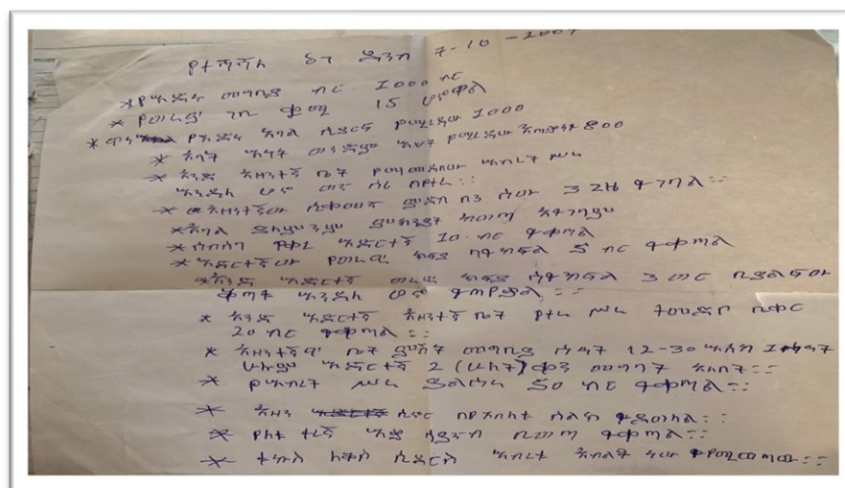
Improved Laws and Rules (7 October 2014).

∗ To join the *iddir*, a fee of 1,000 birr is required.

∗ Members have to pay a monthly fee of 15 birrs.

∗ When any member of the *iddir* dies, 1000 birrs are given to the member's family.

∗ When a member's father, mother, brother, or sister dies, 800 birrs are given to the family.

∗ In a bereaved family, members help with housework and share the burden of preparing the *wet* (traditional stew).

∗ The bereaved person will ill receive assistance from three people, three times a day.

∗ A member who leaves the *iddir* without reason may not rejoin.

∗ A member who does not attend a meeting will be fined 10 birrs.

∗ An *iddir* member who does not attend the meeting will be fined 10 birrs.

∗ A member who fails to pay the monthly dues will be fined 5 birrs.

∗ A member who does not pay the monthly fee for three consecutive months will be fined the same amount and asked to explain the reason for non-payment.

∗ A member who does not attend her shift at the mourning house will be fined 20 birrs.

∗ The evening shift at the mourning house is from 6.30 pm until 7 am.

∗ All members must visit the bereaved person's home twice.

∗ Those who have not done the work of mourning (*ye hbret sra*) will be fined 50 birrs.

∗ When there is a loss, all members are called on the phone.

∗ If the person who is on duty working [at the bereaved person's house] does not wash the dishes, she will be fined.

∗ When there is a recent loss, the members prepare food for them and go out

This translation of the most recent rules of the *iddir*, dated 2014 in the Gregorian calendar, shows several changes compared to Figure 13. A well-defined set of rules for *iddirs* inside the Jemo One blocks fosters solidarity, reciprocity, and good relations. On a monetary level, the

entry fee has risen from 300 birrs in 2007 to 1000 birrs in 2014, and the monthly fee was set at 15 birrs, although, as Hiwot told me, this doubled to 30 birrs per month in 2023.

One aspect I found particularly interesting about the *iddir* is the fines, and, in some cases, these have remained the same: the penalty for not attending the meeting, for example, remains 10 birrs and the fine for missing the monthly payment is still 5 birrs. These sanctions represent the seriousness of the *iddir*, the constant effort required of members, and the desire to limit non-cooperative behaviour.

On the one hand, the obligation — and the fine for not fulfilling it — has increased, as, in this most recent version of the regulations, a fine of 20 birrs has been added for failure to meet obligations at the mourning house, and one of 50 birrs if *ye hbret sra*, all those mourning-related chores from cooking to cleaning, are not fulfilled; finally, another — unspecified — fine is imposed if the dishes are not washed after a member's mourning shift.

Moreover, the number of people sent on *iddir* tasks increased from two in 2007 to three in 2014, although, as Hiwot said, in 2023, it will be as many as seven. On the other hand, the *iddir*'s rules also suggest a degree of leniency, as they do not directly mention kicking out the person who has not paid for more than three months; rather, an explanation for non-payment is required. Other interesting elements are the introduction of technology, symbolised by a phone call made to all members to report a death. These elements show how *iddirs* have evolved not only with the advent of condominiums but also with the passing of time.

I would like to conclude this sub-chapter with a memory of a *lakso* that I witnessed in the condominium, although it was not in the three days of mourning.

My field notes from 13 October 2022 read:

Each house welcoming me shows me a different side, today I experienced the sadness of a loss. The mourning of a father who passed away, a family who received me in lakso*. While the older brother explained to me how the* lakso *ritual worked — what was cooked, drank, with what money — I myself sipped a glass full of* tella*, surrounded by ladies encased in black veils.*

The brother in question is Samy, a middle-aged guy who was relocated to Jemo One Condominium. After a while, he asked me to sit outside on the pavement, so as not to interrupt the ritual happening in his house. Figure 15 is an image of people waiting on the terrace outside his flat.

Figure 15

Outside a Lakso

Samy told me:

> A month and ten days ago, my father died. After 40 days, from the day of his death, in the Orthodox religion is a custom gathering for the memorial, that is, to remember him, *nebs imar*.[26] Tomorrow is exactly 40 days, and we are gathering to celebrate him. We cook for everyone, we help each other, people from the *iddir* and friends from different parts of Addis and beyond help us prepare the *wet*, we eat for free, and we say '*nebs imar.*'

Samy's situation illustrates the dynamic ritual of the *lakso*, which embeds both support from *iddir* members and support from far away, from people in different parts of Addis Ababa and beyond.

Samy continued:

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[26] *Nebs imar* is an Ethiopian expression that I would translate with the Latin locution 'Sit tibi terra levis,' meaning 'may the earth be light to you,' a Christian greeting that wishes for peace, recalling the belief in the afterlife.

There is no obligation, but usually the people from other areas of Addis give a quota of birrs, depending on how much they can manage, 100 birrs, 50, as much as they want. We drink homemade *tella* and spend the whole day together. Often some of the food cooked is taken to the church, where with the expression *nebs imar* it is distributed to the priests and the poor. This does not only happen during *lakso*, but also during happy events like weddings.

Afterwards, Samy confirmed that in the case of a funeral help is necessary, while in the case of a happy event, it is voluntary:

What changes substantially is that the expenses are more on us during the wedding, and the volunteers are substantially less, some offer *injera*, others *tella*, but it is random. In the case of the wedding, you do not offer food in the church for the poor, but instead they come to the wedding venue, and beg.

A woman interrupted our conversation at this point. "Did you see that?" Samy asked me, rhetorically. "The *iddir* lady has just warned us that the *injera* is ready. Let's go eat".

6.3 Fabricating Associations Outside Blocks

Ato Bantayehu made a more general and positive observation regarding Jemo One Condominium's *iddirs*: "They initiate us to get to know each other." Setting up such financial assistance becomes an engine for starting conversations between strangers. The underlying question, however, is to which point the conversation is taken; that is to say, to what extent does this engine succeed in creating networks of trust and reciprocity?

Many people have also indicated the church as a meaningful site for getting to know each other. This entry point introduces not only an aspect of religion to condominiums, but also social capital outside of the blocks but still within the confines of Jemo One Condominium. This sub-chapter is therefore concerned with this aspect, with those relocated as its focus.

Condominium complexes not only bring together people from different economic and ethnic backgrounds, but also people with different religions. However, religion operates in the background and not the foreground of Jemo One Condominium; no Muslim, Protestant, or Orthodox adherent expressed any serious problems coexisting with people from other religions.

In fact, Ethiopia has a rich religious tradition with a plurality of faiths. As a result, religion is a significant identity marker for Ethiopian citizens: two thirds of the population identifies as Christian, while one third is Muslim (Evason, 2018). I will now discuss religious practices, focusing in particular on those of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, with which I have become more familiar with.

That Ethiopia, or at least Addis Ababa, is deeply religious, is evident not only from the details — *netela*[27]-covered streets on Sundays, for example; or, at designated times, pavements occupied by people wiping their feet before entering a mosque — but also from the linguistic way of expressing directions; soon, I found myself having to find my way around by referring to the proximity of Orthodox churches: the square near *Estifanos*; the building near *Kidane Mehret*; and, in the case of Jemo One Condominium, but also the twin projects of Jemo Two Condominium and Jemo Three Condominium, still waiting for a church, referring to places close to the still in construction church *Medhanealem*.

Interestingly, Medhanealem Church is, to some extent, an expression of social capital in the area. The church, which is being built from voluntary donations, is still not finished. Meanwhile, citizens pray in a rough, laminated church, which was also built in two months thanks to citizens' donations. Wooden scaffolding fills the church, as metal is more expensive, while worshippers await money to continue the concrete constructions.

Offerings can be made in three ways: by placing money in the church collection boxes; transferring it to an International Bank Account Number; or during collections on religious holidays. In the latter case, farmers often sell livestock on these occasions and offer portions of the meat for sale at higher-than-usual prices.

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[27] Woven cotton shawl.

In his study of Ethiopia, Mulugeta (2020) touches on the metaphorical relationship in the spiritual world between God and the Christian population (p. 242). Using this metaphor, which draws on Lévi-Strauss's concept of homologous opposition, the author describes how each of the two parties has specific rights and responsibilities. Interestingly, in my study, such expectations were carried over from local moral imaginary to social capital. By way of illustration, many people expressed that they would rather spend money in the Medhanealem church, paying their respect and love for the Lord, than with their block's *iddir*: "Once the church is over, you can pray to God, and sooner or later God will improve your economic and other situation." This statement is not intended to express that God is a practical means to improving one's social condition but that, possibly, his benevolence makes the inhabitants of Jemo One Condominium more inclined to cooperate with the church than the *iddir* in their block.

On 1 December 2022, as I was about to go to the above-mentioned church with my cousins, I observed a series of plastic chairs filling the unfinished church: after asking what was happening, a gentleman explained that it was the elders' *iddir* meeting. Apparently, the men's *iddir* was meeting in the church of Medhanealem. Figures 16 and Figure 17 are photographs taken with their permission.

Figure 16

Men's iddir meeting inside Medhanealem Church

Figure 17

Close-up photograph of the men's iddir meeting

I asked if I could follow and sit down at a distance. In the meantime, a man passed around a signature sheet, and the young women present stood up in turn to affirm that they would be attending in place of their fathers. The gentlemen argued among themselves, a discussion that was only interrupted when a lady poured *tella* into glasses and shared bread bits from baskets.

Apparently, turnout had dropped compared to previous meetings, and a man proposed a fine of 100 birr for absentees without justification. A general round of applause confirmed the proposal. At the end of the meeting, roughly half an hour later, a man stood up and read out how much had been spent and on what. No one objected, and after finishing their glasses of *tella*, attendees expressed their thanks and got up. I immediately approached and explained my research. Four gentlemen and a lady sat down on still-warm plastic stools, giving me the opportunity to conduct a Focus Group Discussion with them.

While chatting, I discovered that this *iddir* was composed exclusively of people relocated from Woreda 7. In fact, it was called *YeSheraton Accababi Yefikir Yeselam Mahber*, the Association of Love and Peace from the Sheraton's Surroundings, and I was impressed.

Ato Girma began:

Our ancestors, grandparents, have carried on these traditions for 60 years and brought us here. We created this association to not lose those old relationships, that unity, and when we

meet every month, we rediscover all that, coming from all around. When we meet again, we are happy, happy to be together and not, like others, for utility.

The *iddirtegnoch* mentioned that the bearers of social capital and praised them for passing on its value.

What was remarkable was that, although there were *iddirs* in the blocks of Jemo One Condominium, they apparently did not meet the needs of the relocated residents.

The main issue, Ato Girma explained, was that:

> The only people who can be part of this association have come from the former *kebeles* 21, 22, 24, 25, so that the relationships, our caring for each other, created in the *iddir* of the old district can continue here.

Therefore, the only people one trusts are bound by provenance: the Woreda 7.

Ato Bantayehu joined the conversation:

> Usually, *iddirs* are created to solve difficulties. This was not exactly the case with us, since we moved the old *iddir* here, in a way. We collect money under the guise of Medhanealem, monthly and yearly, and we meet here. Lately, we have dwindled. There used to be about 80 of us, many have died, others due to lack of money have sold their house to Jemo, and at the moment, there are 63 of us. We don't only meet because of difficulties with life, but on the contrary we look forward to happy, celebratory days together, to be precise the day of Medhanealem, *Megabit 27*.

Ato Bantayehu's statement emphasized several points I had been reflecting on: the high economic cost of living in the area and the moving of people to less expensive neighbourhoods. In addition, he highlighted how the association aimed to emulate the old neighbourhood and serve as a happy meeting place, not just a venue for somber gatherings: "The biggest goal of this *iddir* is the celebration of Medhanehalem's annual patron saint. Here we also bring forward

the happy side of an *iddir*," he elaborated. "Each year, each of us contributes 12 birr, and we bring our thanks to Medhanehalem and support its construction."

The men meet in the church to celebrate the patron saint of Medhanehalem on 27 March in the Ethiopian calendar. The *iddir* contributes to the upkeep of the church building, enhancing the site's significance. It should be noted that the YeSheraton Accababi Yefikir Yeselam Mahber combines several elements of traditional associations: an *iddir*, a *mahber*, and, more broadly, a *senbet*. The rules follow those of an *iddir*, the celebration of the patron saint resembles a *mahber*, and the church as a meeting place evokes a *senbet*. This raises the question: which category does this association truly belong to?

An interesting element is that the Medhanehalem church serves as a forced rather than voluntary meeting place. Ato Bantayehu explained: "We had nowhere to meet, so we asked permission from the priests to meet here." This would exclude the YeSheraton Accababi Yefikir Yeselam Mahber from being classified strictly as a *senbet* or *mahber*. Yet, the members' desire to contribute both financially and spiritually to the church's construction makes the nature of this *iddir* more fluid.

Collecting money typically involves buying a sheep or, in the most fortunate cases where a larger sum has been raised, a bull, which is then shared among the members. A common challenge for many *iddirs* is a lack of funds. For instance, the *iddir* of relocated elderly has limited financial capacity, as its members no longer work or had to leave their jobs due to age, rising transport costs, or the impossibility of performing home-based activities at Jemo One. With a similar economic status and background, the YeSheraton Accababi Yefikir Yeselam Mahber represents horizontal social capital. Yet, precisely because this *iddir* extends beyond a purely financial function, monetary contributions are not a burden for its members.

As Ato Zelalem explained at the meeting: "Just as the horse has reins, this *iddir* also has reins, rules to guide it." The rules are as follows:

- Only one family member can participate in the *iddir*; up to one member per family is allowed.

- All laws must be respected.

- In case of accidents or loss, there are rules on how to provide assistance, whether financial or otherwise.

- The father usually handles the payments, and only after his death do the offspring take responsibility.

Ato Zelalem was particularly firm about this last rule. Here, it is interesting to include the elderly members' opinion of the young people at the Jemo One Condominium. Views are not uniform, but two trends emerge. The first is a pessimistic view held by some elders, who see young people as a lost cause in terms of building or recreating social capital. This outlook is not attributed to the young people's personal shortcomings but rather to external factors. For instance, Burtucan explained that:

In the old neighbourhood, older people took care of the *mahberawi hiwot*, and in doing so, young people grew up experiencing it firsthand. Observing how adults handled social capital provided them with examples to follow and reference figures for guidance

However, young, relocated people can no longer interact daily with the bearers of social capital as they are scattered over different parts of Addis Ababa, Akaki, and Oromia. In this case, and with reference to Zelalem's final sentence, the action of transmitting social capital is more utilitarian since it is linked to holding the father's office.

The opposite views regards young people with hope. Ato Girma explained that the association constantly tries to keep the youth involved: "When there is a misfortune, we try to involve the youth a lot, asking them to organise the *cominal* or bringing chairs in," hoping that these actions will plant the seed of social capital.

The position of relocated young people with respect to social capital is somewhat delicate. On the one hand, the fact that they were around 12 years of age when relocated implies they have less social capital, as trusts and networks build over time. On a conceptual level, though, this should make it easier for young people to adapt to life in Jemo One Condominium. This statement can certainly be perceived as true when compared to older people, who not only have

more memories, but also had more social capital in the old neighbourhood. Yet, complicating this picture is how the young people in the area apparently feel a particular attachment to the old neighbourhood. This sense of belonging seems exacerbated by a context that sees them as "children of no ethnicity".

On a practical level, it is interesting to talk about the *Oldies Wendmamatoch Meheregia Mahber,* meaning "the Brotherhood Oldies Association of Support", shortened to Oldies Mahber, an *iddir* made up of young, relocated people who gather periodically outside the blocks of Jemo One Condominium, at the Oldies City Pub. The reason for the meeting point is simple, as Selemon quickly clarified it to me:

> We meet in this pub because the owner is a guy from the old neighbourhood, there is mutual trust, coming here I know that if I don't have the money to pay for the beer there is no problem because I can pay for it another day. I know I can't do that in another pub.

In the pub, young people rediscover the old social capital, where obligations of reciprocity are not enforced and one can pay for one's beer late. Like the YeSheraton Accababi Yefikir Yeselam Mahber, they produce a horizontal kind of social capital.

Having spent days looking for them, I finally met a number of the young people who were relocated in the pub, including key informants such as Zewdi, Laké, and Eyob. The pub is located on a side street of Jemo One Condominium, in the middle of the blocks, and whenever I visit, there is a large turnout.

Selemon told me:

> One year ago, we relocated young people made an association of 20 people to fill the gaps in Jemo regarding social capital. The most important thing is love, if there is none, nothing, a clean house, a room to oneself, makes sense.

Like the older residents' *iddir*, the young people of the Oldies Mahber are looking for something in Jemo One Condominium that still needs to be recreated within the area. Furthermore, similar

to the YeSheraton Accababi Yefikir Yeselam Mahber, all members were relocated from Woreda 7.

Selemon articulated the practices of the association:

We have written rules, those who do not participate have 200 birrs fine, everyone has to give of their own, when a father or mother dies, we give 3000 birrs. For every holiday we slaughter a bull, at least Easter and New Year, and give it to the less well-off.

Zewdi expanded on the last point: "They can be anywhere, maybe they are people from the old neighbourhood who grew up there, people without children that therefore are not helped monetarily." The Oldies Mahber has a greater financial capacity than the Imawaish YeSet Iddir, as it provides 3000 birrs in the case of the death of a father or mother. In addition, this association caters to marginalised and voiceless groups: people who are living with hardship and who find the financial support provided by their *iddir* inadequate. Since it is an association of young people, most of them work and can afford higher financial expenses and so they take care of a neglected segment of the population. Additionally, as Zewdi proudly exclaimed: "We are all men, but as heads of the family, in a way we also represent relocated mothers and sisters!"

The head of this association is Wosen, who also happens to be the owner of the Oldies pub. After a few weeks, I finally bumped into him in the pub, and he granted me an interview, which turned out to be the longest I have ever had: an hour and forty minutes. From the reconstruction of events, I learned from Wosen that the Oldies Mahber is a peripheral constituency of a larger association of relocated young people, the so-called *Fit Ber Hna Aroghe Kera Mahber*, the association of *Fit Ber* and *Aroghe Kera*, two neighbourhoods in Woreda 7's informal area. The association came into being in 2019 following the coming together of 40 young people. Today, its membership counts 1,200 people from Woreda 7. What is interesting is the process by which it was decided to create a satellite association of the larger *mahber* in Jemo One Condominium.

Wosen stated:

The first goal was to understand why they relocated us. However, first the coronavirus and the war caused us to put that desire aside. Finally, the goal became to bring the same sense of community to the neighbourhoods where we lived.

Fit Ber Hna Aroghe Kera Mahber's original aim was to understand the reason behind the relocation. Still, events such as the coronavirus in 2019 and, later, in 2020, the war in Tigray shifted the focus to the nation. It is worth exploring these obstacles briefly.

In the case of the Covid-19 pandemic, although it was not experienced in the same way as in Western countries, social distancing was implemented in Ethiopia in the early days. Despite this period of isolation, networks of support emerged from within places and saved the city (Maringanti, 2020, p. 42).

Wosen described it as follows:

From that moment on, we embraced the motto 'My health for you, for everyone' and went to the sub-city of Kirkos, where we were born, bought sanitisers, masks, handkerchiefs and started raising awareness. With a microphone we were urging people to sanitise, to explain that one's own health meant health for the other.

He recalled and praised the bearers of social capital:

Our parents are at the core of everything; they raised us with this sense of care. The point of origin was our old neighbourhood, because we wanted to start with our birthplace, with the mothers who fed us, and then extend our focus outward

According to him, the outbreak of war in Tigray in 2020 was an impetus for further mobilisation:

There were five of us, and we stayed four days in Afar, in Talalac, and we saw the worst tragedies. After 40 km we arrived in a deserted area, it had rained, the mud had flooded our car and we waited for people to help us. 30 people helped us push the car. We had loaded 50,000

bales of water, and I saw a mother giving her daughter some water from a bottle cap just as we arrived.

The difficulty in obtaining permits to go to the area eventually shifted interest to Jemo One Condominium. As Wosen stated:

The Oldies, my pub, was a focal point for creating a new association, but functions such as buying a bull and dividing the price between us had been there long before, for every celebration. I used to collect money from various people and fill in the missing amount with my own money. Then, for the past year, we have been selling tickets, where we explain to acquaintances what we are doing, and each of them buys tickets with a sum of money.

On 7 January 2023, I went to the Oldies to celebrate the Orthodox Christmas.

Below are my field notes, made on 9 January:

Two days ago (7 January 2023), I went to Jemo for Gena, the Orthodox Christmas. The men from Woreda 7 invited me to one of their celebrations. They gathered 20 needy people, and with the money collected, which I also contributed to, they slaughtered a bull. I went to the Oldies and those 20 people were there, and I must say it was a wonderful experience. Fieldwork often puts everything into perspective, but this day in particular has stayed in my mind (and heart). These 20 people were all women, some from the old neighbourhood, like the lady who sold almost expired fruit in Woreda 7, and others from Jemo One Condominium. They ate, drank coffee, and we did likewise; partly because we were hungry, partly so others wouldn't feel uncomfortableotherwise other people would have felt uncomfortable. At the end of the day, Wosen hugged me and said, "Now you too are a Woreda 7 girl."

6.4 Bonding is Strong, but Bridging is Missing: Discussion of Data

As maintained by Portes (1998), society can witness the simultaneous existence of different types of social capital. This sub-chapter summarises the main themes regarding social capital within and outside the blocks in the Jemo One Condominium.

The Jemo One Condominium society exhibits two types of social capital. The first is found *inside* the blocks of Jemo One Condominium and involves two different types of actors: relocated people and well-off people. Both are motivated by rational reasons but have different priorities; relocated people mainly invest in networks to alleviate poverty, while affluent people — who do not need to overcome precarious living conditions — want to fulfil their Ethiopian identity, securing funeral rites or, in some cases, celebrations.

Imawaish YeSet Iddir is a women's *iddir* within Jemo One Condominium, the leader of which is Hiwot. Through a strict system of rules, she ensures that practical help is provided during a *lakso*. Providing assistance during joyful celebrations, however, is optional.

The influence of such *iddirs* inside the blocks is weak due to a low level of trust, which we have established is "general" and not "particular" (Patulny, 2004). In the case of both DIR people and rich people, their behaviour within the blocks is exclusively the product of rational individual decision-making. However, while affluent people can combine a collective strategy, participating in the *iddir*, and possibly relying on individuals to deal with problems such as a lack of water or electricity, for example, the same is not valid for relocated people. On the whole, social capital within the Jemo One Condominium blocks is rather weak.

Patulny (2004) expresses how successful social capital occurs in situations where generalised and particularised trust is mutually supportive (p. 5). Michael Bell (1998) articulates two mainstays of social capital that are in close dialogue: solidarity of interests and solidarity of sentiments. Solidarity of interests touches on rational solidarity created to achieve interests, whose foundation is a generalised trust, while the latter is an inner solidarity within human beings, dealing with emotions and the fact that "it often pleases us [human beings] to see others get what they want" (Bell, 1998, p. 187). The last concept may initially drive individuals — though it is challenging to understand what an individual is really driven by — but what Bell (1998)

emphasises is how, for successful social capital, the two must be in dialogue. Social capital inside the blocks shows how this is necessary.

Outside the blocks, however, old and young are not moved exclusively by a rational choice, a solidarity of interests. They refuse to appropriate the practices created in condominium life and fabricate different ones elsewhere — be it outside the blocks of Jemo One Condominium, the meetings at the Medhanealem church or at the Oldies Pub, all three locations are symbolic of a desire to bring back a solidarity of sentiments.

Jemo One Condominium is not the only context where a rational choice drives inhabitants. The same can be found in the Woreda 7 setting, where hunger, as the prime mover, drove people to come together. Yet, Woreda 7 was a place not only of interests but also of sentiments, where the Ubuntu philosophy was displayed, and housing factors or time nurtured solidarity, reciprocity, and familial affinity systems; this made social capital strong.

This social capital has been passed on to both older and younger people. YeSheraton Accababi Yefikir Yeselam Mahber and Oldies Wendmamatoch Meheregia Mahber are two associations of relocated people living in Jemo One Condominium, but who do not find their sense of community fulfilled in the *iddirs* of the blocks. Both associations tie membership to their participants' place of origin, i.e. the informal areas of Woreda 7.

Old neighbourhood-based networks allow for old and young relocated people to carry on a cheerful side of social capital. Their commitment is strong, and so is their social capital.

Whilst strictly a form of solidarity of interest and particularised trust, such networks represent a form of bonding social capital, where belonging to a category, i.e. being a former resident of Woreda 7, triggers other shared characteristics within associations and with their members. In the case of the elderly, as they come from the same poor background, they are more likely to create horizontally based social capital. They have mutual understanding and the same economic availability, but their *iddir*, the YeSheraton Accababi Yefikir Yeselam Mahber, has a low financial capacity. In the case of the young, the neighbourhood binder additionally implies sharing the same urban identity, i.e. they are all children of Addis Ababa; this common binder is

symbolic in a context such as Jemo One Condominium, where particular ethnicities translate into certain statuses, thus resulting in relocated young people clinging to the only marker they have. Eyasu explained that, "if I find myself socialising, I find myself with the guys from the old neighbourhood, from the Hilton hotel."

While the elderly association seems less exclusive, the Oldies Wendmamatoch Meheregia Mahber appears more likely to produce an unconstructive bonding social capital. Requests to join the association are incessant, yet simultaneously rejected because they do not meet the first criterion: belonging to the former Woreda 7. Dynamics of power and exclusion characterise the Oldies Wendmamatoch Meheregia Mahber. Since access is only granted to young boys from the old neighbourhood, people from other social classes or ethnicities are not integrated, making bridging unfeasible.

Wosen and the other boys are proud of where they come from because that place has taught them the authentic Ethiopian traditions of social capital. However, the question arises, why would one avoid sharing such traditions with those who have not had them? Or, what sense does it make to be so restrictive in the criteria, if the person who has requested to join is motivated by the same value of solidarity of sentiments?

Gradually, the boys of Woreda 7 went from "bearers" to exclusive "owners" of social capital. However, it remains difficult to understand whether, as a consequence, Oldies Wendmamatoch Meheregia Mahber is producing a "perverse" social capital (Baycan & Öner, 2022). One might be happy that boys like Eyasu find solace in their peers; yet, when Wosen said to me, "[n]ow you too are a girl from Woreda 7," I felt that I had received a title — an exclusive membership —of which I must be proud. The words of a boy born outside the capital, whom I met one day at the Oldies, confirmed this feeling:

> Whenever I think of the guys from Woreda 7, I think I am really just living now, alongside them. Many of them are my friends and I am happy about that. I am a boy born outside the capital, but I know the details of what it was like to live there. I am older than

them, but I worked a lot in the Woreda 7 area, and I spend a lot of time with these guys. Woreda 7 is also a second home for me.

His words express a feeling of oneness with a group, even though he is not from Woreda 7 himself. Merely hanging around with them is such an honour that he considers the place as a second home. The title "friend of the Woreda 7 guys" sounds appealing, yet the friendship does not guarantee him entry into the association, as he was not born and raised in the place, and the question remains who is permitted entry to the group.

Such aspects could lead one to categorise the Oldies Wendmamatoch Meheregia Mahber as a form of perverse social capital; yet, it should not be forgotten how their association still has positive outcomes for society as it takes care of marginalised actors. The years ahead will reveal the more precise value of this association.

What is certain is that if the criterion of inclusion remains the same, YeSheraton Accababi Yefikir Yeselam Mahber and Oldies Wendmamatoch Meheregia Mahber are unlikely to succeed in creating bridging social capital, something that would lead to even greater social capital at Jemo One Condominium. To make this happen, one should incorporate what happens outside the blocks, inside the blocks; that is to say, bring people from different economic and social backgrounds into dialogue and ensure that those who have experienced the authentic traditions of social capital can pass on this solidarity of sentiments to current and future generations.

Conclusion

The present chapter was designed to determine why and how the inhabitants of Jemo One Condominium reproduce social capital practices in the area. The main reason for relocated and condominium-owning people is rational-utilitarian. While the former is primarily driven by seeing their economic problems overcome, the latter participate in risk-sharing mechanisms such as *iddirs* to secure their rituals during funerals. De facto, such *iddirs* are mainly established to see funeral practices fulfilled and, while they are linked to Ethiopian rituals, they do not offer

any emotional support to their members. General trust, pressing demands to be fulfilled, and a nuclear kinship weaken the creation of a flourishing social capital inside the blocks. On the other hand, outside the blocks, elders and young people born and raised in Woreda 7 come together, sustaining a solidarity of both interests and sentiments. Their bonding is strong, rooted in shared origin, yet it does not extend to bridging other social classes or ethnic groups. To do so, one would have to involve inhabitants of different social classes and backgrounds living in the block. Chapter VII examines whether and how the local government of Jemo One Condominium succeeds in bridging the gap between itself and the diverse inhabitants, and whether it can eventually bring what happens "outside the blocks"— the broader sense of community—into the area.

Chapter VII

The New Relationship between the Government and Citizens: The Administrative Machinery of Jemo One Condominium

Jemo One Condominium has different kinds of social capital, weaker and more rationalistic inside the blocks and more robust and cohesive outside the blocks. The blame, however, does not lie exclusively with the population; whilst the upper classes have reasons for not wanting to engage more with the *iddir* within the block, relocated people are inclined to create a more substantial social capital outside. Patulny (2004) explores how the phenomenon of victim blaming is permeating studies on social capital: the lack of it, he argues, is often blamed on the unfortunates, who become "symbolic causes of society's ills" (p. 18). Residents of Jemo One Condominium should by no means be entirely blamed for such weak, two-sided social capital. Indeed, the social capital practices at Jemo One Condominium are at least enough to get by. But whose responsibility is it to bring the social capital dynamics from outside the blocks into the blocks themselves? According to linking social capital theory, the government plays a key role in this process—in this case, the local government (Putnam, 2000). From this perspective, the role of the local government in fostering social capital in Jemo One Condominium deserves critical examination. This chapter, therefore, deals with the role of the *woreda* vis à vis citizens' social capital, whether relocated or not, in toto, using both citizens' perspectives and the *woreda* administration's point of view, and political practices in condominium units.

7.1 Citizens' Perception of the *Woreda*

Before exploring the performance of local government in Jemo One Condominium, it is necessary to make clear what exactly is meant by local government, or rather, what citizens perceive it to be.

Theoretically, the ideal answer would be the *woreda*. However, in Chapter IV, I showed how everyday articulations of the idea of local government referred to *mengist*, *woreda*, and *kebele*

interchangeably. Nevertheless, when I did the same, in an attempt to replicate their language, various interviewees corrected me and distinguished the different bodies. For example, Serkalem perceived the work of institutional bodies like this: "The *mengist* has improved the streets of our neighbourhood. The *woreda's* job, on the other hand, was to give identity cards. The *kebele* is now dead." This shows how, according to Serkalem, *mengist*, *woreda*, and *kebele* have three distinct roles. Furthermore, it illustrates that she is aware of the merging of the *kebele* into the *woreda* following reforms. However, people did not always seem perturbed by the use of the correct term, especially the older ones who referred to the Woreda 1 of Jemo One Condominium as *kebele*. To interpret the meaning, I had to contextualise the term using the time frame described. If they were talking about the role of the *kebele* in Jemo One Condominium, it is evident that they meant the *woreda*, since there are no more *kebeles* in the area. At other times, I simply asked them to confirm what they meant. It helps, at least, that in this case, the term *woreda* was used by the interviewees in political terms and not, as in the case of Woreda 7, in geographical terms.

Although the distinction between the terms was not always easy, there was a common understanding among interviewees regarding the perception of local government as a living reality. In fact, Serkalem's phrase does not refer to specific operators, such as government agents, involved in building the roads of Jemo One Condominium, but rather she delegates the action to the *mengist* in toto. Mulugeta's (2020) research reports similar findings in the study of the everyday Ethiopian state: "I found that all too often the state was constantly referred to in conversations as if it were a living reality, unified and tangible" (p. 26).

Furthermore, the personification of the state features a homologous opposition of the kind spelt out between God and the people: just as between God and the people there is a relationship of reciprocal rights and responsibilities, the same applies to the state and society. A comment by one of Mulugeta's middle-aged farmer interviewees is emblematic: "God is the one who can give us rain. This is the same with the government" (Mulugeta, 2020, p. 242). In parallel, my interviewees also drew analogies between God's powers and those of the *woreda*.

For example, addressing the role of the *woreda* in the area's economy, Turuye's neighbour related that "God helps us as he can, and the *woreda* also helps the widows, those who have no family, who are at home with a child, who have been affected by the coronavirus emergency as it can." Indeed, the *shemachoc*, a *woreda*-operated trade shop in Jemo One Condominium, provides financial help to ten marginalised people.

This is not the only help provided by the *woreda shemachoc*. Since 2018, Ethiopia's key food industries, such as sugar, have been privatised in a bid to resolve the country's economic and financial crisis. This government manoeuvre was supposed to fight inflation and external debt, creating jobs instead and improving credit to the private sector (Zikargie et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the downside of extending private control over natural resources has been an increase in the price of goods and a decrease in their availability. The *shemachoc* thus provides citizens with goods at an affordable price based on a quota system, such as five kilos of sugar for 330 birrs against the cost of 500 birrs for the same amount sold by private companies.

At the same time, the employees of such *shemachochs* are usually formerly unemployed people who, having gone to the *woreda* of Jemo One Condominium seeking a job, were allowed to work there.

In my first bureaucratic pilgrimage to the *woreda* of Jemo One Condominium, to obtain a research permit, I had the opportunity to witness this dynamic.

My field notes from 3 October 2022 record the following:

Today officially started my fieldwork in Jemo 1 condominium. 8:00 am in the morning, I dressed quickly, had some juice left from the day before, and went to look for a print place with my cousin. However, right when we just arrived in the print place, electricity turned off and we had to wait one hour until it came back. Then we headed to the Woreda 1, where I needed to explain my fieldwork purpose to get my research permit. Spending an hour and a half in the waiting room allowed me to do some participant observation. The room had two tables, one facing the other, and along the wall there was a line-up of chairs, where we were all sitting tight. I rapidly

noticed how full of young people the room was, but I mean, one could say that is no big news in Ethiopia, the country with the youngest population in Africa.

The age of the young people must have been no more than 20. My cousin explained to me that:

The *woreda* is trying to solve the unemployment problem. Unemployed young people apply to the *woreda* for a place to set up a business, certifying that they are unemployed, after which they are given a certificate stating this, they join a waiting list and every week a list of winners is published.

If lucky, these young people get a plastic tent to open petty trade businesses such as *bunna* places, barbershops, or vegetable stalls. Indeed, the streets of Jemo One Condominium are full of them. The opportunity also extends to older people like Alem, who was drawn from the waiting list after applying to the *woreda* and received a plastic tent where she sells utensils.

Occasionally, there are also job opportunities within the *woreda*, with open positions for civil servants. This tends to happen more frequently in some regions than others. As Yilmaz and Venugopal (2008) state, "in Amhara and Oromiya, *woreda* administrations play a central role in advertising and selecting (…) at the local level" (p. 16).

Samry offered me a younger person's perspective: "At the beginning of the year, the *woreda* distributes pens and notebooks for us students," she laughed, "and it becomes a competition between us girls to see who can keep everything in the best shape."

The perception of the *woreda* is most significant regarding infrastructural changes. For example, Johannes, a member of one of Jemo One Condominium committees, reported the *woreda's* construction of a football kit box as a positive and concrete element of its work.

Furthermore, Selemon confirmed Serkalem's opinion on the *woreda*, stating that: "With the arrival of the inhabitants, the *mengist* started to improve the area, widening the roads and creating alternative roads", but it was the young people themselves, pinned down by the Woreda 1, who created those roads. Sara, who works in the general office of a block, said: "Before, the *woreda* helped, for example, it gave the youth the job of carpeting the streets with cobblestones (…) Now I don't know what it does."

Nonetheless, such structural changes seem minimal, resulting in citizens believing that the *woreda* is ineffective. One example would be the dustbins. Turuye's neighbour claimed that:

> The *kebele* has repeatedly asked people living on the streets in dog kennels made of foil to clear the bins, but everything has stayed the same. What should be dustbins for rubbish remain homes for people, and we need to figure out where to throw the remains.

Currently, confidence in the *woreda* as an institution is low. According to Tiye Turuye: "The *kebele* tells us, '*you have the condominium.*' They think we can eat the condominium. But we were taken and thrown here by the government, we did not come here voluntarily." Turuye's phrase alludes to how the *woreda* perceive having a condo as sufficient to get by; yet, as she states, one does not obtain daily food from simply living in a condo. Especially if one has not chosen to live there and moving into an apartment building has resulted in the loss of former economic, social, and political practices crucial to getting ahead.

Turuye's neighbour asked a rhetorical question, "What does *woreda* contribution mean?", and exclaimed:

> We [citizens] have not seen it! During the coronavirus, there were rumours of help for marginalised people, but it was not seen in our block. In our block, there were many people who needed a hand, one lady is blind and lives off her daughter, yet nothing was done.

Turuye's neighbour expanded, stating that if the *woreda* did offer help, it was elsewhere, so it is not tangible. Consequently, the *woreda's* credibility has been undermined.

Issues of power and exclusion also intersect within Woreda 1. Indeed, job opportunities are available, but the problem of who has access to them remains pressing. Sometimes, these opportunities are undermined by the regions themselves, as in the case of the choice of civil servants: "[E]ven when a qualified candidate is present in the region, the *woreda*'s administration cannot make an independent decision to hire without the regional bureau's approval." This compromises the discretion of the *woreda*, since "[its] decisions are sometimes overruled by the regional bureaus or zones, without consultation" (Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2008, p. 16).

Eyob, on the other hand, blames the *woreda* itself. He is pessimistic about the *woreda's* help in finding work and said that "[t]he jobs given to my young friends fell during the election period, they probably gave them out to accommodate more consensus, and now all those jobs that were given out have actually been requested back."

I could not find confirmation of this fact. However, I was told by Woreda 1 that all places offered are temporary and offered as an opportunity for people in the interim, while they look for more stable activities. Similarly, Eyasu disclosed the difficulties of accessing job opportunities:

> We asked the *woreda* to give us a place for taxies, we wanted to run a taxi car park.
> Twice they told us to wait, and when we came back to follow up, we discovered that the
> space had been given to someone else who had paid 50,000 birrs.

The *woreda* is perceived as a highly politicised entity, accountable to only one ethnic group (Pausewang et al., 2002). Eyob continued: "The woreda is a political arena, and everything produced within it is political." One interviewee went so far as to declare that "not speaking Orominiya is a tremendous disadvantage for citizens," thus suggesting that not being from the Oromo ethnic group is disadvantageous. His sentence shows how citizens are conscious that the *woreda* would provide benefits, even if bound by speaking a specific language.

Does this disaffection represent a crisis of this institution or rather a continuation of the citizens' perception of it? The most plausible answer is that the confidence of the citizens has never been very high (Ayele, 2015; Pausewang et al., 2002; Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2008) but that the current ethnic context of the country, and in particular at Jemo One Condominium, has discredited the institution even further.

I did not want my research to be framed strictly in ethnic or politicized terms, but given the broader context of the country, it was almost inevitable that ethnic tensions would arise during my interviews.

Favouritism is nothing new in the study of local government. It is also something that I am no stranger to, having grown up in Italy, where clientelist relationships have shaped the country's

political tradition. What did astonish me, however, is how such associations have severely discredited the local government, at least that of Jemo One Condominium. As Selemon said: "For me, [the] *woreda* is just a place where I can renew my identity card. And even to renew that you have to go through a thousand difficulties." This highlights a distance between residents of the Jemo One Condominium and local government. The *woreda* is a place only occasionally visited. This may be due to the reform which resulted in the *kebeles* disappearing, and eliminating small geographical constituencies damages the closeness between citizens and local government, especially if the local government is recently formed. Moreover, the situation is complicated by the increase in the Jemo One Condominium's population.

This distance can be particularly glaring for relocated persons, such as Eyob, shifting from a context where civil servants are your neighbours to one where you struggle to see them more than once a year.

Moreover, the distance is physical, to the extent that many interviewees claimed to not even know the location of Woreda 1 of Jemo One Condominium.

The *woreda* dedicates an essential portion of its administration to bureaucratic duties such as collecting fees for registrations of births, deaths, marriages, and divorces (Ayele, 2015, p. 215). However, it also represents a source of economic opportunity; yet, the latter is disregarded, and, instead, the *woreda* is associated with trivial bureaucratic matters.

What about helping the residents to be social? I was interested in getting an answer to this question, because, for my research, it was essential to know whether, in a context where many of the inhabitants have been involuntarily forced to live, and where those who arrive voluntarily are strangers to the residents, the local government is helping citizens to weave a social fabric. The relocated people I spoke to certainly felt this was necessary. However, I was often met with laughter in response to this question, which, nonetheless, I continued to ask. Initially, I was disappointed not to receive any useful data about this issue but then I realised that a lack of data is still data; the lack of examples about the matter, or the laughter or derision in response to the question, shows how, according to the residents, the local government has done nothing to

familiarise people with each other, creating another layer of disappointment for the inhabitants of Jemo One Condominium.

7.2 A Truly Absent Administration?

The previous sub-chapter showed citizens' perception towards the work of Woreda 1, mentioning positive factors such as the economic aid provided by the *shemachoc* and the possibility of employment both inside the *woreda* itself and outside of it. The structural changes seem to show more concretely and definitively the role played by the *woreda* in Jemo One Condominium. The problem, however, is that in reality, the *woreda* is absent on the ground, as in the case of the dustbins, which shows a more negative side to the role of Woreda 1 in Jemo One Condominium. Moreover, it is apparent that the opportunities provided by the *woreda* are not accessible to all, either because of institutions, such as the regions, or because of issues of patronage or ethnic relations in the *woreda* itself. Furthermore, none of my informants mentioned any action by the *woreda* that can be seen as fostering social capital. However, it is worth investigating the other side of this narrative and asking how Woreda 1, its departments and employees, perceive their role at Jemo One Condominium? And how does Woreda 1 perceive its citizens? The following sub-chapter answers this question, investigating employees from different *woreda* departments and their role in improving Jemo One Condominium.

According to many citizens, Woreda 1 of Jemo One Condominium is something of a façade, simply there to deal with trivial bureaucratic issues. However, by stating this, residents are denying any economic opportunities the *woreda* may bring and are ignoring its more standard role as custodian of utilities (Stebek, 2013). To be clear, the *woreda* does not provide utilities such as water, electricity, or transportation; that is a task that, as seen in Chapter V, falls to the national government. Indeed, several administrative sectors mention this, e.g. the electricity administration noted in the survey that I sent them as part of my research that large companies do not provide enough materials to ensure constant electricity services and the state's

management of the city's grid is poor. The transport department, moreover, stated that public transportation in Jemo One Condominium would improve if the government offered enough transport every day and based on the destinations.

However, the *woreda* must ensure that, within the area they manage, the handling of these resources — or their redistribution, to use Polanyi's (1957) term — is done correctly. Consequently, the *woreda* has no influence on effectiveness but it certainly impacts efficiency.

Indeed, my frequent visits to the general Woreda 1 electricity, water, rubbish, transport, and sewage departments shaped my image of the *woreda* as a complex piece of machinery: each gear has its role to play, but only in cooperation can they benefit the perception of Woreda 1. Woreda 1 is the lived space where many bureaucratic or political activities take place: citizens can go to complain about an increase in their bill, the employees answer various questions, and they also check the functioning of the different utilities. It should be noted that I was given a dedicated space during my visits.

In response to the questionnaire, the general administration of Woreda 1 wrote that, in addition to the economic opportunities already described in the previous chapter, in cooperation with wealthy people and with some sponsorship from companies, the *woreda* has arranged for houses to be built and given to needy inhabitants within 60 days. However, I could find no evidence of such an initiative during my research, nor were any of my interviewees aware of it when asked about it.

In addition, the garbage collection department refuted the previously mentioned reports of Turuye's neighbour; they wrote in the questionnaire that:

> The offices are in the front line of work. They advise people on rubbish management. They request that the streets are cleaned daily. In addition, every week, we ask citizens to clean the surroundings where they live. We ask them to empty the dustbins.

The same office also praised residents, writing: "The citizens collect the rubbish immediately and take it to the bin."

Moreover, all the offices claimed to be in charge of utility management at Jemo One Condominium. In addition to demonstrating certainty about their role in the area, this assertion shows that Woreda 1 is also aware of its power in terms of financial, natural, and human capital.

Heading from a *woreda* office to an interview with a resident, my research took on the feel of a ping-pong match, with conflicting opinions. . The contradiction between what the *woreda* perceives in terms of its role and what the citizens feel they receive in term of services may partly be the result of a general disaffection among citizens, who, not seeing too many benefits of the *woreda,* are not really aware of the roles that, in reality, this local government plays.

The most surprising aspect of this conflicting evidence actually concerns social capital. Firstly, it is interesting to note that the Woreda 1 general department wrote in the survey that: "The situation in Jemo One Condominium has improved socially." This perception contrasts sharply with that of the residents of Jemo One Condominium, particularly the relocated people, and makes one wonder whether having an office position improves one's perception of the area.

More strikingly, the idea that the *woreda* did not help the social capital of Jemo One Condominium, at least in its early days, is not necessarily true.

In 2010, as people began to take up residence in Jemo One Condominium, interactions between the inhabitants did not naturally occur. Consequently, Woreda 1 (which was called Woreda 3 at the time), and in particular the section "Management of committees," implemented linking social capital, creating forums for interaction between the inhabitants. As an employee of Woreda 1 explained:

> The *woreda* posted a news item telling all flat owners in Jemo One Condominium to meet. Each set of blocks met and decided on a name for their block. In addition, the *woreda* asked everyone to take care of a role, such as tending the street, the garden, on a voluntary basis, but also to organise committees.

7.3 Approaching Committees

The following sub-chapter analyses the committees' tasks, a management reality inside the blocks of Jemo One Condominium. This sub-chapter analyses the committees' tasks, the relations between the citizens and the committees, and between the *woreda*, in this case Woreda 1, and the block committees.

The committees are an institutional body that came into being under the impetus of Woreda 1 (then Woreda 3) of Jemo One Condominium. Each block in Jemo One has an organisation committee that represents the interests of the residents within the condominiums. Eyob legitimised their representation as follows:

Representation through committees is necessary because, in a condominium of 340 inhabitants, not everyone can address problems or injustices individually. Grievances are therefore channeled to representatives delegated by the residents.In order to ensure a democratic process, the committees are elected every three years. All the residents apart from renters are invited to vote. In the case of renters, the owners of the rented flats must be present and vote.

Each committee is led by a *Wanna committee*, which translates as Board Office in English, and a sub-committee called *Sra Ascheagi*, which takes on the role of a General Office. Their work is documented by a *Tzahafi*, which translates as rapporteur in English.

Figure 18

Committee Hierarchy

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┌──────────────┐
│ Committee    │
└──┬───────────┤
   │ Management │
   │ institution│
   └────────────┘
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┌──────────────┐
│ Wanna        │
│ Committee    │
└──┬───────────┤
   │ Board Office│
   └─────────────┘
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┌──────────────┐
│Sra Ascheagi  │
└──┬───────────┤
   │ General Office│
   └───────────────┘
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┌──────────────┐
│ Tzahafi      │
└──┬───────────┤
   │ Rapporteur  │
   └─────────────┘
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Johannes heads the board office of a block of Jemo One Condominium and, perched on a stool in the block's garden, he explained his task: "The job of the committee is to enforce the law, without committee, there is no law. We listen to people's problems and try to solve them through the law because people do not know their obligations and benefits." Johannes outlined three main tasks of committees: resolving disputes within the condominium; enforcing people's obligations; and ensuring their benefits are guaranteed.

When I visited Sara, who works at one of the block committee's general office in Jemo One Condominium, I immediately observed an example of the first task. Sara's office is narrow and greyish, and in the centre is a long table. Next to the wall are four chairs, where I sat waiting my turn. Next to the table an elderly lady was busy telling Sara about her problems. I listened in and made notes about the short and clear dialogue:

From my field notes, 9 January 2023

The lady reports a theft of her water tanker by a neighbour, apparently a renter, and asks Sara to take action about it. Sara asks for the lady's particulars — name, surname, floor where she lives and house number — and explains to the lady that she would first have to ensure the truthfulness of the act, but that she would soon take action. The lady leaves the office muttering, and I catch a few phrases like 'Let's hope it happens soon' and 'God bless you.'

Then it was my turn to occupy the chair next to Sara, who gave me an example of her role in ensuring that residents fulfil their obligations:

No one can occupy terraces with objects. I started to educate everyone, to tell them '*you don't need this*', if it starts to rain, things will begin to smell and that is not good for your health. I started to clean the stairs, to teach them how to do it, and once I taught that I started to explain more. For example, people on the upper floors would throw dirty or used water on the lower floors, without thinking about the residents, and I had to teach them not to do that.

This narrative refers to the residents' obligations and benefits: just as it is their obligation to ensure that a common space such as the terrace remains clean, it is their benefit to enjoy tidy spaces freely. Sara also demonstrated the committees' role in regulating communal areas, i.e. education on living together. Although each committee in the Jemo One Condominium blocks differs — which I will explain later —it is striking that every committee member I interviewed demonstrated a genuine desire to care for the condominium and, by extension, its inhabitants. Sometimes, committees post flyers on buildings, as shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19

Cleaning request notice
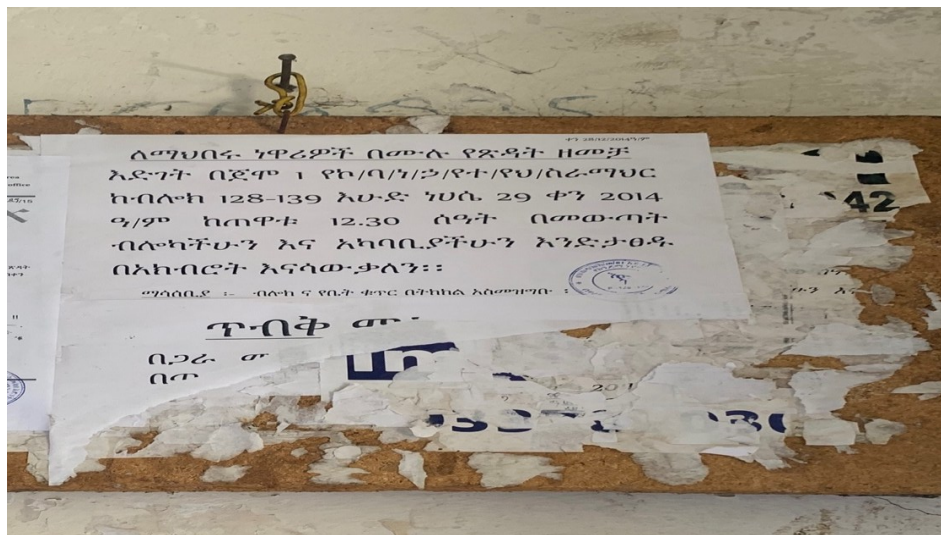
Dated 28 December 2014:

For the whole community of inhabitants from the volunteer cleaning group.

> To the attention of Jemo 1[abbreviation] from block 128 to 139 on 29 August 2014, we
>
> kindly request that you come out at 6.30 am to clean your block or neighbourhood.
>
> Recommendation: register the block and the house.

Rahel is a block treasurer, a role that she speaks of positively. The interview with her took place at her home, and as she apologised for being unable to offer me *bunna*, she stated:

> Here, nobody occupies the terraces with objects. In fact, people clean the stairs together once
>
> a month. If there is a problem, for example, someone smokes and throws cigarette butts on
>
> the terrace, the person who is disturbed by this comes to the committee and the committee
>
> sends a note explaining the situation.

It is fair to say that the committees created inside the blocks are more effective at teaching Ethiopian citizens how to live in the apartment blocks than the Addis Ababa Grand Housing Program guides. Their role, as Rahel reported, has enabled the inhabitants to implement community practices.

This is most noticeable on a practical level, such as in renting the *cominals*, as Johannes recalled:

> The committee law must also give permission to the condominiums to rent a room for
>
> mourning or slaughter a bull. If the condominium residents do such things without permis-
>
> sion, they are fined, if they do not pay the fine, they go to the *woreda*.

But the most salient example of the practical help of the committees is in the payment and management of guards, gardeners, cleaning people in the apartment block, and also the creation of recreational places such as football pitches. It is worth dwelling on the work of the guards. They usually live on the corner of the gates of the blocks, in similar houses made of corrugated sheets. Most of them are young men, who organise their shifts as they please. Abel, a guard in the area, explained to me how arduous such arrangements are: "Sometimes my mates skip their shifts, but they still demand payment." To cope with these episodes, the committee of his block imposes fines of around 10 birrs to anyone missing a shift.

Now, it should be emphasised that the work of the committees is not voluntary; on the contrary, it is paid and, in a certain sense, linked to the rational utility of managing common spaces within the condominium. While part of their salary comes from a fixed monthly fee paid by each condominium owner, most of their salary is generated from the use of common condominium space. Sara noted thus: "We meet with all residents once a year. For the meeting to take place, 50% + 1 of the residents must be present." If the constitutive quorum is reached, they choose how to manage common areas on the ground floor, usually kitchens, the *cominal*, and parking spaces. The ground floors, for example, are rented out for everyday shops, gym schools, or health clinics. The car parks accommodate cars at a variable price: if you are a resident there is a nominal price of around 30 birrs per day; if you are not a resident of Jemo One Condominium, the price increases and it is around 150 birrs. Ground floors, if not inhabited, are rented monthly from 4500 to 8800 birrs.

The number of people on the committee, as well as the guards, gardeners, cleaning people, and recreation places in each block vary. If a condominium generates more income, for instance, by hosting many cars, it will have more money and therefore be able to afford more staff. Practices such as securing a safe area legitimise the committee.

The committees derive their authority from the *woreda*. Mimi shared an episode with me that clearly demonstrates this:

In Block 48, a lady who was a hairdresser near her house had opened a pipe that she needed for her shop, but next to it was a sewer manhole. A little further on, a pub worker accidentally broke the same manhole, causing pee to spill onto the street. I argued with everyone for 15 days for the situation to be resolved, and only finally did the committee call the pub owner to resolve the problem, explaining that with the sun, the pee would dry up and the smell would rise to the apartment building. So, the owner paid 2500 birrs to fix the damage. And the *woreda*? The *woreda* does nothing.

As Mimi's story shows, the committees' actions are not necessarily swifter than the *woreda*, but the fact remains that, when required, the inhabitants reach out to the former. Moreover, it is

remarkable that Mimi asked for help not only because she cares about the hairdresser's business, which would lose clients because of the smell, but also because any stench would permeate the block where she lives.

The question arises as to whether the committees' authority is lent by the *woreda* or actually substitutes it. According to Lily, it is neither one nor the other:

> The committee should serve as our link between residents and the woreda. When you have a problem, whether theft or a disturbance of the peace, you are supposed to turn to them. But once you do, they often do nothing. For example, if there is a theft, you report it to the committee, but when they fail to act, you have to turn to your neighbours. Only when the issue escalates, such as unnecessary noise, does the police get involved

However, the committee members claimed to respect the hierarchy between the *woreda* and themselves. For example, Sara told me about the process of reporting problems with electricity:

> The main problem in the block of flats is electricity. We get harassed with requests regarding electricity, they ask us why we don't solve it, they advise us on who we should turn to. They don't understand that there are steps and a hierarchy to be respected. For problems like electricity, we turn to the *woreda*. If the *woreda* cannot solve it, the problem is sent back to the sub-city, and if in turn the sub-city fails, we send it to the Ministry of Finance.

Moreover, Sara highlighted how local relations with residents can put committee members under pressure, as they have to perform and be responsive to them, even though it may not be their task (Woolcock, 2001, p. 236).

Johannes's stance, on the other hand, was somewhere between Lily's and Sara's, since he perceived the role of the committee as a compromise:

> There are situations where we intersect, like when they [*woreda* civil servants] want to take care of the silence of the area, of making the place quieter, of the development of the area, then we are on the same page.

If one wants to appeal to the facts, the most likely answer is that the committee is increasingly inclined to replace the *woreda*, and, in fact, Woreda 1 admits this, albeit indirectly. For example, Eyob reported: "I remember that when there was the Covid-19 emergency or the war in Tigray, the *woreda* did not feel it was in a position to ask for donations from the inhabitants directly, so they asked the committee to do it for them." Such events show how Woreda 1 is au courant with the fact that the committee has more leverage in making specific demands. Yet, it is apparently unperturbed by this.

7.4 Committees as Inhibitors of Ways of Living Together: Discussion of Data

Jemo One Condominium is led by Woreda 1, formerly Woreda 3. In describing it, citizens denote positive elements of its performance, such as the sale of primary goods at optimal prices, job opportunities, or the construction of football pitches. Yet, negative elements also emerge, with citizens claiming that this *woreda* is driven by patronage or favouritism towards certain ethnic groups, sometimes making access to its opportunities more difficult. Between mistrust and disaffection, Woreda 1 becomes a bureaucratic loophole that citizens resort to on a one-off basis. At the same time, the *woreda's* employees stand firm, claiming to have ulterior qualities, such as regulating the efficacy of utilities such as water, electricity, and transport. Citizens' narratives and Woreda 1 reveal dissonant views, especially on the issue of social capital: while citizens claim that little is being done in this regard, Woreda 1 brings evidence of a substantial effort in promoting social capital at Jemo One Condominium.

The junction of this dissonance of opinions is both citizens' and the *woreda's* consciousness of their hierarchical position: citizens know that they can find advantages in Woreda 1, which, on the other hand, claims to be an asset, especially in the area of financial and human capital. The relationship between Woreda 1 and the citizens is vertical. This premise meets with the theory of linking social capital, whereby both parties must be aware of their positions. Indeed, analysing the effort to promote social capital in Jemo One Condominium with this lens, several elements reveal insights. By forcing residents of Jemo One Condominium to meet and create

committees, Woreda 1 acted as a link between individuals, sharing decision-making and organi-sational power with committee members and, to some extent, creating partnerships between residents.

These forums of interaction had several implications. The *woreda* benefitted from the re-duced cost of enforcing regulations, a task that now shifted to the committee. However, it is worth investigating whether committees are currently sharing or replacing the work of Woreda 1. The answer varies depending on the respondent.

From Sara's point of view, the hierarchy between the Woreda 1 and committee is respected, confirming what Warner (2001) states about neighbourhood collaborative bodies "likely to have strong linkage within community but less autonomy than formal governmental institu-tions" (p. 190).

Yet, the *woreda* itself tends to see the committee as substituting rather than sharing its works, e.g. using its members for monetary collections for the Covid-19 emergency or the war in Tigray. This is further confirmed by citizens' anecdotes, including that of Mimi, who, following a problem with a burst pipe, reached out to the committee. In 2017, Planel and Bridonneau noted that "the committees are the sole interface with local authorities" (p. 38). Indeed, the overlap-ping role of the committees is fuelling citizens' disaffection with the *woreda*. The most plausible explanation is that, unlike the *woreda*, the committees have succeeded in building relationships of trust with the citizens (Evans, 1996, p. 1121). Mundane tasks such as resolving disputes within the block of flats, observing obligations and guaranteeing benefits, translated into ele-ments such as cleaning of communal terraces and resulted in the committee now being re-garded as a credible authority inside the blocks.

By representing the only interface with local authorities, such committees reproduce the dy-namics of the *kebeles* in Woreda 7, where citizens saw political units as their neighbours, and, likewise, succeed in creating closeness and trust with the citizens.

If Woreda 1 acted as a link between the institution and the citizens, what was its effect on the social capital of the committees? Do committees produce further social capital?

As stated by Planel and Bridonneau (2017), committees are "forging a communal space that updates Ethiopian social practices in modern form and developing tools that structure collective practices and supplant the clubs and societies that are so active in older neighbourhoods" (p. 38). Some actions are proof of this. For instance, the payment and management of guards is a symbol of collective action to improve neighbourhood safety. To cope with insecurity, young people undertake the activity collectively and share the cost (Mercy Corps, 2017). In this sense, the committee has been an incentive in implementing and coordinating this activity.

One could find an expression of social capital in the committee itself, albeit not necessarily a beneficial one; the constraint imposed on the residents of the apartment building generates bonds, the limiting side being that this is often bonding social capital, where only those who are residents can be part of the representation. One wonders, in fact, if this is why tenants want to avoid taking care of common spaces or even participate in practices such as *iddir*.

In addition to such examples, the most quoted answer is that committees are restricted in terms of the social capital they add to Jemo One Condominium. As Flora (1998) denotes: "Social fields do not necessarily add up to a strong community field. One cannot simply aggregate individual or organisational action within a community to achieve community wide action" (p. 499).

This is intrinsic to the committee's current value. The committee exists for the citizen only to the extent that the citizen experiences the condominium. They are micro-linkages that tie community and political body, aiming to organise a collective good. This may partly be the reason why citizens do not see the linking of Woreda 1 as benefiting social capital: committees try to preserve the object more than the subject. In doing so, they do not create any sense of belonging, a motive for which, perhaps, Woreda 1 is exclusively mentioned as a political reality and not as a place of geographical belonging. To preserve condominium units, committees establish common practices. Johannes thus reasserted their role: "The woreda takes care of the individual citizen, and by extension the people, while we take care of the condominium." Like the *iddirs* in the blocks, they crystallise new ways of living but are confined to their particular block. In this

regard, the committee has not truly succeeded in shifting citizens' interests from individualistic interests to more community-oriented ones. And so, social capital navigates elsewhere.

Conclusion

Chapter VII aimed to understand the political practices in Jemo One Condominium. First, citizens' perceptions of the local government in the area, i.e. Woreda 1, were examined. It was estimated that although it contributes through *shemachoc* and jobs for the inhabitants, as well as with tangible elements such as the construction of football pitches, the opinion of the residents, especially those who were relocated, is not high. Elements such as a lack of concrete aid or clientelist, ethnic relations detract from its role, sometimes flattening it. As its departmental agents are keen to emphasise, Woreda 1 deals with utility management and has implemented a link by creating committees. The latter are condominium organisations aimed at ensuring compliance with the obligations and benefits of the inhabitants, concerning the area, e.g. by cleaning shared terraces or setting up a patrol. Receiving most of their income from the condominium areas themselves, such as from renting out parking spaces or empty tertiary floors to shopkeepers and small entrepreneurs, the committee is reiterating what it is: a body that, more than its inhabitants, exists to the extent that the object, i.e. the condominium, is respected. Consequently, the interviewees do not see any evidence of Woreda 1's operations inhibiting social capital, but rather they perceive it as securing and/or protecting the areas in which they live.

Chapter VIII

Conclusion

Approaching the end of this thesis, it is now necessary to summarise its main trajectories. This chapter will review them by reviewing the key research findings about the economic, social, and political consequences of living in condominium units, particularly for people relocated from the informal houses of Woreda 7 in Kirkos sub-city to the Jemo One Condominiums in Nefas Silk, Addis Ababa. In so doing, it will also discuss the contribution of the thesis and ways to move forward.

While Chapter I was an introductory chapter to the thesis, Chapter II laid the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the thesis, i.e. the use of social capital theory, as conceived by Robert Putnam, and its political ramifications, i.e. linking social capital theory. Chapter III established the methodical and methodological basis of the research, describing the observation methods used, the interviews and surveys, and analysis of the data collected. Chapters IV and V answered sub-question 1, analysing how the livelihoods of the people relocated to Jemo One Condominium have changed compared to their former neighbourhoods. Chapter VI answered sub-question 2, understanding how condominiums forge new ways of living collectively in Addis Ababa. Finally, Chapter VII answered sub-question 3 and detailed how Woreda 1 links to its residents and what the results of this link are. Each answer to these sub-questions feeds into answering the general research question and shows how condominium life shapes citizens' practices in Addis Ababa, particularly those of the people who have been relocated.

8.1 Wrapping up

The Amharic expression *condominium hiwot* for condominium life has now taken on a variety of meanings and implications, ranging from economic to social and political.

This thesis set out to explore how the livelihood of former slum inhabitants evolved when moving to condominium units. To do so, Chapter IV navigated the memories of former

inhabitants and explored how they lived previously in the informal areas of Woreda 7, including: the locational advantage of nearby hotels and headquarters, which created formal jobs such as chauffeurs and informal jobs such as shoe cleaners, and the strong and flourishing network of connections, driven by long-standing acquaintance and proximity, which emerged as the mainstay of life in the former neighbourhood. Chapter V identified that living in condominium units contrasts starkly with people's previous lives and noted the high cost of living in the Jemo One Condominium and the primarily formal economic activities available to residents, e.g. work as a broker, office work, or jobs in the private sector, which are out of reach to many in the lower classes. The lack of a primary economic source is further compounded by a lack of community support, particularly in terms of access to food. Another significant finding revealed in Chapter V is that class and ethnic differences, with particular reference to neighbouring Oromia, become more pressing in apartment blocks. Such differences contribute to the divergent views of living in an apartment building held by someone who was relocated compared to, for example, their wealthier neighbour, who usually moved having won the lottery or because they were in a financial position to buy a condominium unit. The latter will likely assert that living in the apartment block is a success, primarily because of the facilities offered: private bathroom, private kitchen. Yet, low-income people cannot enjoy such amenities due to intermittent electricity and water, problems that cannot be solved simply by paying for *jericas* or barrels of water. For the relocated people, the changes in economic activities and social fabric, compared to the old neighbourhood, are severe, while challenges related to utilities such as water and electricity remain ongoing.

The main goal of Chapter VI was to examine these challenges and see how relocated people, and more generally the inhabitants of the block of flats, forge ways of living collectively, with a particular emphasis on networks of support found in the Jemo One Condominium. One of the more significant findings from this chapter is that regardless of being presented as a collective living arrangement, apartment blocks' shared areas do not do justice to the vernacular social practices of Ethiopian life. Specifically, they do not have usable spaces for *bunna* ceremonies or

tents to put up in the case of a funeral. What happens inside the blocks is a valid but weaker version of earlier ways of living. The drive for inhabitants to forge collective practices is, as in the case of Woreda 7, primarily a rational economic choice: by joining together, relocated people hope to have their economic needs met. Meanwhile, homeowners are in a position to pay for funeral celebrations, combining risk-sharing strategies like *iddir* with individual strategies based on their wealth. This is something that relocated persons, who are often in a poor economic situation, cannot do.

Relocated people abandon the particularised trust, generalised reciprocity, and fictive kin of the old neighbourhood to make way for generalised trust, balanced reciprocity, and nuclear kin. Consequently, while *eqqub* and *mahber* are not practised in Jemo One Condominium, *iddirs* are a vestige of weak social capital. One only has to think of the women's *iddirs*, such as Imawaish Ye-Set Iddir, who have tight control over their members through a network of rules, and whose support is expressed in the form of common Ethiopian customs.

This chapter also showed that places located outside the blocks but still within the condominium area have a truly Ethiopian sense of community, or, one might say, social capital, involving elders as much as relocated youth. This is the case with the YeSheraton Accababi Yefikir Yeselam Mahber and the Oldies Wendmamatoch Meheregia Mahber. Feeling alienated from practices that take place inside the blocks, despite having lived for more than a decade at Jemo One Condominium, they make their way elsewhere, to the churches for some and to the pub for others, to forge new forms of association, which resemble the old ones. Although their bonding social capital is substantial, motivated by their own interests and a solidarity of sentiments, the same bond of shared identity can prove to be a problem, as it excludes other inhabitants from benefiting from and contributing to this social capital. Today, such instances are limited to people from Woreda 7.

Chapter VII examined the relationship between the local government, i.e. Woreda 1 of Jemo One Condominium, and the social capital of the residents. According to linking social capital theory, local government could act as a link in order to bring what happens outside the blocks

inside the blocks. Woreda 7 did not present significant examples of this: bonding and bridging social capital was strong in itself, and the few situations in which this was threatened, such as quarrels between neighbours, do not constitute significant examples of social capital being weakened. Since the government agents in Woreda 7 were inhabitants of the area themselves, the relationship between the local government and the inhabitants had a short, primarily horizontal distance, and, where a power relationship was identified, the agents used their assets to benefit the whole community.

However, upon examining Woreda 1 in Chapter VII — including both what citizens perceive as its merits and limitations, and the evaluations provided by employees and departments — several aspects emerge as particularly appealing. Citizens realise that the local government can help at an economic level, through *shemachoc*, knowing places to obtain primary products at low prices, or the provision of jobs, but, according to interviewees, these opportunities are limited to patronage networks, particularly ethnic ones. Thus, trust in the *woreda* remains weak. Additionally, there is little tangible help in improving areas, resulting in the *woreda's* work being limited to bureaucratic trivia such as the demand for documents. On its part, the *woreda* resents the denial of its role in, for example, the management of electricity or water, or its role as a social inhibitor. In asserting its roles and powers, the *woreda* is aware that it has power advantages over the citizens and is apparently happy to surrender its authority by creating managerial units within the condominium.

The research has shown that even if limited to one meeting, de facto, Woreda 1 of Jemo One Condominium attempted to act as a link to the inhabitants. The myriad of committees in the area is the result of this. These committees have shown how Ethiopian citizens have organised themselves to adapt to the new arrangements, admittedly encouraged by the administration. Through a network of representatives, committees keep common areas clean, have guards, and occasionally even gardeners or cleaners. In the practice of mundane relations, such committees successfully replace the *kebeles* because of the closeness they boast with the citizens, while undermining the *woreda's* authority. Lending or substituting political bodies are increasingly

tenuous concepts in Jemo One Condominium, where residents prefer to go to the committee, as opposed to the local government, even for matters that were previously dealt with by the *woreda*.

Another significant finding identified in Chapter VII is that the financing of the committee is a hint of social organisation: the payments are primarily covered by the rent of rooms on the ground floor for shops, medical clinics, and other businesses. However, the committees themselves are increasingly inclined to legitimise their work primarily insofar as it ensures the maintenance of the object (the condominium) by the subject (the residents), rather than enhancing the social capital of Jemo One Condominium, both in terms of bonding and bridging. Could this, then, be the new face of practice in Addis Ababa? An exercise aimed at the object, in this case, the condominium, rather than on the subject, its residents?

The analysis of over six months of field research in Addis Ababa demonstrates that these observations cannot be separated from their broader context. Ultimately, if the cost of living in Jemo One Condominium has increased compared to the former neighbourhood, this is largely attributable to inflation, which has risen steadily over the past ten years. While deficiencies in water and electricity certainly affect the condominium's residents, inhabitants of other areas of the capital might report similar challenges, as such accessibility and management issues are linked to Ethiopia's growing population. Likewise, if ethnic tensions appear more pronounced than in the past, this can partly be attributed to the continuing politicisation of ethnicity — most recently heightened during the war in Tigray — and, consequently, to an increasing estrangement of citizens from governing authorities.

8.2 The Path Ahead

Although many of the problems discussed stem, in part, from broader national challenges, the evidence from this thesis suggests that the condominium model must be examined in its entirety as an enduring solution to population growth. Rather than offering opportunities to specific segments of the population, such as relocated residents, the model often exacerbates

existing economic, social, and political difficulties. If this is to remain the primary housing solution for low-income residents in Addis Ababa, where citizens from informal settlements continue to be moved into apartment blocks, further research on life in these condominiums is essential.

Such research can provide a comprehensive understanding of the limitations of apartment blocks and, when considered in the wider national context, inform strategies to improve these conditions. The results of this thesis support the idea that local government can serve as a link in promoting social capital, with the creation of committees serving as an example. However, these committees often focus primarily on the interests of the building itself. Therefore, it is worth exploring - through the lens of linking social capital theory, which strengthens over time - how the *woreda* could play an even more significant role as a link, shifting attention away from the individual citizen and the individual building, and fostering a more cohesive community within the apartment blocks.

8.3 Further Research

As noted in the introduction, a limitation of this study concerns the research sample. Since this thesis primarily focuses on the experiences of relocated persons, other social or ethnic actors are considered only insofar as they interact with the sample under study. For instance, the experiences of more affluent residents are addressed mainly in relation to their (non-)interactions with relocated persons. This partial focus reflects the fact that a systematic comparison of different social categories was beyond the scope of this study and its methodology. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that social and political frictions emerge within condominium life. To advance the debate, I suggest future research aimed at understanding the experiences of various social classes within condominiums. For example, renters may perceive themselves as excluded due to their temporary residence and lack of voting rights on committees.

8.4 Give Them Space

In conclusion, this thesis has made it possible to show the shaping of economic, social, and political practices in condominiums by examining the experience of those people who were relocated to Jemo One Condominium. In the introduction, I quote that home is the place where one starts from. In light of my findings, I do not believe that ways of life will return to the way they were in the informal area of Woreda 7; so many things, in my case alone, have moved on from how they were in the Box. Grandma is no longer there, and my cousin Mary, after getting married, moved away from the condominium with her husband. I myself have visited Addis Ababa less and less over the years. I hope I have shown in my thesis that ways of living evolve in step with the rhythms of life, and they are dynamic rhythms, continuously changing and often becoming undetectable. The future hope, therefore, is not to bring back previous, now impractical, ways of living in the condo, but to forge and adapt different but equally effective ones and "make them endure, give them space" (Calvino, 1983).

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Appendix A

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE WOREDA

This questionnaire was prepared as part of field research for my Research Master's thesis in African Studies, with Jemo One Condominium being the research site. I thank you for your possible cooperation and remain available for any doubts or clarifications.

1.1 How many years has the condominium site Jemo One Condominium been in existence?

1.2 How many households are in this community?

1.3 How many inhabitants?

1.4 How many inhabitants in percentage have come here to live because of

Development:

Victory of the lottery:

Other:

1.5 In the last five years, the number of people living in this community has:

Increased [ ]

Decreased [ ]

Remained the same [ ]

What is the main reason of this change?

(a)

(b)

1.6 What are the two principal economic activities for men in this community?

(a)

(b)

1.7 What are the two principal economic activities for women in this community?

(a)

(b)

1.8 In the last three years, availability of employment for unemployed has:

Improved [ ]

Worsened [ ]

Remained the same [ ]

1.9 In the last three years, the roads leading to this community have:

Improved [ ]

Worsened [ ]

Remained the same [ ]

1.10 The availability of housing in this community is:

Adequate [ ]

Deficient [ ]

1.11 What are the two main reasons why housing in the community has improved, worsened, or

remained the same over the last three years?

(a)

(b)

1.12 What is the most important source of funding in Jemo One Condominium?

1.13 Do you think that over the last five years, the level of trust in this village/neighbourhood

has gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same?

 Gotten better [ ]

 Gotten worse [ ]

 Stayed about the same [ ]

Please explain why

1.14 What does most often cause problems/lacks in the neighbourhood?

Electricity [ ]

Water [ ]

Transportation [ ]

Sewage [ ]

1.15 In the past 12 months, how often have people in this village/neighbourhood gotten together to jointly work with the *woreda* for something benefiting the community?

1 Never

2 Once

3 A few times (<5)

4 Many times (>5)

If Yes, explain:

1.16 Has this *woreda* ever attempted to make improvements but failed? Why do you think the attempt failed? What would have you done differently to make the effort more successful?

1.17 Have there been any efforts by the community to improve the quality of the (service or benefit) or overcome a problem? Can you describe one instance in detail?

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE ELECTRICITY ADMINISTRATION

This questionnaire was prepared as part of field research for my Research Master's thesis in African Studies, with Jemo One Condominium being the research site. I thank you for your possible cooperation and remain available for any doubts or clarifications.

2.1 What fraction of the community has

The entire community [ ]

Most of the community [ ]

About half the community [ ]

Less than half/very few [ ]

No one in the community [ ]

2.2 In the last three years, the electrical service to this community has:

Improved [ ]

Worsened [ ]

Remained the same [ ]

2.3 Currently, the quality of electrical service within the homes of this community is:

Very good [ ]

Good [ ]

Average [ ]

Poor [ ]

Very poor [ ]

2.4 How would you describe access to electricity among the population?

Very good [ ]

Good [ ]

Average [ ]

Poor [ ]

Very poor [ ]

2.5 Has advice been given to residents on how to save on electricity? If so, how?

2.6 What are the two main problems with the electrical service?

2.7 Can you explain the role of your office, your daily activities?

2.8 Have there been any efforts by the community to improve the quality of the (service or benefit) or overcome a problem? Can you describe one instance in detail?

APPENDIX 3 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE WATER ADMINISTRATION

This questionnaire was prepared as part of field research for my Research Master's thesis in African Studies, with Jemo One Condominium being the research site. I thank you for your possible cooperation and remain available for any doubts or clarifications

3.1 What part of the community has weekly access to public standpipes?

The entire community [ ]

Most of the community [ ]

About half the community [ ]

Less than half/very few [ ]

No one in the community [ ]

3.2 In the last three years, potable water service has:

Improved [ ]

Worsened [ ]

Remained the same [ ]

3.3 What are the two main problems with the potable water service?

(a)

(b)

3.4 Can you explain the role of your office, your daily activities?

3.5 Have there been any efforts by the community to improve the quality of the (service or benefit) or overcome a problem? Can you describe one instance in detail?

APPENDIX 4 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE GARBAGE COLLECTION ADMINISTRATION

This questionnaire was prepared as part of field research for my Research Master's thesis in African Studies, with Jemo One Condominium being the research site. I thank you for your possible cooperation and remain available for any doubts or clarifications

4.1 What fraction of the community is served by a garbage collection service?

The entire community [ ]

Most of the community [ ]

About half the community [ ]

Less than half/very few [ ]

No one in the community [ ]

4.2 In the last three years, the quality of the garbage disposal in this

community has:

Improved [ ]

Worsened [ ]

Remained the same [ ]

4.3 For homes that do not receive garbage collection services, what is the main solid waste disposal method?

Burn it [ ]

Throw on own lot on the street [ ]

Throw on others' lots [ ]

Throw into river [ ]

Bury it [ ]

Pay to haul away [ ]

Other [ ]

4.4 How do the inhabitants handle the garbage?

4.5 How long does it take to eliminate the garbage?

4.6 Are there any health problems due to exposure to the garbage?

4.7 Can you explain the role of your office, your daily activities?

4.8 Have there been any efforts by the community to improve the quality of the (service or benefit) or overcome a problem? Can you describe one instance in detail?

APPENDIX 5 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

This questionnaire was prepared as part of field research for my Research Master's thesis in African Studies, with Jemo One Condominium being the research site. I thank you for your possible cooperation and remain available for any doubts or clarifications

5.1 Is this community served by a public transport system?

Yes [ ]

 No [ ]

5.2 The walking distance to the nearest community with public transportation is:

Distance (in walking minutes) _____

5.3 Public transportation is available:

Every day [ ]

Some days of the week [ ]

One day per week [ ]

Other (specify) [ ]

5.4 In the last three years, the quality and service of public transportation has:

Improved [ ]

Worsened [ ]

Remained the same [ ]

5.5 Public transportation is used by:

The entire community [ ]

Most of the community [ ]

About half the community [ ]

 Less than half/very few [ ]

 No one in the community [ ]

5.6 Can you explain the role of your office, your daily activities?

5.7 What two main changes could improve public transportation to this community?

(a)

(b)

APPENDIX 6 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SEWAGE ADMINISTRATION

This questionnaire was prepared as part of field research for my Research Master's thesis in African Studies, with Jemo One Condominium being the research site. I thank you for your possible cooperation and remain available for any doubts or clarifications

6.1 What fraction of the community is served by a public sewage system?

The entire community [ ]

Most of the community [ ]

About half the community [ ]

 Less than half/very few [ ]

No one in the community [ ]

6.2 In the last three years, the quality of this community has:

Improved [ ]

Worsened [ ]

Remained the same [ ]

6.3 Currently, the public sewage system is:

Very good [ ]

 Good [ ]

Average [ ]

Poor [ ]

Very poor []

6.4 What are the two main problems with the public sewage system in this community?

(a)

(b)

6.5 Do the streets of this community have sufficient sewers and drains to handle excess water and prevent flooding when it rains?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

6.6 What other sewage and wastewater systems are used in this community?

a. Latrine

b. Septic tanks

c. River or sea

d. Other (specify)

6.7 Can you explain the role of your office, your daily activities?

6.8 Have there been any efforts by the community to improve the quality of the (service or benefit) or overcome a problem? Can you describe one instance in detail?