The Impact of Large-Scale Development Projects on the Kumpal Agaw Minority

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Abstract

Ethiopia was hailed as one of the fast-growing countries from 2004 to 2015. Under the Growth and Transformation Plan I (GTP I), which ran from 2009/2010 to 2014/2015, the country launched a transformative development plan. Subsequently, many state-owned mega-projects were designed with the aim to improve the country's economy and improve peoples' lives. However, the livelihood of local communities that hosted these projects has been disrupted. The Kumpal of northwest Ethiopia are one of the minority groups that hosted large-scale development projects intervention, three sugar development projects under GTP I. The Kumpal have experienced disruption in their livelihood, without benefiting much from the employment opportunities created by the projects due to the lack of educated manpower qualifying for the positions. They also benefited less from compensations, both in cash and in land, for being displaced from their places of residence. The implementation of the projects was also incompatible to the host community's socio-cultural institutions and values. Despite favourable constitutional provisions for the right to development of disadvantaged ethnic communities and the state's obligation to support them, development planners have overlooked the effects of large-scale development sugar projects on the host Kumpal community. The article recommends similar future projects should consider socio-economic consequences on local communities. The sugar development projects, yet under construction after having been delayed due to corruption, should also work on re-strengthening the Kumpal livelihood and support the community to continue as a viable group.

Keywords: *development interventions, large-scale development projects, ethnic minorities, Kumpal*

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Introduction

The Ethiopian government, led by EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front), launched the first round of Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I)[176] for five years, from 2010/11 to 2014/15. GTP I aimed to enhance industrial growth, commercial agriculture, and infrastructure, with projected average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth between 11 and 15 percent. Subsequently, high annual growth rates were reported on the economy, according to MoFED (2015), an average economic growth of 10.9 percent between the years 2003/04 and 2013/14. UNDP-Ethiopia report of 2014 also confirmed the country's economy growth by 10.8 percent from 2003/2004 to 2012/2013 (UNDP Ethiopia 2015).[177]

The economic growth improved the image of the country,[178] increased optimism and opportunity, and may have reduced poverty.[179] However, for some, it resulted in marginalization, poverty, inequality and, in some cases, rise of violence. Large scale development projects, launched following GTP I, made and are making significant inroads into, 'peripheral' minority ethnic groups, having mostly an adverse impact on the people who had incompatible social, cultural and livelihood systems to the interventions.

The purpose of this article is thus to investigate the impact of large-scale development project interventions on peripheral minority groups

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176 Though the official document does not refer it as GTP I (rather just GTP), the author uses "GTP I" to differentiate it from the second round of GTP (GTP II), which has been launched for 2015/216 to 2019/2020. Both GTP documents can be accessed at http://www.*mofed*.gov.et.

177 After the end of the GTP I period, the government developed another growth roadmap known as the second growth and transformation plan (GTP II) (2015/2016-2019/2020).

178 Because of this remarkable economic growth, the country is hailed, among others, as "an awakening giant" (www.economicst.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21595949-if-africas-economies--are-take-africans-will-have-start-making-lot, accessed 12 August 2015); as a "bright spot in sub-Sahara Africa" (globalriskinsights.com/2015/Ethiopia-rising-bright-spot-in-sub-sahara-africa, accessed 03 March 2016); or as the "African lion" (www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/or/ethiopia-faster-rate-millioners-michael-buek, accessed on 04 March 2013).

179 Ethiopia poverty rate for 2015 was 90.20 percent, a 2.9 percent decline from 2010. Ethiopia poverty rate for 2010 was 93.10 percent, a 2.5 percent decline from 2004. See https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/ETH/ethiopia/poverty-rate#:~:text=Ethiopia%20poverty%20rate%20for%202015,a%201.2%25%20increase%20from%201995, accessed 08 September 2020.

in Ethiopia. Setting aside the benefits, as stated by the government, the article investigates the disruptive intervention of development projects on host communities. Focusing on the Kumpal people (also known as Kunfal, Kulsi, or Yeqolla Agaw), this article analyzes the impact of the construction of three large-scale sugar development projects, still in progress due to a delay by corruption, in Jawi *woreda* of Awi zone in Amhara region.[180] The article closely looks into the case of the Kumpal that shows disruption of the community's livelihood and loss of benefits from compensations for displacement, i.e. compensation-in-cash and land for land compensation. The article is the result of a series of fieldwork from 2010 to 2018 in Jawi *woreda*. By using a qualitative approach to data collection, formal and informal interviews were conducted with the Kumpal minorities as well as with Amhara residents in the area. Interviews were also made with local officials of Jawi *woreda*. As Persson (2015) states, the expropriation process lacks documentation and transparency so that important records were missing from the local authorities. This made the process hard to follow including lack of data on the exact figure of people expropriated. For this reason, I relied on oral sources for some discussions, which otherwise should have been supported by documentary evidences.

An Overview of Empirical Studies and Models

Large-scale development project interventions into peripheral communities of Ethiopia began during the Imperial Regime of Haile Sellassie I (1930−1974). In the 1950s, large irrigation schemes were launched in the Afar region (Said 1997; Ayele 1994; Gamaledin 1987; Kloos 1982; Bondestam 1974). In 1962, Koka Dam was constructed together with, by then, the first large commercial farm in the country (Rettberg 2010; Gamaledin 1987). In the 1970s, there were large-scale development interventions in places inhabited by the Karrayu as shown in the study by Ayalew (2001). Research on large-scale development interventions and local communities was, however,

180 A contract to execute TBSDP was initially awarded to Metals and Engineering Corporation (MetEC) in 2011. Following the coming to power of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2018, the Ethiopian Sugar Corporation cancelled the contract with MetEC citing problems of quality and delays in completing the project. In September 2019, the contract was newly awarded to a Chinese construction firm known as China CAMC Engineering Co. Ltd (CAMCE). The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2020 (see "Tana Beles Sugar Project Progressing Well: Board Members", Addis Ababa, January 25, 2020 (FBC). https://www.fanabc.com/english/tana-beles-sugar-project-progressing-well-board-members/

absent during the Derg regime (1974–1991); there seem to be no significant large-scale development endeavours during this time. The most important way of intervention into the community during the Derg was through resettlement programs. During this regime, however, there was a massive resettlement program from the food-scarce and environmentally degraded highland areas to peripheral lowlands where, according to the government, there was 'abundant' land (Gebre 2004; Wolde-Sellassie 2004; Desalegn 1988).

With the coming to power of EPRDF in 1991, there have been a growing number of development projects by the state and private investors. The GTP I, as indicated in the first section of this article, accelerated the presence of the state in the life of minority groups through large-scale development projects such as sugar plantations, agricultural farms, and hydroelectric dams. There are thus many researches that followed on this trend (Yonas and Mahmmud 2015; Abbink et.al. 2014; Desalegn 2014a; Desalegn 2014b; Gabbert 2014; Dereje 2013; Abbink 2011; Pankhurst and Piguet 2009). These studies show a mixed picture of how development projects promote change, negative or positive, in the host communities.

There are two broad models used to interpret the impact of large-scale development project interventions on local communities. The scudder model deals about displacement due to development interventions (Scudder and Colson 1982). It views success or failure of adjustment to displacement in the long-term, for two generations at least. The model was criticized for lacking contextual background to local communities and its long-term proposal to determine impact. The social and cultural domain of the community in concern is pertinent to analyze the impact of an intervention, which this model failed to put into consideration (Sharp and Spiegel 1985). This can be done through a social impact assessment, which according to IAIA (2003), "includes the process of analyzing, monitoring, and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programs, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions".

Cernia's impoverishment risk and reconstruction (IRR) model for resettling displaced populations is "the single most quoted source in the literature on development-forced displacement" (Abbink et.al. 2014:12). There are eight major impoverishment risks proposed by IRR. These are landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization,

food insecurity, loss of access to common property and services, increased morbidity and mortality, and social disarticulation. More risks can be observed depending on the unique features of a project. However, the needs of community participation, negotiated forms of compensation, and mechanisms of overcoming social risks through community institutions are not sufficiently elaborated in this model (Dwivedi 2002). The model does not also mention the duration to regain normalcy by displaced communities (Kassahun 2009).

Shying away from these models, this article shows outcomes of development intervention whereby the host Kumpal community has suffered from adverse effects due to lack of a proper undertaking of a social impact assessment or lack of interest or commitment to implement if there was any. Based on the experiences of the Kumpal, the article suggests how a genuine social impact assessment and commitment to implementation of recommendations from an assessment is an imperative step to lessen adverse effects of development interventions by the state or private investments in the Ethiopian development interventions practice.

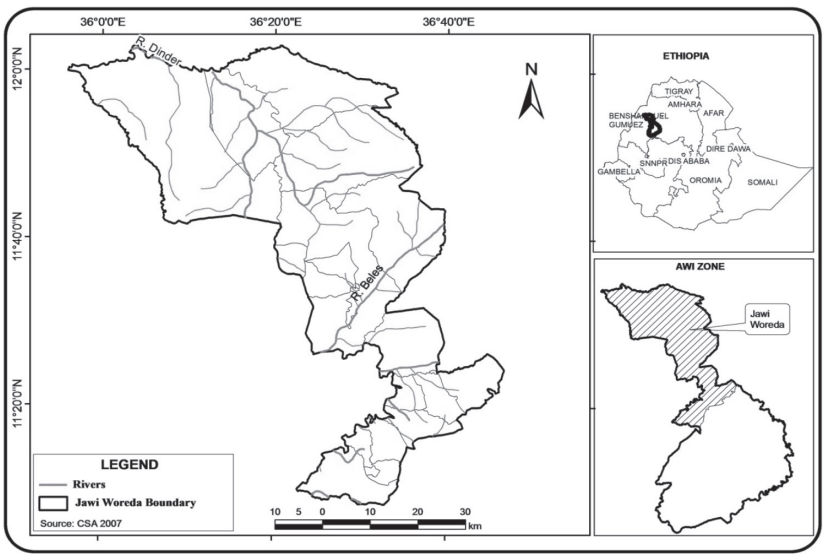
The Kumpal and their Encounter with Large-Scale Development Projects

The Agaw, an ethnic group that traditionally inhabited northern and central Ethiopia is known today by the names of the different sub-groups. The well-known sub-groups are Awi, Wag-Himra, Kemant, and Felasha (also called Bete-Israel). The Kumpal, one of the Agaw branches, is less known in academics compared to the other Agaw variants. One of the prior studies on the Kumpal was done by Cowley (1971) on the "Kunfal" language. There are more works since then, more recently Anthropological studies done by Desalegn (2014a; 2014b; 2016a; 2016b).

The Kumpal are officially considered as the Awi, and thus live in the Awi zone together with the titular group. The Kumpal identify themselves as the Agaw, but at the same time recognizing their different cultural peculiarities from the Awi such as language. Though many speak the Awngi dialect at present (a language commonly spoken by most Agaw titular groups), few elders speak the Kumpal language, distinct to that ethnic group.

Since 1995, when EPRDF created ethnic based administrative units, the Kumpal constituted a *kebele*, the smallest administrative unit of Ethiopia, under Dangila *woreda* of Awi zone in Amhara region. Later in 2006, the *kebele,* which the Kumpal inhabited, was promoted to the next level of administrative unit and was named Jawi *woreda*, within the Awi zone. Members of the Kumpal community are also found scattered across surrounding administrative areas of West Gojjam zone and North Gondar zones both of which are found in the Amhara region. A significant number of the Kumpal are also found in Dangur *woreda,* Metekel Zone of Benishangul Gumuz region (Desalegn 2014a). There is no official data that informs on the population of the Kumpal; they are not represented in all the population censuses. Based on local informants, Desalegn (2014a) estimated the number of Kumpal people to be about 10,000; 12.6 percent of the 79,090 population of the Jawi *woreda* (CSA 2007). The rest of the population of Jawi *woreda* is predominantly Amhara.

Jawi *woreda* falls between 1,025 and 1,225 meters above sea level (Jawi *woreda* Communications Office 2012), with an average temperature of 26^{o}c (Tesfaye 2007). It covers an area of 5,150 km^{2} (515,000 hectares) (Jawi *woreda* Communications Office 2012), half of the Awi zone. The area is fed by a significant number of rivers and streams (see the map below); the two major perennial basins being Abat Beles and Gilgel Beles (Girma 2010) with rivers such as Ayma, Senel Wuha, and Zengel. The area is located at the foothills of highlands in the north and northeast from where the rivers flow. The highlands are in general moist and rugged and the surrounding lowlands where the Kumpal live and into which the rivers flow, are mostly arid and flat. Because of its drainage, Jawi *woreda* has become an appealing place for development projects.



Map 1: location of the Kumpal and rivers in Jawi woreda (Desalegn 2020)[181]

The Kumpal are referred as indigenous to Jawi *Woreda*, while the Amhara are referred to as settlers, due to the self-initiated migration and state-sponsored resettlement of the Amhara in the area (Yohannes 2011; Tesfaye 2007). However, regardless of claims of or attribution to indigeneity, the Kumpal are increasingly inundated by highland migrants through state-sponsored resettlement programs and informal migration in search of land and labour work in newly opened development projects in the area (Desalegn 2014a).

Before 1991, because of lack of road infrastructure and insecurity problems, the Kumpal area had been less accessible. The area was a base for guerrilla fighters of the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party (EPRP) against the Derg regime. The area is best known by Ayalnesh, a female guerrilla EPRP commander. After the security problem improved, following the coming to power of EPRDF, the area became attractive for agricultural development with a suitable topography, drainage, and vast land. Major large scale development projects then began with the GTP I. As part of GTP I, the government intended to build, at the country level, ten sugar factories and upgrade the capacity of existing ones, in order to increase sugar production from

181 The Central Statistics Agency (CSA) of Ethiopia provided GIS data, collected in 2007, for this map while Bamlaku Amente, an expert in GIS at Addis Ababa University, assisted the author with mapping the data. The author is grateful to both CSA and Bamlaku Amente.

17,712,000 tons in 2009/2010 to 42,516,000 in 2014/2015 (Ethiopian Sugar Corporation 2014:4; MoFED 2010:17).

Jawi *woreda,* where the Kumpal reside, was chosen as one of the sites for these large-scale projects; three out of the ten sugar factories were to be constructed in this area under the project name Tana Beles Integrated Sugar Development Project (TBISDP). The water for irrigation of the sugar plantation is taken from the Beles River. Originally, TBISDP envisaged having a production capacity of 242,000 tons of sugar per year from each factory. The sugarcane plantation for these factories expropriated 75, 0000 hectares of land, mainly from Jawi *woreda* of the Amhara region, some extended to adjacent areas in Benishangul Gumuz region where the Kumpal reside (Sugar Corporation 2015:19). As a result, more than 2500 households, both Kumpal and Amhara, had been displaced from their land for this project (Persson 2015).

In addition to the government-owned TBISDP, a private owned sugar company, Hibir Sugar Share Company, also planned to invest in 25,000 hectares of land in Jawi *woreda* in 2010. The company had been allotted 6,183 hectares of land (Elias 2012) from which local inhabitants had already been displaced. The progress of the company is stalled at the moment.

Disruption of Livelihoods

Kumpal informants discuss, until recently, the high attachment of their livelihood to the surrounding environment. They relied on collection of honey, hunting, gathering, shifting cultivation, and animal husbandry all of which is highly connected to the natural environment in their surroundings. As to the wild beekeeping, while visiting the Kumpal area at the mid-twentieth century, Simoons (1960:44) witnessed that the Kumpal forest hosted several wild and semi-domesticated bees. Numerous cylindrical beehives were tied high in the branches of trees away from villages and the beehives were indications to the presence of a Kumpal village. Informants also confirmed that they could harvest wild honey at least three times a year. Simoons (1960:44) noted that honey was sold for merchants to generate cash, and the Kumpal used to pay tax in honey.

The Kumpal also relied on hunting wild animals for meat. Hunting was also a social practice among the Kumpal men. Those who killed game animals, especially lion, can assert their manliness and gain social honour as full men. The Kumpal also gathered various wild food sources. Informants mention several such sources collated from

the forest, including different species of root plants, bamboo shoots, and climbing or ground-creeping plants. In their system of shifting cultivation, using slash and burn mechanism, the people produce various crops such as maize, red millet, cotton, and peanut. Red millet is, in particular, the chief produce (Jawi *woreda* Communications Office 2012). The people consume red millet in different forms such as bread and *Anki*[182].

Cattle rearing was also a significant source of the Kumpal livelihood. The forest and vast land served as grazing ground for their animals. The Kumpal visit their herd, left in the forest, once in six-months or when they would find more calves added to their herd. When needed for meat, the animals were hunted down since they were partly wild. Before the development interventions that started in 2010, Jawi had already been strained by planned and unplanned resettlement since 2004 and the predicament on the environment and the livelihood of the people had been felt (Desalegn 2014a; Melisachew 2009). The introduction of the sugar development projects made the area a destination for youth labour migrants from the highland areas of Amhara region. This led to deforestation and a decline in the livelihood of the Kumpal as a result. An increase in the population led to clearing of the forest, to build houses and farm what the new comers consider as 'empty land'.

In addition to migration and informal land acquisition, development intervention also meant that the host community should lose land for sugar plantation. The Kumpal lived in sparse settlements nucleated around a common descent known as *Abala*. Informants mentioned seventeen *Abalas* for the entire Kumpal; every person in Kumpal claim membership to one of these *Abalas*. Each lineage traces territorial control over a particular area of land. These claimed lineage lands were however lost during development interventions; several villagers bequeathed their land for the projects. The Kumpal were no longer able to exercise control over a vast territory of land in their linage settlement. Many people who had large plots of land were given only

three hectares in replacement. What is more, they were gathered into crowded settlement villages compared to their previous scattered settlements.

Compensation to Displacement and Socio-Cultural Factors

In addition to the impact of the project on the livelihood of the Kumpal, the difference in values and beliefs from compensation practices also

182 *Anki* is the word the Kumpal use to refer to *Injera*, a flatbread made of *teff* flour, commonly used in most national dishes.

affected the host community. Below, the author will discuss five factors that affected the Kumpal uptake of entitlements to and opportunities from the development projects.

Belief in Cursing

According to oral traditions, the Kumpal were oppressed, among other several ways of oppression they narrate, through unfair taxes, sometimes paid in person (women). Once paid in tax, the Kumpal women were used for household labour and as a sex slave. As the oral tradition goes, once upon a time, certain rulers demanded the Kumpal ancestors to pay tax in young girls. However, the ancestors found this order harsh to comply with. In fear of punishment for their non-compliance, the ancestors fled from the area after taking their revenge on the tax collectors. After intoxicating them with alcoholic beverages, in a gathering organized by the ancestors, the Kumpal villagers beheaded the tax collectors and run away together. This started the act of solidarity among the Kumpal to leave no one behind during such times of exile and keep the community's secret. In their journey, however, the Kumpal got divided on how to cross a river they embarked on their way. While some spoke to the river to split into two and was able to cross as a result, others run away into the forest. The group that fled to the forest has since then be cursed for being a traitor to the solidarity. According to the belief, the Kumpal are now the generation of the cursed group. The curse that has passed on down through generations, they believe, has been the reason for their impoverished living condition, high level of illiteracy and subordination to outsiders who migrate to the area. While 'others' are making use of development projects in the area, the Kumpal have become more impoverished. This story of oppression and being cursed is interpreted into the everyday life; every failure in life is attributed to this curse.

Belief in the curse also had an implication on development project interventions. The Kumpal did not benefit from employment opportunities created by the projects; neither were they educated to make use of these opportunities. In 2018, there were only few members of the Kumpal who had completed high school, and very few, some informants counted about ten people, completed their degree. Even those who are considered successful in their education are attributed to have been born from Kumpal and Amhara parents (Desalegn 2016a). Due to the curse, the Kumpal also think that they are not fit for any

government positions. For this reason, they were not involved in the decision making of displacements or compensation due to the sugar development projects. This hid the problems that need consideration regarding the vulnerable Kumpal group. Besides, many informants implied, because of 'fear' of authorities, they did not make known their needs and problems in the process of displacement and compensation as will be discussed in the following section.

Lack of Assertiveness

Many informants perceived corruption in the course of deciding entitlements for compensation by officers. Kumpal informants perceive several Amhara households have bribed officers to get access to fertile land as well as to benefit from the compensation-in-cash. According to an informant:

> *There were rumors about some people getting attractive compensation. I know people who have bought trucks following compensations for displacement. People talk about them and say "they bribed officers so that they could make big money." After all, it is easy. If you treat someone in charge to a bottle of areqé (local liquor), he would become sympathetic to you (Anonymous, Fendeka town, May 2017).*

In addition to bribes, the ability to negotiate during the compensation process created advantage or disadvantage. According to Kumpal informants, non-Kumpal communities were better in actively negotiating with officers during the process of compensation. The following quotation of interview with an Amhara informant shows what negotiation meant:

> *The officers in charge of estimating the compensations came to our homestead and saw our mangoes, for example. They assigned certain value for each mango tree. For example, they would say, "1000 Birr is enough" for a grown-up mango tree. At this time, if you are not afraid, you would talk to them. You would say, "No, this mango deserves 7,000." Then you beg them. The officers may increase the value to 2,000 or 5,000 Birr. When they gave us replacement land as well, they would give some of us places which are unfertile, rocky, and hilly. Then you should say "no boss, I have this*

and this number of children. I cannot make living with this land. Please give me a better plot". The officers would refuse or they would give a better plot. If you were agreeable with some of the key persons there, you would take advantage. It depends on how you make your voice heard or how you negotiate (Mengist Gobeze, Alu Kurand kebele, April 2017).

On the contrary, the Kumpal were not good at negotiating during the process of compensation. As a result, many of them were given land unfavourable for farming. Some were even left without a replacement land. Interview with local *woreda* administration in 2014 showed that 300 Kumpal households were not compensated for their land. The local administrators claimed those households were to be compensated soon, and were left out by mistake. The Kumpal believed that since their community has no educated members, there was no one to support their cause. While generally they believe they shy away from engagement in the process, they also complain that they are not heard whenever they try to appeal their case to *woreda* officials. An informant stated:

But, our people do not have educated members. No one listens to us. Besides, the administrators do not listen to us. You see people working in the offices? We do not have our sons represented. Well, [so and so] went to the woreda office to appeal our cause; but they said they were not heard (Tagele Ambaw, Fendeka town, May 2015).

Residency after Marriage

According to the Kumpal culture, newly married couples stay with groom's family before they create their own house. While the duration may vary, the Kumpal man, after getting married, stays in his father's home until he gives birth to his first child. When the couples are ready to live on their own, the man makes home in his father's vicinity. This residence pattern had an effect on compensation-for-land. Many married couples who would soon make their own homes were not considered for compensation-for-land, since it was only given to already built houses and not for couples who are living with their parents.

This was a clear disadvantage compared to the non-Kumpal households. According to Kumpal informants, before displacement

for the sugar development projects, to get more compensation, the Amhara constructed several new houses. Compensation was then made based on the number of houses, which were considered as households. According to informants from both the Kumpal and Amhara neighbourhoods, many profited from the compensation. A Kumpal informant stated:

> *The Amhara migrated from elsewhere and created several new homes to receive compensation per household. During the registration for eligible households for compensation, they gave the name of their relatives, which even had not been living in Jawi. The officers first took all potential names for compensation. Later, they went around the neighbourhoods to check if the listed household names were eligible for compensation. The Amhara who had already created new homes temporarily put household items in the houses to show the officers when they came to check. When we come to our case [the Kumpal's], even those who were genuinely eligible did not get land because, according to our culture, couples create their new homes much after they stayed with the groom's family (Nigatu Wasse, Fendeka town, May 2018).*

Cultural Conception of Property

According to the federal government's Proclamation No. 455/2005, there are two forms of compensation made for expropriation of land for public purpose, depending on the type of property. These are compensation-in-cash and land-for-land compensation. The Kumpal believe that they lost the opportunity of compensation in cash because the plants they grow in their homesteads were not compensable.

The Amhara households mainly grow mango trees, which are important for food as well as for sell, especially in May and June. However, the Kumpal instead give more emphasis to culturally significant trees, such as the *Bamba* (*Ficus sychomorus*) and *Wombla* [for which the author could not find equivalent scientific name] trees that have a special place in their belief system.

The Kumpal believe these trees host sprits known as the *Tsahasivi*.[183] It is forbidden to cut or burn these trees, not to disturb the dwellings of the sprits (Desalegn 2016b). Upon displacement for development projects, however, the Kumpal did not receive compensation-in-cash for these trees unlike the mango trees, which are eligible for compensation under the state law. According to informants, the Amhara neighbourhoods received up to 10,000 *Birr* for a mango tree and could collect up to hundreds of thousands for many. However, since the Kumpal did not have mango trees, they lost the chance for such opportunity.

Escape Value

A saying goes in Kumpal "*aki yintihua div yintihwa*", which can be translated as "when people come, dispute comes". When the Kumpal feel they are under pressure from one or another factor of encroachment, such as state-sponsored or self-initiated resettlement and development interventions, they opt for passive retreat into less inhabited areas (Desalegn 2014a); they do not have the culture of resistance. Their tradition is guided by practices of migration.

Due to large scale acquisition of land by the project, a number of Kumpal were displaced, leaving them with small plot of land. This restricted their livelihood, which is mainly based on crop cultivation. While many people from the different parts of Amhara region are attracted by jobs in the project, the Kumpal voluntarily stay away from the project areas into places where they can find more land (Desalegn 2014b).

> *…Here, you see this house, and over there another house. They are deserted after being sold to Amhara neighbours. Our people do not like to live life this way: people gathered in villages without forest around and new faces added to the village through migration from elsewhere…This house… you see… the Amhara bought it in a cheap price from our man [Kumpal man]. Our people, if you give them small money, they just give a plot of land or house, use the money to drink alcohol in the town and run away to more desert areas. There is a place called Awujemis in*

183 *Tsahasivi* is an ancestral sprit the Kumpal believes in. It dwells in some tree species such as the *Bamba* and *Wombla*. If not properly worshipped, the spirits bring loss, i.e. health problems, loss of human life or property.

> *Benishangul Gumuz [next to Jawi woreda]. Awujamis is a very hot place where many people do not reside. But, our people prefer to live alone even in that harsh place. In my family, for example, I am the only one still living here. Maybe I will also go one day. One of my brothers went to Awujemis. Another went to Quara to live with our relatives there (Tagele Ambaw, Fendeka town, May 2015).*

The Kumpal associate their escape value to historical events as well. They believe that they have been victims of oppression throughout history since the power transfer from Zagwe Dynasty to Solomonic. When Yikuno Amlak took power in 1270, the Kumpal believe their fate of being persecuted began. As a result, they were forced to flee into the area today known as Gondar. From there, they also were further moved to Jawi and parts of Benishangul Gumuz region. An informant described:

> *There is an oral tradition that says our ancestors first lived in Sekota. As they were continuously pushed from one direction, they moved away from Sekota to Tiklil Dingay then to Gondar then to Quara and then now we live in Jawi and there are some people who say our people even live in the far south, gone after having escaped a certain persecution. While our people move away because they are forced, it seems it has also become our culture. As we are inundated by more and more people, we move away to areas sparsely settled (Tagele Ambaw, Fendeka town, May 2015).*

Legal Framework

The 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, under Article 43, provides the right to the development of all Ethiopians. Sub article 1 in particular states "the Peoples of Ethiopia as a whole, and each Nation, Nationality, and People in Ethiopia, in particular, have the right to improved living standards and sustainable development". All other sub-articles in this article also clearly stipulate the right to the development of people as a group. Moreover, Article 89(4) of the Constitution clearly indicates the state is under a duty to empower disadvantaged communities. In the expansion of development projects, the Council of Ministers Regulations No. 135/2007 stipulates compensation to be paid during displacements and restoration of livelihoods.

The state argues development projects are to the benefit of local communities and the country at large. Sugar development projects in Jawi, according to the government, benefited the community who were disadvantaged in previous regimes. They argued compensation was made duly as per the law, even if there were some irregularities. Government officials further argued the Kumpal has been given special privilege for being the host community. Local government officials claimed they gave priority to the Kumpal to work in the projects as labourers. Moreover, training was given to the local Kumpal youth to equip them with technical skills, which would enable them secure employment in the projects. In 2013, for example, five Kumpal youth were trained and employed as dozer operators in the TBISDP. The Kumpal were also given preference to fill posts as security guards at the project sites. With lack of qualified manpower from Jawi, however, officials recruited labour from other *woredas* in Awi zone. From each *woreda* of Awi zone, job seekers were recruited and organized into small and micro enterprises in different fields required for the project.

State intervention into the Kumpal is, nonetheless, interpreted differently by the people. According to the people, the projects are considered as disruption of the pre-existing livelihood and socio-cultural system, leaving the community without viable alternatives. Persson (2015), who also studied the process of land expropriation law and practice in Ethiopia by focusing on the TBISDP in the Amhara region, also concluded that there is a significant discrepancy between the requirements in the legislations and the practice. According to the study, and the findings shown above in this article, the affected people are to a large extent dissatisfied with the expropriation process and the amount of compensation received for lost property.

Conclusion

Development projects are not placed only on physical spaces; they are also placed in communities that have complex socio-cultural setting. The findings of this article presented the impact of sugar development projects on the Kumpal and the socio-cultural factors that affected the reception of the projects. The Kumpal are disadvantaged minorities due to their perception of past sufferings, current inequalities, and their world view of cursing. They are minorities that do not have the power to resist developmental schemes impacting their lives. The Kumpal example maybe an indicative of similar trends observed in different

parts of Ethiopia where there are sugar development projects. Similar issues are raised in South Omo area where five sugar development projects exist.

Host communities should have the right to benefit from development projects and determine the continuity of their culture and identity as well as social and economic development. Minorities should not be deprived of earning benefits and suffer from various development interventions. Development planners should make, thus, a pre-emptive analysis to understand and mitigate the impact of projects on host communities. The social impact assessment principles should not be simply used for lip service. It needs to be properly conducted and implemented. Even if favourable provisions exist in the constitution towards equitable development of all nations, nationalities, and peoples, existing law should be further scrutinized to set up a proper and enabling legal framework to properly treat the local minority in the context of large-scale development projects. In the case of the Kumpal, the project implementers should discharge their social responsibility by investing in education, awareness raising against their sense of victimhood, and restore and strengthen their livelihood.

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