Historicizing Urbanism: The socio- economic and cultural pattern of the city of Gondar, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The establishment of Gondar in the 17th century marked a very promising chapter in the history of the Ethiopian urbanization. This research aimed at exploring the meaning of urban space, the change of meaning through time and effects of displacement on the social bonds. In doing so, qualitative method (document analysis, interview, observation, photo voices) were used for thematic analysis. Various social institutions such as religion, market, monarchy, and long-distance trade promoted the Gondarian urban development. All the three Abrahamic religions, namely, Christian, Islam, and Judaism were developed in urban Gondar. Although these religions meant to divide the communities, the Gondarian Markets served to unite and glue the believers of these religions together. However, the residential places were segregated on the basis of religions, leading to sprawling. The sprawling was ensued by unplanned urban expansion, triggering developmental imbalances across the city. The corrective remedy of redevelopment injected by the municipality also caused slums of despair. Despite these short- comings, urbanization marshalled with holistic goals of making Gondar one of the icons of the Ethiopian centers of religion and culture tinorder to promote and maintain national unity.

Keywords*: Urbanization, Gondar, settlement, religion, market*

Background

Gondar stands at an elevation of 7500 feet on a basaltic ridge from which streams flanking the town flow to Lake Tana (Encyclopaedia, Britannica, 2012). Gondar is created by the Gondarian monarchs that had more power than the Orthodox Churches due to their ability to control lands and ecclesial affairs (Berry (1976). Most of the monarchical decisions made Gondar an important administrative, commercial, religious, and cultural center - noted for the skill of its craftsmen (Camerapix, 1995). On the one hand, the city of Gondar contained the slums of hope. The slums of hope are settlements that relied on an upward mobility, made up of newer, usually self-built structures -- successively augmented via development, consolidation, and improvement. On the other, the Gondarian slum of despair comprises "declining" neighbourhoods that are in a process of inevitable decay (Nayak, 2013).

Central place theorist (Chirstaller, 1933) focused on market as fundamental attractor for exchange of goods and services. All central place theorists agree that no country has achieved middle-income status without becoming largely urban as cities are central to economic growth, generating jobs, and producing the highest gross domestic product. Most cities are often laboratories of innovation—testing grounds for policies and solutions that can be scaled up at national level (IFC, 2017). These urban centers contain three categories: nature, culture, and functions. As there are forces that shape the patterns of the city, there are also forces that challenge those patterns. In expanding cities such as Gondar, business centers tend to grow at the expense of residential zones. Conversely, residential areas show a centrifugal tendency by moving more toward the outskirts. The increase in number of the population also changes the class structure and the ethnic divisions of the population. (Burgel, 1955). Not only that but urban growth dynamically alters the physical as well as the social fabrics of cities (Solomon, 2006). In turn, the growth of

cities also affects the social spaces - the living quarters, open spaces and other tradition-ally functioning spaces of the old settlements. This phenomenon has been observed in industrialized countries but it has unfittingly crawled to Africa and Asia (Flanagan, 2010).

While the ecology of the rural areas is largely determined by the kind of lands available to agriculturally sustain farmers, (Burgel, 1955), urban areas are formed by institution-al values, traditions and customs (Peterson, 1985). According to Gedeon (1955) social forces and processes reached the level of rigidity - producing social segregation - that typically led to the formation of "quarters". Park (1929/1952) suggested that city based social interactions take on a spatial dimension that the divides cities not only into areas with patterned residential segregation but segregations themselves could also be linked to patterns of social interaction and bonding. Therefore, this paper aimed at addressing multifaceted objectives: first, it attempts to identify the meaning of urban space as a route to social cohesion and/or exclusion. Second, it will assess the changes in the meaning of space through time. Finally, it examines the effects of displacement and resettlement on people's livelihoods and economic needs.

Statement of the Problem

Although Gondar is one of the oldest cities, the tempo of its growth has been low. Some areas are congested, houses are debilitated, water sewerages are extremely limited, and there are no sufficient roads while the existing ones are ill planned (Hall, 2002). Even though Gondar prides on its long and established history, its current place/space highly suffers from lack of planning settings (Dukale, 2012). Urban settings have to be planned with the aim of providing safe, organized, and enjoyable homes/workplaces with recre-ational settings for residents (Elias, 2008). While the idea of urban planning emerged in the 19th century, Gondar was established as a city in the 17th century. Thus, Gondar precedes urbanization theory and planning processes (Velazco, 2012). Malpas (1998) con-sidered planned space as abstract entity tied to psychological, political, and social con-figurations. The Gondarian urban places represent both geopolitical and spatial features esteemed by metaphorical and psychological descriptions. However, these places are very problematic due to lack of sanitation, proper resettlement and displacement ensued by extant poverty (Mumford, 2004). The Gondarian city spaces are unbounded – encompass-ing both physical and social settings. Theoretically, place is a location while space is de-fined by the areas within it (Malpas, 1998). The appearance of place as a central concept is clear in the discussions that touch on aspects of human experience (Malpas, 1998; 33). As well, place is integral to the very structure and possibility of existence while space is a limitless container of parcelized entities. Nevertheless, no places are equal nor spaces are even (Madoki, 1998; 73). Moreover, Fiast (2000) stated that space is larger than place because it encompasses opportunity structures, social lives, subjective images, human values, and social meanings by far more than places. Hollis (1979) asserted that human beings have interests; desires and rationale aptitude that make them choose a given place of residence. Finnis (1980) described that humans not only have interests but also values and knowledge that guide their residence choices. Scolth (2002) contested that choices often involve conflict as deciding in favour of one advantage implies forgoing others as every option connotes trade-offs – that is not exception to Gondarian places. Whether it is chosen formally or informally, places where Gondarians chose to live have a powerful symbol on their identities (Caragata, 1998).

The city of Gondar is amongst the places that are influenced by globalization for various socio-economic and cultural reasons. A modern city as the western based concept started in relation to the traditional and historical places of past civilization (Mesfin, 2003 E.C).

There are some manifestations on the general change that has occurred in some parts of the city. For instance, Markakis (1974) outlined that since the establishment of the city, the character of Gondar has immensely changed. Genet (2011) also states that unlike the historical process, the modern formation of the city brought new changes to its multicultural aspects. The latest change can be caused by different impositions of redevelopment scheme - the redevelopment scheme that is not precisely designed (Moughtin et.al, 1999). This redevelopment process led to the displacement of many people sending them to another place through resettlement. Cerena (1997) suggested that the recent emphasis of scholars on the scheme stemmed from the need to clarify the link between macro structural processes and specific urban redevelopment efforts, and lived experiences.

From here onward, it is neither arbitrary nor irrelevant to suggest that most Gondorians feel intimate with lands – identifying their communities by natural landmarks – with the settings that represent a quality of interactions. Hence, Gondarians identity is established in terms of place - the place that shapes their cultural values (Howard, 1998; 148). It is also important to reiterate that the Gondarian values have holistic nature as Gondar is one of the icons of the Ethiopian center of religion and culture that glued national unity. By taking this as a point of departure, what kind of change has been brought in relation to the social geography of space will be the core endeavour for these researchers to assess. Understanding the past ecological pattern helps one to project the direction of change in planning and social relationship in terms of religious, ethnic, and economic positioning with certain implications to posterity.

Methodological Considerations

The methodology used to elucidate data in this study is qualitative approach. Qualitative study mostly relies on the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world and reality is neither fixed nor single (Marshal, C., & Rossman, G. B., (1999). A qualitative researcher is the primary tool of data collection and analysis (Finlay, (2002). Hence, the research team used various tools of qualitative approach in order to answer the research questions about the evolution of Gondar as urban scenery.

Study Area

This research focuses on the city of Gondar and its vicinities. The researchers chose Gondar as a site of the study due to: (1) Grandiose settlements of Gondarian post Zagwe Dynasty and impressive historicity of its foundation that survived for over four centuries. This city has overcome enormous turbulences from the Zemene Mesafinit through Italian occupation to the present. These episodes have influenced its social and cultural context to the extent of affecting contemporary urban life. (2) The existence of historical documents about the foundation of Gondar, particularly oral histories - elucidating the meaning of the city with cultural traditions in various forms of social lives. (3) Researchers' awareness and/or fondness of the study area, personal experience, understanding of the traditional culture and strong participation in the Gondarian social life. (4) The possession of the skill of the Ethiopian liturgical language - Geez - by one of the researchers aided the selection and thorough reading of ancient materials about Gondar. This study examines the impact of urban redevelopment on cultural and social bonds of the communities. The authors employed qualitative mode of inquiry that focuses on the meaning of events rather than the magnitude of the occurrences. Hence, document analysis, interview, observation and photo voice/map and sketches are used to collect and analyze data.

Document Analyses

Most of the documents referring to Ethiopia's glory have enormously raised the importance of Gondar. These documents reside at national museums, archived at churches, municipalities and libraries are highly chasing scholarly analyses. This research team took the opportunity to critically review the documents by way of elucidating the urbanization of Gondar. The document analysis is the most unobtrusive method of data collection and analysis (Denzin, 1978; 260). Unobtrusive mechanisms of data collection demonstrate that information can be collected from numerous traces and records that are intentionally or inadvertently left by humans (Berg, 2007). Voluminous documents, historical archives, monarchical discourses, and recent texts of social/economic and political nature of the city of Gondar are extensively examined. The documents were evaluated so that they are original (not distorted) and representative of the time it tries to explain (Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) proposed that documents of qualitative nature be assessed on the basis of trustworthiness and authenticity. Again, Bloor (1997), Geertz, 1973, Belk et al, 1988 and Guba and Lincoln 1994) have suggested that documents have to be verified for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability prior to utilizing them as data source. Nevertheless, the researchers do not claim that all materials utilized are representative. The drawbacks in representativeness emanated from the low level literacy during Gondarian period - the time that favoured boys' education than that of girls'. As well, the selective survival and/ or destruction of some materials due to the prevailing political tensions might have affected the relevance and symbolism of some documents (Scott, 1990).

The researchers of this study found most archival data of the city of Gondar with its grandiose castles and impressive churches that are highly attractive because of their standard format and filing systems from the library of the city of Gondar and the University of Gondar libraries (Loftland, Snow, Anderson, and Loftland, 2006). Moreover, historical records of different time about the city, scholastic literatures, itineraries, travelers' documents, and personal diaries were exhaustively used. Some of the documents present the meaning of city's relationship to the physical arrangement of social spaces that were systematically configured. Errors detected during the analyses are readjusted using cogent means of data integration.

Interview

The very crucial aspects of knowledge in Ethiopia are not widely recorded but orally kept. The elders and the traditional people kept their cultural knowledge intact; and thus only interview could elicit it. Here, interview is a conversation with the purpose of collecting information (Gordon, 1992). Face to - face semi structured - interview conducted with participants (Fitzgerald & Cox, 2001) and the key informants discussed about their livelihood, resettlement, social relations, and their future aspirations. These interviews enabled researchers to gather data that are relevant to the study of the evolution and structure of the city of Gondar. The rational for interviewing key informants (Babbie, 2001) was to examine the complexities of the evolution, expansion, and consequences of sprawling on local population. The impacts of residential changes on their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and experience were significantly discussed. Social meaning of the residential change with its symbolic interpretation, implications, and the cultural traditions of the population are vigorously examined. The researchers recorded the speaking styles, facial expressions, eye contacts, postures and movements of the interviewees which called their latent response to questions (Merriam, 2001). The emotional and body languages of the respondents were watched as they narrated their stories. The researchers took

the stories as self-revelatory and personal and not superficial (Marshall and Rossmann, 1999). The informants were representativeness of religion, gender, class, and ethnicity in Gondar. Besides, the key informants have rich knowledge of the city and its historical development. Additionally, scholars and professional with excellent understanding of the city development and the social change were used as key informants in order to allow the researchers to ground their analysis on foundational knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2014). The interview was conducted with 8 participants and 4 key informants from July 20 -28, 2017.

Observation

The research team of this study initially climbed to Goha in order to view and observe the general topography, terrain characteristics and the overall aspect of the city of Gondar. It was only after having a clear mind-map of the city, did they commence to observations of the areas of interest. All types of field observations from a sociological perspective offer role-expectations, requiring a reconceptualization of system development and the nature, sources, and management of errors (McCall, George J. (1984). The research team conducted a direct observation of an environment, neighbourhoods, and artefacts in a physical setting at the city of Gondar. Observation also entailed the direct seeing of social behaviours to be analyzed using categories devised prior to the commencement of observation (McCakk, 1984, 277). These researchers chose systematic observation - using observation schedule to collect information on various artefacts -- witnessing the phenomena as they actually unfolded. Researchers easily observed the sequence of connectedness of events that affect the meaning of the physical and social environment (Taylor et al. (1985). The research team mainly focused on symbolic places such as churches, settlement neighbourhoods' and imperial castles (Fasil Gibbi). Also, places such as roads, markets, cultural centers were observed and recorded. Similarly, villages located in various parts of the city were systematically observed and their social meanings were methodically deduced. The researchers conducted this observation with greater precision regarding their timing, duration, and the reliability of explanatory accounts about the artefacts, physical space, castles, and others (Charleton, 1988 et al, 1998; 7). Generally, the researchers selected some sensitizing concept, observed phenomena, wrote down observations, looking for patterns across observations and used inductive method to draw pertinent conclusion. As well, the researchers observed Falasah neighbourhoods, Addsi Alem, Arbatu Ensessa villages that are segregated. At these locations, the elderly, unemployed, women, children, and adults were systematically observed during their honest interactions with each other.

Map, Photos, and Sketches

The production, dissemination, and utilization of knowledge about urban development take many formats. Maps, photos and sketches-based production of knowledge has three main goals: (1) to enable people to draw, record and sketch maps to reflect the concerns of the community, (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of maps, photographs and sketches, and (3) to easily reach policymakers through visual and audiovisual means (Wang, 1994). Maps, photos, and sketches of the Gondarian castles, churches, and landscapes are the very important inputs for the understanding of the physical features, traditions, and material cultures of the city (Stevens 2010). The research team allowed participants to take photos that were exhaustively analyzed. Nevertheless, the researchers did not uncritically use the pictures, maps, and sketches drawn by the partcipants. All models of drawing and photo taking can be affected by the people behind the camera and/or hold pencils for drawing

(Berg, 2007). The selective focus by cameramen can affect the truth and meaning of the photos with the major influence on the data. However, all the photos, maps, and sketches analyzed in this study are highly authentic and representative of the Gondrian culture. The maps of the city helped researchers recognize the changing nature of the spatial and historical evolution of the city. The photographs helped to show the arrangements of the city structure, the cultural traditions, public spaces, and some other open spaces (Clark and Zimmer, 2001). As well, sketches served the researchers to understand the structure of city. The researchers are very attentive in looking at and reading the sketches because the crude and manual sketches were drawn at a time when there were no photographic and sketching technologies. Some data that are used to explain the city of Gondar were collected from atlas, government and non-governmental sketches websites and photographs. Also, the researchers gave participants a camera and asked them to photograph their neighbourhoods, streets, markets, and churches during observations. Participants were encouraged to transfer knowledge and information about personal and community issues discussion about photographs Wang, Cash & Powers, 2000). Thus, photovoice is based on the principles that images teach, pictures influence policy, and community members ought to participate in creating the images that shape important public policy (Stevenson, 2002).

Data Analysis

Data analysis may take various formats - depending on the nature of the data. The analysis of some data is based on collection instrument (Corson, 1998), and other were analyzed on thematic basis (Judd, Kidder & Smith, 1992). Some of the photographs, maps, and sketches are used to illustrate factual information and enabled researchers to describe the socio-economic and physical structure of the city. These documents including archives, maps, photos, sketches, artefacts, buildings, churches, markets, and roads of historical significance were thoroughly analyzed. Nonetheless, as some of the pictures are fuzzy, researchers could not clearly extrapolate their meanings and thus relevant explanatory literatures were used to articulate these documents in order to ascertain their meanings (Berg, 2007).

Moreover, the interview data collected from participants by the team was not readily convertible to standard measurable units. These data vary in level of abstraction, frequencies of occurrence of events, and relevance to the central question of the study (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). The interview questions focus on the impact of the physical arrangement of the city on dwellers, traditional meaning of city life, the ever-changing structural setting and expansion of the city. The interview data was transcribed and four copies were produced out of which one copy was filed as a master copy for safekeeping. The other three were used by the researchers interactively to review responses. The responses were thematically arranged to appropriately connect the responses to the research questions. The researchers extracted meanings and coded the information in order to summarize segments. This process was found important because it served to reduce voluminous data to a manageable size. As well, coding helped researcher to group summaries into patterns and themes (Berge, 2007). The researchers also coded some data in hierarchical order so that coding served as a measurement device (Bernard, 1995). In this case, the physical feature of the old Gondar versus the recent ones were compared using previous pictures and photos against the current ones. Physical evidence of castles, churches, market places, public spaces and residences were unequivocally described by participants.

Data collected via observation were thematically patterned in order to deduce meanings (Blakie, 2000). Observation schedules were precisely prepared, site of observations were

chosen, data collection materials prepared and researchers went to the sites to conduct observation. Most of the field observations at the castle, churches settlement places and around the city focused on common occurrences, contrasting events and mediating factors. Researchers chose observation as a means of data collection and analysis primarily because it does not rely on attitudes to predict behaviour, can scrutinize behaviour across time, examine more in-depth data at social phenomena, analyze phenomena in context within which it occurs and can easily assess both verbal and nonverbal indicators (Babbie, 2001). However, the model observations chosen by researchers is non-participants as the case does not allow participatory model of data collection: subjects of observation were castles, tired roads, churches, slum houses, markets and other social and religious settings.

Stimulants in Gondarian Urbanization

All data collected show that forces that influence the development of urbanization triggered by some precursors and attractors: Castle, religion, water, and market are the main igniters of urban development (Wheeler & Beatley, 2004). The growing population in the developing nations will mostly settle in vast, burgeoning, and largely impoverished metropolises — areas where religion is spreading. Even though secularization, the spread of education, science, technology, and prosperity are parts of modernization, the evolving new megacities are havens for religious revivals (Jobs, 2005). Historically, religions have been adept at gaining adherents in urban environments; Christianity formed as an urban religious movement in the cities of the Roman Empire. The Franciscans began as an urban reform movement in medieval Europe in response to poverty/inequality created by the rise of the market economy (Thomas, 2010).

The Castle

Among many of the igniters of Gondarian urbanization, one finds castle as castles were the magnets of urbanization (Biru, 2016) and thus the city of Gondar is the by-product of castles and churches. The construction of the castle or *Bête Mengist* [house of governance] was the principal trigerer for the emergence of Gondar. The castles were built in an area between *Angereb* and *Qeha* rivers - surrounded by several churches and residences of the *echege* [The head monk of EOC] (Kasssa, 2010). The royal enclosure was residential for the royal families and their servants. E. Isaac (2012) commented that castles served the Ethiopian empire to organize monarchical institutions through which the kings discharged their responsibilities.

Figure 1: The Gondarine castles at Fasil Gibbe - coutesy of alamy.com

Hence, Gondar is known as the "African Camelot" — exhibiting breathtaking relics of stone citadels - with Fasil Ghibbi, being a looming testament to the ancient Ethiopian kingdom.

Church and their Social Functions

Durkheim (1912/1995) defined religion as a system of practical belief that unites people who adhere to it through (Weber (1920/1963: 29). The Gondarian royal enclosure was a center for the churches that was built to unite and congregate people. With the expansion of the city boundary, the churches were also built in relatively far places to the city center near the palace. Among the forty four churches, some were engulfed by the physical expansion of the city.

Figure 2: Debre Brihane Sellassie Church - courtesy of alamy.com

The early urban settlement of Gondar is adored by erection of churches. Those churches that existed around the castle were in the residential quarter for the Christian subjects. Christian subjects settled around churches, their settlement was based on their social status. On the other hand, residents who are not Christian [Orthodox] were not allowed to live in the city but in the peripheries. Among those subjects the Muslims and Felashas were some of the most known group of people who settled in the peripheries. The principle of the early settlements in Gondar was religion. The followers of state religion, the followers of Orthodox Christian were the legitimate settlers in the city (Sereke-Brehan, 2008).

As a capital of the Christian kingdom, Gondar was a place that had more than 44 churches. The Churches were one of the most important structures that served both as dividing and defining communities in Gondar. Half of the churches were built very close to the castle compound while the rest were relatively farther away. Most of these churches were built within one and half century from 1632 to 1782 (Pankhurst, 2001). All churches have symbolic meaning, expressing belongingness to the Christian community. At the micro level, the churches were the center of settlements in every corner of the city. As a settlement center, there were relationship between the church and the residents [around the church]. In spiritual sense, churches organize annual and monthly religious ceremonies in collaboration with the community. Additionally, the family based ritual ceremonies such as baptism and burial ceremonies are performed by churches. At a communal

level, the churches were the most important part of social organizations. Communal institutions like *gorebet* [neighbourhood], *edir*, *senbete*, and *mahiber* were dependent on church-based settlement. Gorebate and edir are social organizations that emerged with in a community around individual churches (Levine, 1965). Exceptionally, *mahiber* is organized among families or friends that lived in a scattered settlement.

The development of the city has brought different religious and socio-political features for churches. Since the late seventeen century, churches have become centers of education, art, and music. As centers of education, they were delivering basic education for the children who needed religious knowledge. The churches were also responsible on certifying students who had accomplished their courses. The communities who belonged to certain churches were responsible in caring for churches. These economic supports were provided in the form of *asrat*, *si'elet*, and *meba'e*. Additionally, the church had been collecting products from their rim that was harvesting land granted from the king who established them. The settlers around the churches have been assigned to various individual and communal works. They share household activities and work to maintain the security of the village. Additionally, the neighbours are responsible to help each other in time of thick and thin in the household. They also participate freely in preparation of feasts: wedding, *Tezkar*, baptism, *Zikr* and other ceremonies (Sahile, Negash, Kebede, 2017).

Market

Globalization has become the true universal faith that subjected all customs to the laws of markets (Roy, 2010). The study of globalization addresses the connectivity processes of technological, economic, political, cultural interrelationships. Whether one looks at the economic, cultural, or worldwide media connectivity, one has to take a much broader understanding of society and social institutions (Robertson, 1995). However, Gondar with its one lane road, mountainous setting, broken streets, and cooperative communities may not be conducive to globalization. At present, proponents of globalization are attempting to introduce unholy competitions to the local settings (McNally 2002). In fact, competition can be a potent force for development when individuals share a desire for certain rewards and strive to outdo one another to maximize the share of those rewards (Bennet 1988). Nonetheless, unchecked competitions have many consequences causing social exclusion, income inequality, more unemployment, social instability, destruction of important feature of community by aggrandizing the sense of personal insecurity (Keiger 2011). Market led growth imperatives are pushing organizations to impose their interests on the local (Ritzer 2004).

Most of the Gondarian markets used to diverge away from the basic market principles because they did not only focus on exchanges of goods but also on creation of vital information, friendship, and collegiality. The markets served as space of acquainting people to each other. Specifically, the market area that was located at south of the Gondarian palace compound was situated between the Christian and the non-Christian settlement. The market was deliberately located at this place for the following reasons. First, the market used to serve as a place of exchange for goods and services amongst the dwellers of the city and the others. Second, government officials collected taxes from the market easily due to its proximity to the palace; third, the market was used as a place to deliver proclamations, to collect local, national, and international information from Caravan retailers. Fourth, the market served as a welfare center for the needy populations such as beggars, pilgrims and others. Fifth, constant market operations were the signal of national stability. Sixth, the market served as herbal pharmacy from where traditional medicines are bought.

The market not only served to buy and sell merchandizes but also as a place of recreation, appointments, welfare, and another socio-cultural center. The Gondarian market was the beginning and/or end point of travelers who frequented Gondar. The dwellers that lived in both the city and rural areas used the market as place of information exchange about their relatives. The social groups who are beggars, travelers, and pilgrims used the place as a center of social cooperation. The beggars collect alms in kind and in cash from the buyers and sellers regardless of their religion, origin, cast, and social status. Symbolically, the market areas were non-restricted public space for every human being - Christian and non-Christian dwellers in the city. The integrative market was situated in the edge of the Christian settlement but closer to the Muslims and *Felashas* quarter. Therefore, the market place was the only public space that was used as exchange and meeting place for dwellers. Amongst the Christian dwellers, settling in churches near the market has lower status than settling in the other parts of the city. The Christian inhabitants who lived near the market worked in the market as *Shekach* while others are called *Kotkach, Komari, Meshetegna*. This shows that the immediate neighbourhoods of the market area were surrounded by low class inhabitants of the city. Muslims and Jews were living on the other side of the market. However, cliff of *Dingaye* separated Muslims' settlement from the market.

Here, it is easy to extrapolate that market transactions, occupation, and production of some items were reflected through religion and culture. For example, Muslims were socially recognized for their weaving. On the other hand, pottery and metal works were left for the *Felashas* while retailing was for Muslims.

Figure 3: A model to show the function of the market (source own model, 2018)

As illustrated above, market was a public space that allows everyone to interact with each other regardless of social differences. Some communities with different religion may categorize as a single economic society based on their similar productions. For example, the Felashas and Muslims communities were weavers of the city. Both Christians and Muslims were caravanning in order to dominate the selling activity in the ancient Gondar. The social interaction in the market was not only between Christians and non-Christian communities, but also among the non-Christians. The interactions among communities such as Muslims and Felashas had been common in the market. During marketing, all groups come with their special productions. Individuals who have similar products take some identified row in the middle of the market. Others who deliver service take their usual places. As well, agricultural productions, house utensils, clothes, animals, leather products, beautification articles, ornaments, spices, other imported materials like sickle were the common goods in the market.

Segregated Villages

The term segregation refers to state or condition of being set apart, separated, or restricted from joining the other group. Any segregation induces a sense of unity and belongingness among the group that is affected. Also, the affected group constantly develops animosity against the major group. In Gondar, there was religious based segregation for many years. At the early period of its inception, the city of Gondar had more than three religious based settlements. In the following paragraphs the meaning and functions of the village- settlement will be described. This description is divided into two parts. These sections describe the settlement villages of different religious groups

Addis Alem

Addis Alem is a name of the village frequently used by Muslim settlers themselves. This settlement is referred to as a new world situated at the southern part of the city. This settlement was originally belonged to Muslim at the early emergence of Gondar. By that time, Muslims were living with the Christian inhabitants in the city. *Addis Alem* emerged as segregated settlements of Muslim subjects/inhabitants at the period of King Yohannes I. Afterward, not only Muslims but also others who are not Christians were also settled in segregated village. This village has the oldest Islamic community that had been dominating trade and weaving. The Muslims were importing various commodities from abroad while exporting agricultural products to other countries. Additionally, they have been satisfying the public demand of cotton clothes (Abdussamad, 2000).

The village had been a segregated settlement zone for more than two and half century – serving Muslims as religious and economic base. As the economic quarter of the royal city, the *Negadiras*/chief of merchants was selected from the inhabitants of this village. The village has symbolic importance for the Muslim inhabitants since time immemorial. The village is still dominantly occupied by Muslims for the sake of its symbolic and historic significance. Currently, both tangible and the intangible heritages of the early Muslims are available in the village. It is a place where young Muslims get their history and traditional Islamic education to develop their identity.

The *Falasha Places*

Falasahs are Ethiopian -Beta Israelites who lived in Gondar for many years. The residence of Falahas was located at the northern outskirt of the city. Hancoock (1992) argued that Falasahs migrated to Ethiopia before 640. BC. Flad (1869) suggested that the Falashas were in Ethiopia since the time of King Solomon. At the emergence of Gondar, Bete Israelites were known for their skills of construction, pottery, carpentry, weavers and fighting. They had significant contribution in the constructions of the royal palace and other infrastructures of the city (Pankhurst,1965). This community was very important in the urban settlement of Gondar.

Figure 4: Falasha Residence Area at Gondar (Own Model, 2018)

Tolossa (2010) discussed that the migration of Jews to Ethiopia took place when Ethiopis, the grandson of Jherto came carrying the replica of the Ark of the Covenant while the second migration of the Israel's 12 tribes ensued Minlik to Ethiopia with real Ark of the Covenant. Thus, Tolossa argued that Jews and Ethiopians share the same cultural history to the extent of worshiping the same God. At the end of Gondarian period, the Falashas have lost their relevance due to the disjuncture of the building activities. Nevertheless, their importance in crafting pottery and smiting remained vital even after the decline of the Gondarian period.

Although the Falashas have been segregated, based on occupation and religion, it is very difficult to ascertain whether they have voluntarily moved to the place they lived at or forced to settle there. Whether the segregation was due to a pressure from the dominant Christians or by self-interest, it had persisted for a long period of time. Unlike other religious and ethnic groups, they didn't live with the Christian after the Dervish invasion and Italian occupation. They kept their segregation intact until they moved to their legendary land of origin, Israel. Through many days of observations (July 20-28, 2017), the researchers witnessed that their former places are currently taken by residences of diverse religion and ethnic groups who took high oath to keep the fingerprints of Falasha intact after their "repatriation" to Israel.

Tizazu (2007) argued that *shimagles* played a constructive role in settling disputes in Ethiopia while the social workers have replaced elders in Israel. When Ethio-Israelites faced problems, instead of mediating, the social workers often opt to break up families. A minor conflict that could have been easily solved becomes a divisive issue in the hands of Israeli social workers. Although the Falashas considered moving to Israel as rosy, their places are kept with reverence in northern Gonder. Hence, it is possible to extrapolate that the fingerprint of Falashas will never fade away from Gondar whether the Falashas are Israelites or Ethiopians.

Gondar's Proposed Renovation

Although Gondar prides itself as the medieval heritage of Ethiopia with a vast cultural coherence and classicism; it finally needed extensive renovation to fit into the global model of urbanization. Hence, Gondar proposed a viable mission statement with extensive development plan. All urban planning is needed in order to properly use the scarce land and increase the efficiency of using available resources. Not only does planning enable communities to decrease the hazards to humans and environment, but also adds aesthetic value to cities (Velazco, 2012).
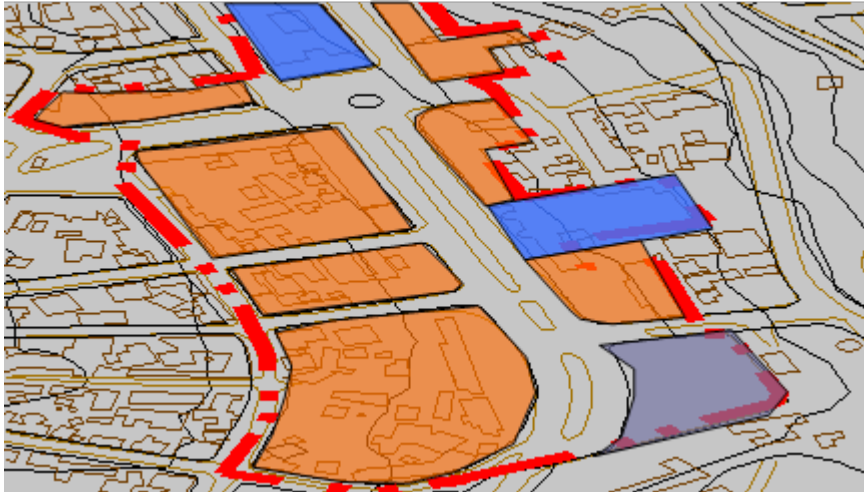

Figure 5: New City Plan Source: Gondar City, 2004

■ = Historical site
■ = Mixed business
■ = Services

Nonetheless, the stated plan came with a huge displacement. Many people that were uprooted from the core/centre of the city were driven to Arbatu Ensesa and Addis Alem. While Arbatu Ensesa is found south east of the imperial castle and below the crest at the eastern cliff of the town, Addis Alem is situated adjacent to the formerly Muslim owned neighbourhoods. Both areas formed as a result of a redevelopment scheme undertaken in the city for people who were living in the older quarters of the city. Owing to its remoteness and absence of road and street light, their current residence, has recently become the den of thieves (Interviewee, 7, July 25, 2017). These residents live in constant fear as if they are residing in the state of nature (Hobbes, 1982). Because of the fear of insecurity, the neighbourhoods close their doors at twilight. These settlers formerly live in the old quarter where their home means their means of survival in terms of economic and social engagements. A 36 years old woman living in the Addis Alem neighbourhood said:

> At present, I am unable to get a better income. In the past, I used to take two jobs per a day when I was living in piazza. But now because of the remoteness and the fear it brought, I am unable to do a single work

This woman in her former residence worked half a day as a receptionist in one place and the rest of hours were left for different tasks. And she could have gotten up early in the morning and comeback even at the darkest hours. But after relocation, she said, as it is a

place where high amount of crime takes place, she refrains from getting up in the morning or being late in the evening - living in a constant fear.

Discussion

The foundation of the city was related to political, religious, and economic factors. The royal palace, churches and the markets were developed early as social spaces (Genet,2011) - followed by the establishment of segregated places. *Woleka*, *Addis Alem,* and places where *Falashas* lived were historically segregated (Solomon, 2001, Genet, 2009). This "spatial exclusion" (Thorns, 2002) exhibited spaces where Muslims had restricted relationship with the Christian inhabitants of the city (Pankhurst (1990). Besides, *Kayla Meda* is the village of Ethiopian Jews locally known as *Bête Isra'el* or *Kayla.* According to Quirin (1998), segregated settlements emerged with the exclusion of Muslims at the time of King Yohannes I (1667-1682). Space also creates social integration and organization (Giddens 1981) as actors co-present in space. The segregation process helped them retain their cultural practices Quirin (1998). It was true that *Addis Alem* was self-contained in terms of their social organization and activities having mosques, cemeteries, social control mechanisms and other necessary organizations.

The community members who lived around the churches also had duties and responsibilities for the churches - as churches are definers of their identities and socio-cultural lives (Genet, 2009). The churches serve not only for spiritual purpose but rather they had social and political functions, controlling the stability of the residents by intervening in all aspects of their lives. Activities that are currently transferred to the modern municipal such as administering marriage were the sole responsibility of the church. For instance, birth registration, marriage contract, death announcement, and local affairs were some of the most common exercises in the church. Even though the role of the church is substituted by the municipality, the churches remain exercising the tradition. The church education was mandatory to get the higher position in the royal court in order to keep the tie between the community and the churches stronger. Besides creating self-containing quarters, market also served as a means of interaction. As one needs the other for the fulfillment of its basic needs and vice versa, Gondarians remained unified through market in spite of the existence of some dividing forces. Markets maintained unity and the ever increasing tolerance between different religious groups were attested by elders during the interview.

In the process of building the city of Gondar, religion played a role in promoting the overall settlement pattern. However, with the growth of market-oriented lifestyle and the concurrent policy focus on redevelopment, the areas occupied by different religious groupings were replaced by profit making projects. Researchers studied the redevelopment scheme of Gondar city have signalled that the outcome of the study almost resembled the redevelopment scheme of Addis Ababa. For instance, Demelash, et al (2004), pointed out that the displacement and resettlement schemes of Addis Ababa failed considering the interest of displaced households. Also, Berhanu (2006) studied Casainchis in Addis Ababa, assessed the impacts of urban redevelopment on the livelihoods of displaced people. His major findings reflected that the current urban redevelopment schemes of the city did not address the needs and priorities of the urban poor; rather the development plans even impoverished and marginalized the affected communities by pushing them out of their former locations.

In most cases, changing residence creates a change in employment status because most old quarter residents use their home as a source of their income. Mejia (1999) discovered

that urban modernization of slum areas undermines site –bound employment opportunities by imposing negative effects on urban poor, the unemployed, underemployed and households headed by female. The study also indicated that resettlement sites are mainly located in urban fringe where restoration of employment, income, and social networks is difficult. In the case of Gondar, eight displaced individuals were interviewed and all respondents were full of anger due to the displacement they endure in the name of redevelopment. The process of resettlements caused the change in social bond and a high level of drop off social interactions. At new places, they have indicated that there is a decline in neighbourhood-based attachment. Berhanu (2006) highlighted that eviction and displacement are the greatest threat to most dwellers since that means an end to their former settlements, a loss of an interdependent community lifestyle. Therefore, the planned redevelopment should not lead to displacement and underdevelopment.

Conclusion

Gondar, being one of the most adorable historical cities in Ethiopia assigned various functional meanings to social spaces. The Gondarian principle of settlement, social arrangement, and communal activities are tied to its legendary status. The current activities of the dwellers are influenced by the glorious socio-cultural traditions of the past. Despite such grandiose achievements, the newly emerging urban developments, urban renewal, as well as the gentrification projects are enormously affecting the development of the city. The present renewal and development meant to solve scarcity of resources and urban unemployment. However, the "renewal" did not respond to any of the vital questions. Rather, it exacerbated the improper handling of the culture, tradition, and history of the city of Gondar. Moreover, the surviving material and non-material heritages as well as the cultures that have been contributing factor for the wellbeing of the society are eroded from time to time in the name of development. In spite of the fact that cultural change and social development are highly needed, they should never come at the expense of common social and cultural goods. No urban phenomenon should be accompanied by degrading the ever-existing social capital. Also, urban development must not be spearheaded by sprawling. Urban renewal must not be solely measured by economic developments that often come with unfair distribution. Such development may erode historical legacies, propagate slums, undermine social values - on which the Gondarians' pride. Thus, the Gondarians still believe that their revered city would become the sacred centre of spiritual and social wealth, requiring a constant nurturing.

Limitations

The basic goal of scholarly research is not to paint rosy pictures on topics under investigation but rather to demonstrate elements that require further explications. Although this qualitative study enjoys rich description of personal experiences, it may not be generalizable. The photographs taken by the participants may not be representative of the streets, neighbourhoods, and markets. Some of the pictures analyzed as data were fuzzy – needing other data to clarify them. Nevertheless, these shortcomings do not undermine the rigorousness of the analysis, the clarity of the data and thoroughness of the methods as well as the dependability of the literatures used. The colossal issues of Gondarian redevelopment immensely require further research.

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