



Public Spaces in Ethiopia



**The Use and the Meaning of Open
Urban Spaces in Northern Ethiopia.
What are the Differences Between
Planned and Organic Cities?**

Master Thesis

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Abstract

Public space is a complex socio-spatial structure, lying at the centre of social, political and cultural life. It reflects the society and its values, as well as it is a key for livable and inclusive cities. Especially it becomes important in the rapidly changing environments, where new spatial structures are emerging in the extreme pace. These new spatial structures are replacing old ones, destroying existing social-spatial relations and erasing so important heritage - a valuable source of knowledge, what arrangements people create in build up environments.

In countries as Ethiopia, where urbanization rates are phenomenal, yet there is a lack of resources to provide basic needs, the context-based knowledge becomes more than important. Due to these problems, high pressure from society and the global world, solutions often are lacking understanding of context, thus are not reaching their full potential.

This thesis seeks to analyse daily practice in public spaces, aiming to identify what spatial units exist and what is the social, cultural background of such formation. Moreover, it aims to identify, are there any differences between use and meaning in open public spaces in planned and organically emerged towns. The comparative analysis of 15 open public spaces, from 3 different emerging towns located in Northern Ethiopia, identifies the existing traditional typologies of open spaces. First, this study analyses the political and cultural factors, which have shaped society and then examines the daily behaviour patterns occurring in public spaces. Secondly, by comparing morphological and social characteristics distinguish existing spatial typologies, aiming to get a glimpse if and how public spaces differ in planned and organically grown towns.



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List of Abbreviations

- BIUD** - Bureau of Industrial and Urban Development
- EiABC** - Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development
- EOC** – Ethiopian Orthodox Church
- InfAR** - Informatik in Architektur und Raumplanung at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar
- NUPI** - National Urban Planning Institute
- RUPI** - The Regional Urban Planning Institute

Vocabulary of Local Terms

- Idir** - community organizations providing financial help to families for emergencies, such as funerals.
- Kebele** – the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia, equivalent to the neighbourhood or the ward.
- Ketema** - a town or a city.
- Sefer** - neighborhood.
- Tella** - traditional beer from Ethiopia.
- Woreda** – the administrative unit in Ethiopia equivalent to the district.

Statutory Declaration

I hereby affirm that the Master thesis at hand is my own written work and that I have used no other sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages, which are quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources, are indicated as such, i.e. cited, attributed.

This thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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Place, Date

Signature (First name and Surname)



1. figure Gashena. Common street life.

1

Introduction

This chapter provides a short introduction to the research background and its problem, as well as it defines the posed research questions.

02 Background & Justification	05 Research Questions	06 Thesis Outline
04 Research Problem & Knowledge Gaps	06 Research Aim	



2. figure Local woman in the church forest. Source: National Geographics. Photograph by Kieran Dodds.

Background & Justification

Ethiopia is among the top countries facing extremely rapid urbanization levels.¹ Rapid urbanization is a cause for both, new opportunities as well as new challenges. As a developing country, it faces many intricate growth and transformation processes, which crucially affects the existing fabric of the country. As more and more people migrate from rural to urban areas, spatial structures of cities and towns are going through the intense densification or/and sprawl processes. Due to the lack of the appropriate management as well as lack of resources securing basic needs (housing, water and electricity supply) or old and new urban settlers, land use in the cities and towns are being shifted in the enormous pace and extent.

Open urban spaces are being modified into the infrastructure or buildings, increasing the urban land coverage rates, but but eliminating components from urban fabric. As the extensive urbanization takes place, open public spaces play a crucial role in developing a sustainable (in the term's broadest sense), inclusive and competitive cities. "Urbanization is both a threat and an opportunity for the creation, protection and management of urban public spaces. In times of urbanization, the existence of public space depends on our ability to see its value."² The main issue is that values of open public sapce creation, management and planning is not understood as a long-term investment to a future's prosperity. The significance and the capacity of open public spaces are not yet fully recognized, nor it is seen as an important element in the functioning urban system.

In recent years, it is observed a remarkable increase in a shift how cities and their governments started to manage and understand public spaces. More attention is drawn to consider urban open spaces as an important tool, an element improving mobility, access to the basic services, to stimulate economic activities and inclusiveness or to preserve historic, cultural assets.³ However, what is crucial is to understand that open public spaces are a collective good, a symbol of the societies well-being, enabling the overall growth of cities. They define culture, society, economical as well as political features of the city. However, in the many developing countries, such as Ethiopia, these spatial elements are not fully recognized and are rather seen as a commodity to trade for an economic profit. Especially, high pressure from housing provision sector and private stakeholders, as well as a lack of political will and short-sightedness, constrains public spaces development, neglecting their significance in the long-term perspective.

The role of public space is universal and intricate, its characteristics vary according

1 World Bank Group, 2018.

2 UN-HABITAT, 2015, p.1.

3 UN-HABITAT, 2015.

to the certain region.⁴ Especially it is visible in the “informally grown cities”, where cities are built more by the society throughout many generations and without any appropriate planning control. Such environments are characterized based on the direct needs and demands of the local residents, creating a need for new definitions for such spatial structures. New emerging cities and new expansion plans cannot offer suitable solutions unless the authorities will look at the traditional, established principles of the living. Many international organizations coping with the global urban development issues “has actively promoted public space as an important component for prosperity in cities.” stating that “prosperous cities are those that recognize the relevance of public spaces with proper layouts, and that allocate sufficient land to street development”.⁵ Ignoring such knowledge is a questionable practice, leading the future development projects to fail. Consequently, it constrains the planning process, making hard to create and manage new settlements, which are attractive to live, prosperous and sustainable. Therefore, a closer look at the traditions, how people use and perceive open public spaces they live at, is more than a necessity.

Nowadays, the focus on informal settlements is undoubtedly increasing. The professional community and governments are starting to admit the necessity to have a closer look at such structures as a valuable information source. However, most of the time attention is paid on the housing or infrastructure situation, which are undoubtedly the essential elements. The shortage of housing, difficult living conditions, lack of basic services are tremendous problems. Nevertheless, the spatial arrangements should be definitely taken into considerations more seriously. Especially the ground level spatial relations, the common and public spaces. Such places play a huge role in the residents’ life since most of the daily life activities and social interactions are held outside the houses. It provides a platform for local men and woman to socialize, discuss the occurring matters, to do daily chores and spaces to play. In the time, when vertical developments are seen as a solution for future cities, it becomes even more important to seek for understanding about the nature of the open public spaces, the nature of socio-spatial relationships and local traditions, shaping the uses and the meanings of those spaces. And more importantly to understand the contexts in order to be able to respond to the needs of society. Only by understanding how people live and how they use the spaces they live at, allows to react to the occurring challenges by offering appropriate solutions. Moreover, to build more resilient, inclusive cities, which are able to cope with the issues and are contributing to the global wealth.

4 UN-Habitat, 2016.
5 Clos, in UN-HABITAT, 2015, p. V.

Research Problem & Knowledge Gaps

“The city, therefore, must be tailor-made to its inhabitants if it is to experience growth, success and prosperity. It is critical that an analysis is undertaken in order to understand how the community is using the public space.”⁶ The link between the built environment and society is obvious, as well as the idea, that each society appropriates its urban settlements and urban spaces to their own values and needs. And yet, there is so less information and so less contribution towards a better understanding of why certain spatial constructions occur in certain regions and what preferences each society has. The spaces in the urban context is a social construction, build and reshaped by society. Therefore, public spaces are the social product, reflecting the everyday traditions and of course the society itself. Build-up environment is directly created by many generations and interlinked with the everyday uses. Especially it is visible in the developing countries, where informality is prevailing, and so prominent.

The definition of public spaces varies from the context to context, indicating its very complex nature. Especially in African cities the concept and definition are extremely intricate. Therefore, it requires a better, more profound understanding, adjusted to each certain context and its inhabitants. Levin (1968, 108) writes that recent researchers deal “with problems in the city rather than of the city”⁷. Harvey (1973 22-23) later, based on this idea, argues that “Any general theory of the city must somehow relate the social process in the city to the spatial form which the city assumes.”⁸ As Harvey goes on later, “our problems can also be attributed to our failure to conceptualize the situation correctly. If our concepts are inadequate or inconsistent, we cannot hope to identify problems and formulate appropriate policy solutions.”⁹ He point out that researchers of the urban realm and sociologist rather focus on the existing, presumed problems and concepts, what confined further process for progression. This locality component, or more comprehensive understanding of the society and the build-up environment itself as Harvey and Levin were talking, is the undoubted key-value missing in the nowadays planning practices, especially in the fast-growing environments, which requires fast, efficient solutions with least input and resources. In many developing countries, governments and planners rather focus on the settlement improvement projects. As a result, such projects are often lacking a deeper understanding of settlement nature and usually offer alien solutions, which are not suitable nor acceptable for the societies living there. The housing and infrastructure provision or improvement certainly are essential and have a lot to offer. However, the environment constructed by many generations and traditions, the heritage should get an appropriate attention as a significant component contributing in offering

6 UN-HABITAT, 2015.
7 Levin (1968, p. 108) in Harvey, 1988, 1999.
8 Harvey, 1988, 1999, pp. 22–23.
9 ibid.

more resilient, eligible solutions to improve infrastructure and housing issues. What was observed, that even such studies aim to look deeper into the build-up environment, aiming to understand its nature and structure better, often they exclusively focus on the bigger urban settlements. In the case of Ethiopia, most of the studies are conducted in Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar or Gondar cities, neglecting the rest of the country. Therefore, a choice to investigate smaller, emerging urban settlements was made not by a chance. The small town in Northern Ethiopia, with a population size varying between 10 000 – 50 000 inhabitants constitutes to relatively big part of the urban settlements in the country and especially in Amhara region. Small urban centres are the fastest-growing urban structures in the country, yet the most forsaken ones. Especially in terms of open public spaces, there is rarely any investigations conducted in the area. Consequently, this study concentrates on the socio-spatial structures in the small size cities in Amhara region.

Research Questions

The researched problem discussed above indicates the need for a better understanding of open urban spaces, which are formed and transformed by many generations as well as a formal planning work and to see how such practices are interrelated. Moreover, the existing knowledge gap requires to look at the existing typologies, morphologies and uses of open public spaces and investigate how they differ from the planned and unplanned urban settlements. Due to the socio-cultural and historical factors involved in the research, it has a rather complex nature, therefore it is important to have a consistent approach of the topic. Therefore, the topic is deconstructed into smaller sections, so it helps to reveal the essence of separate study parts. As a result, research questions are formulated in the way, that it targets the separate topic, build a more solid base for a further finding. Hence, the main research questions are as following:

- What are the political, cultural factors which have shaped Ethiopia's society, therefore influenced the urban environment?
- How traditional socio-cultural values have influenced the use of open public spaces?
- What are the everyday uses of open public spaces and what significance do they have in everyday life, as well as how does it diverge between communities living in the formally planned and organically grown cities?
- What are the patterns of open public spaces in smaller cities and what typologies of public spaces can be traced in both planned and informal urban settlements?
- What peculiarities of the spatial configuration of open public spaces exist in both, planned and organically grown cities?

Research Aim & Objectives

The aim of this research is to analyse the existing typologies and means of uses of open public spaces in the towns located in Northern Ethiopia Region looking at the different urban settlements. By doing this, the aim is to research the linkages between the behaviour of the society and build-up environment: political, social factors shaped the perception towards build-up environment use and to attempt to determine the existing typologies. Furthermore, to seek to identify whether or not there are differences in how spaces are used and what typologies exist in the formally planned towns and organically grown (a.k.a. self-developed) urban settlement. This is done by comparing spatial structures. The specific objectives and aims of the study are to explore and analyse:

- the socio-cultural values, which are related to build-up environment and has a significant impact on the form and the function;
- the urban fabric in planned and organically developed cities, looking at the use, significance and morphology of open public spaces;
- to compare the findings, classifying found spaces into typologies, aiming to see what differences exist between different spatial layout cities;
- to discuss the conclusions aiming to facilitate the better integration of traditional perception and values into present urban planning practice;
- to contribute to the ongoing urban developing phenomenon by complementing the general knowledge about the Northern Ethiopian region;

Thesis Outline

The thesis research is organized into five parts. The first part provides the introduction to the topic, research aim and the short introduction of the study context. It covers the background of the research problem and the knowledge gap. Main research objectives and questions are also specified in this part.

In part two the important literature is reviewed to provide more comprehensive knowledge about the subjects and to define the main key concepts. The theoretical analysis looks over the historical urban development in Ethiopia, the present situation as well as provides a short overview of the land hold system in Ethiopia. Moreover, the reviewed literature aims to define public open spaces, as well as to look at the theory of space production, building a more solid argument, that public spaces are a social-spatial construction also, the concept of planned and informal settlements is analyzed here along with other important key concepts.

Part three is dedicated to describing the followed methodology: research strategy, data collection and analysis methods. The process of location selection is outlined here.

Chapter four discuss the analysis of the study. The information obtained during the study cases analysis of public spaces in planned and organic towns is characterized and discussed in this part. First of all, it provides an introduction to the study cases – three cities which were examined. Then later, this chapter provides the classification of open spaces, creating typologies based on the collected data. More importantly, this research aims to analyze the occurring differences and similarities between spatial structures in planned and unplanned urban settlements in Northern Ethiopia. The results are presented in maps, diagrams, radial charts, tables and photo fixations.

The last, fifth chapter provides general conclusions and findings. It gives a summary of achieved results. It also highlights the limitations, faced during the research and recommendations for further research.



3. figure (above) Gashena. Street spaces inhibits many daily activities. It is often the main, central spaces for daily interactions.

4. figure (on the right) Empty market field in Gashena.



5. figure North Wollo area. Emerging urban settlement



2

Theoretical Background

This part of the thesis provides main definitions used in this study, as well as it aims to explain theoretical concepts and analyze the important literature sources, seeking to build a more solid theoretical knowledge base for the further research.

11 Key Concepts	21 Land-hold System in Ethiopia	26 Public Spaces in the African Context
14 Urbanization in the Historical Context	23 Institutions	27 Production of Public Space
18 Small Size Cities	25 Public Space & Society	29 Planned & Unplanned Urban Settlements
20 Present Urban Planning in Ethiopia	25 Definition of Public Spaces	

Key Concepts

In this chapter key concepts, relevant for the study will be explained and defined. It is a crucial step to define the terminology used in the study, as words can be used or understood in a different meaning. The success of the study lies between how well one can conceptualize and the reader to understand, used concepts.

Concept ¹⁰

1: an abstract or generic idea generalized from particular instances.

Theory ¹¹

- 1: a plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle or body of principles offered to explain phenomena
- 2: a belief, policy, or procedure proposed or followed as the basis of action
- 3: an ideal or hypothetical set of facts, principles, or circumstances —often used in the phrase in theory

Concepts are defined as generalized reality about the object(s) or phenomenon. It is a construct to explain a specific phenomenon. It describes a physical or non-physical reality. It helps to explain an empirical matter by abstracting the occurring features. Meanwhile, the theory is a set of connected concept systems aiming to explain the phenomenon or a behaviour pattern in a certain setting. For example, Liehr and Smith (1999) define theory as „a set of interrelated concepts, which structure a systematic view of phenomena for the purpose of explaining or predicting. A theory is like a blueprint, a guide for modelling a structure. A blueprint depicts the elements of a structure and the relation of each element to the other, just as a theory depicts the concepts, which compose it and the relation of concepts with each other “. ¹² Adam Morton (1980) argued that our everyday perception of environment and happenings can be explained as the theory of attempt to predict and explain behaviour throughout our beliefs, intentions and character features. To put it differently, we aim to characterize and define everyday experiences as concepts which are based on our background information and then create theories to predict future occupancies. In this study, the formulated concepts seeks to explain the theory, that Ethiopian society has appropriated their urban spaces based on the cultural influences. Furthermore, it aims to investigate an idea about the differences between planned and unplanned urban settlements.

10 Merriam-Webster Dictionary.
11 ibid
12 Liehr & Smith, 1999, pp. 81–91.

Routine

- 1: a sequence of actions regularly followed;
- 2: habitual or mechanical performance of an established procedure.

Routines are the everyday actions, repeated over a time, forming a certain behavioral pattern. It is a basic element of the every days activities and encounters. Daily routines, are the indicators of the lifestyle, certain society has established. Human activities, their daily practices and daily uses are the keys, building social life, which is coherent with the practice, how we build and appropriate spaces, we live in. Moreover, investigating daily practices, allows to identify what is important and what is needed. In terms of the build environment, it is an important tool, revealing what are the needs and preference each social group, shaped by different external factors as politics, economic and culture has. Since this study dealing with the human behaviour and build up environment, the concept of everyday routines becomes crucial.

Spatial Organization

In the context of urban planning and this study, the spatial organization is the way how human beings arrange themselves in the environments they live in. The term refers to a collection of aspects such as spatial hierarchy, distribution spatial relationships. “In a border sense, the physical characteristics of settlement is shaped mainly by the socio-cultural and political relationship dominating the area.”¹³ It is a dialogue between the society itself and the institutions to generate the build-up environment. Especially it is well illustrated well in the developing countries, where informal sector, informal or ‘spontaneous’ development plays a crucial role. ¹⁴

Appropriation

- 1: an act or instance of appropriating something

The book “Urban Appropriation Strategies” ¹⁵ explains the definition of appropriation as “the assignment of anything to a special purpose (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017). In this study, space appropriation is seen as an act of society claiming certain urban open spaces in both conscious and unconscious ways. Therefore, here the process of space appropriation can be understood as a projection of social space and social structure onto the physical space. According to Harvey (1988) “Each form of social activity defines its space”, he explains that “the shaping of space which goes on in architecture and, therefore, in the city is symbolic of our culture, symbolic of the existing social order, symbolic of our aspirations, our needs, and our fears.” ¹⁶

13 Gebregiorgis, 2011, p. 42.
14 Denise, Lawrence, Setha, 1990.
15 Mameli, Polleter, Rosengren, & Sarkez-Knudsen, 2018.
16 Harvey, 1988, 1999, pp. 30–31.

In other words, the physical space as we see it reflects the structure and patterns of certain society is inhabited by. Its traditions, hierarchy and values. The process of appropriation itself is a complex process, combining both informal, unconscious claiming with intentional acts of society and organizations itself (governments and religion). It would be inappropriate and unenforceable to separate such influences as they are closely interlinked between. The most important, the act of space appropriation, its ways and products reflects values of that society. Moreover, by analyzing and trying to understand the way how society adapts the built environment, it can reveal, what are the existing needs and appropriate settings.

Certain behaviour in open public spaces, appropriating it to the community's needs, creates evocative signs. This is a process when the definition of space is shifted, and it becomes a place. These evocative signs generate a common sense of the place, internalizing behaviour and meaning, as well as making a generic sense, which is recognized by a community. This is an important aspect of this study. Observing human behaviour and spaces itself, how to build environment has been appropriated throughout many generations can reveal, what are the actual needs and sense for a certain physical setting.

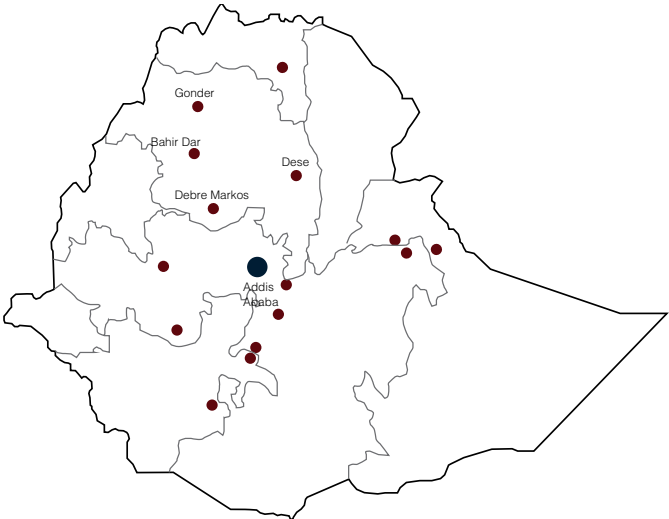
Typology

- 1: A classification according to general type, especially in archaeology, psychology, or the social sciences.
- 2: Study or analysis using a classification according to a general type.

Typology is a classification of certain characteristics based on the pre-defined specifications. However, it is important to mention, that such process can be done in either way: clustering data into pre-defined groups or by grouping items where groups are pre-defined by looking at similarities. In this study, it is important not to dictate the findings, but rather to define existing features without preconceptions.

The typological classification provides a method to describe complex organizations and phenomena throughout analyzing and classifying similarities between different elements. Moreover, it helps to reveal the differences between different types. In the sense of urban setting, urban typologies can be defined as a systematic way to define existing urban fabric elements and their types. The development of urban typologies ease the analysis of existing forms by providing a piece of knowledge, what already exist and how it is characterized, therefore helps to see what elements or features are missing. The collection of types, abstractions of the elements and the concept, characterized by specific features, constitutes typologies. If one would see urban design or planning as a language, urban typologies could be named as a vocabulary, providing the understanding of each element, its qualities, characteristics, morphological relations. The advantage of the typologies is that it not only can define a case but can be adapted to other settings, which share similar characteristics.

Urbanization in the Historical Context



6. figure Current map of Ethiopia. Main urban centers

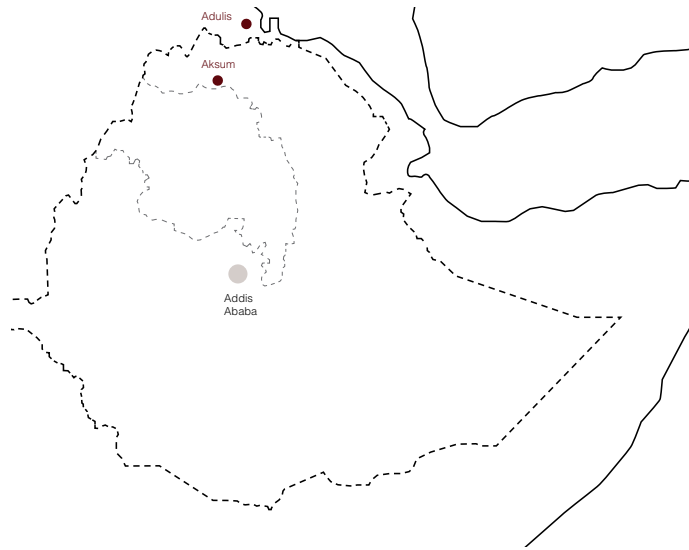
This section provides an introduction to the historical background of Ethiopia. It is necessary to look at past development on purpose to understand present processes. This discussion shows what main urban planning objectives have been formed during the historical development. Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in Africa, and by some described as “the Hidden Empire”.¹⁷ Such perception could have been

formed due to the reason, that beside five years of Italian occupation before the inter-war period, the country was never colonized. Italian invasion in 1935 triggered faster urbanization levels and a shift in slow agrarian culture decline. It is a second-most populous country in Africa, with a population size of 110 million and 2.5% yearly growth rate.¹⁸ Most of the Ethiopian society, even 80% still lives in rural areas, indicating that most of society is highly agrarian. Nevertheless, the urbanization in the country has been rapidly increasing and tripled since the last 30 years, from about 4.5 million in 1984 to about 16.7 million in 2014.¹⁹ With an annual growth rate of the urban population reaching 4.5%, Ethiopia is among the fastest Africa’s urbanizing countries which itself is between the world’s fastest urbanizing regions.²⁰ As many cities and towns in Ethiopia have developed spontaneously and autonomously, without any guided management and plan, cities continue to face many development and management challenges.

Despite the low urbanization level (but rapid growth) and sporadic growth, the tradition of urban development in Ethiopia is long-standing. The first rudiment of urban development can be traced in the Aksumite Kingdom. City of Axum, located in present-day Tigre province, and Eritrea was a core of this state. A wealthy trading empire existed from the first century till the end of Millennium.²¹ The thriving ancient city-state was based on

17 Adejumobi, 2006.
18 Worldometers, 2019
19 CSA, 2013.
20 CSA, 2012.
21 Windmuller-Luna, 2015.

trading with Arabs and other African nations. During the Aksumite Empire era, urbanization level was relatively high. It is known that there existed different level urban settlements: villages, towns and cities. Villages and towns were mainly residential areas, varying in the population and coverage area size. Most important and well-known urban centres at that time were Adulis, Yeha and Aksum. Adulis city was the main port city, therefore served as a main cultural, economic hub, whereas Yeha and Aksum served as political, ceremonial hubs in the



7. figure Map shows location of Aksum city and boundaries of the modern Ethiopia.

Axum Kingdom. The functions of the city mainly shaped their fabrics. The empire developed cities distinguished by monumental architecture, lack of fortification structures.²² According to Munro-Hay's (1991)²³ archaeological observations, cities had these main features:

- Residential Areas – palace structures encircled by residential zones;
- Open public spaces – open squares and market areas in the city centre;
- Religious areas, commentaries - characterized by large monuments;

Solomonic Dynasty, consolidated around the 13th century, marks another very important urban development phase in Ethiopian history, when Amhara region and its people become the main dominant ethnic group. 17th century, the time during the emperor Fasiladas (1632-1667) ruling, representing a significant transition in urban development as Ethiopian monarchy shifted away from the nomadic lifestyle and become more settled and fixed. This transition marks the rise of Gondar city, which soon became as one of the most important urban, political and cultural centres. However, the period between 18th - 19th centuries is known for a political crisis causing the political decentralization. Such process brought changes in power from monarchy towards feudal, strengthening the supremacy of the local lords. The role of the emperors during the 19th century became more as “the puppet” than rather holding actual power. The empire was disintegrated into many smaller territories ruled by a local feudal becoming into a highly divided political entity.²⁴ Consequently, political power decentralization (a nomadic lifestyle) and the rise of feudal power caused the urban decentralization, creating a raise of many smaller and medium-sized towns and cities. Moreover, the constant state of war, lack of peace and frequently changing headquarters resulted in the very weak, limited urbanization process. In this

22 Windmuller-Luna, 2015.

23 Munro-Hay, 1991.

24 Adejumobi, 2006.

time the main components of urban settlements were palaces, markets and churches.²⁵

The foundation of Addis Ababa in 1886, marks the origins of modern urban planning in Ethiopia. The city was established by king Menelik II as an agglomeration of many villages and refugee campus (sefers).²⁶ King Menelik II (1889 – 1913) have had established a number of smaller urban settlements, with Addis Ababa being by far the most important one. The land use of Addis Ababa was shaped by empress Taytu, first based on the other towns emerged during the wartime and second with an aim to establish a new political, cultural, economic centre. Up until this time, the fabric of the city remains reflecting its original settlement pattern.

After Addis Ababa become a more centralized, political and administrative centre, the urbanization process was mainly concentrated around this area. The development of communication and infrastructure lines, as well as industrialization, brought up some changes in the urban areas. Especially a new railway line Addis-Dijabouti caused a formation of several small towns along with it and around the stations. However, large-scale urbanization accelerated only after the Italian occupation in 1941, when modernization of taxes and land reforms increased an urbanization rate.²⁷ Nevertheless, the period during Menelik II ruling, is marking an important point of the modern era of urbanization due to the administrative reforms he established. Spatial administration system for the first time was reorganized and separated from the rest government, limiting the power of local lords, who hold the power over public land administration. As a consequence of the governmental administration reform, Ethiopia was divided into six local governments in each region, where each had four levels of provincial administration. The modernization of the governmental system and introduction of the bureaucratic apparatus created a clear hierarchy of urban centres, defining the functional roles and clear differentiation of cities and towns. The process played a crucial role in the overall urbanization process in the pre-Italian period.

Basically, the urbanization during 16th – 19th centuries (the main development period) happened in Northern Ethiopia region and Eritrea, but to avoid any confusion cities in Eritrea are excluded from this study. The main urban centres of Ethiopia at that time were founded in Tigray region, Wollo, Gojuam zones - these areas are having one of the longest urban traditions (the case studies are located in these zones). Cities and towns in Tigray are marking the important urbanization pattern in Ethiopia. Urban settlements here were developed based on production and administration functions; the production of a certain good was the main trigger for urban growth and a rise of a these settlements. Urban centres in Gondar and Wollo had an appearance of military camps. The most important feature of these settlements were international routes going through the towns and cities. The third group of the cities is found in Gojjam area. The main character of these urban settlements were markets and churches. These components are recognized as main elements in smaller cities up to this date. Towns here served as an asylum for

25 Gebregiorgis, 2011, pp. 12–16.

26 Heisel & Kifle, 2016.

27 UN-HABITAT, 1996, p. 3.

refugees and nomands.²⁸ However, all three groups of urban centres had very similar urban layouts and did not had substantial differences and rather reflects the main urban distribution area. Mainly towns and cities were established or expanded due to the political, ceremonial reasons and around areas which were sufficient to support the local economy. Some scholars argue that urban growth is rather linked with a political decision where to settle rather than economy, overlooking the fact, that such centres were always around the area which could support the local economy. However, the growth of urban centres during this period is limited mainly not because cities were established based on politics rather than trading but due to the political instability itself. In general, urbanization in Ethiopia can be divided into three periods: the pre-Italian period, Italian period (1935-1941) and post-Italian period.²⁹ This historical, political aspect is directly reflected in the urban fabric. The prevailing political system has influences the distribution pattern of the cities as well as the main purpose of the city.

During the Italian occupation period, many changes in urban planning and architecture fields were initiated. Italians contributed to promoting existing urban centres expansion as well as by establishing new towns and introduced European urbanisation.³⁰ In most of the cases, towns were established around fortress or army barracks, which served as an initial urban function. Towns during this time are characterized by the rigid grid pattern. In many cases, new industries (trucks repair, factories, etc.), as well as new urban functions, were added to the cities to accelerate economic growth, hence urbanization.³¹ The important aspect triggering faster urbanization process during and after the Italian invasion is a free land distribution to new urban settlers. This act promoted the rural-urban migration in the country by providing better opportunities for residents to sustain in the urban areas. Moreover, inserting new functions in the towns and providing a free land, government attracted more different occupation people such as weavers, blacksmiths, carpenters and likewise, who otherwise would have remained as half-time farmers in scattered rural areas. The process of urbanization under the Italian regime did not only brought the economic and physical changes in the cities but also the new lifestyle there, introducing residents to the new European customs and systems. The italian period became a facilitator in the Ethiopian history, as a transition element between initial attempts of modernization and the modern era. The new urban fabric elements and functions, the layout of the cities brought changes in the traditional Ethiopian scene.

The period after the Italian occupation brought a drastic economic and urban decline. The land, which was confiscated by the Italian government was distributed back to the owners and new residents were required to pay rent. Many families were not able to afford the rent and were forced to go back to farming, hence to move out from the urban areas. During the post-Italian regime, the Ethiopian Government set many programs to support

28 Gebregiorgis, 2011 pp. 17-18.
29 Horvath, 1968, pp. 42–51.
30 Benti, 2017.
31 Horvath, 1968.

small towns by establishing small, local offices such as schools, police, administration offices, building more roads and establishing medical clinics. Consequently, such distribution of administration units caused an urban and governmental decentralization, although the urban population started to grow again and by 1950's surpassed urbanization rates during the Italian period. However, a lack or weak linkages, poor infrastructure between urban centres, and rural area resulted in the isolation of urban settlements. As it is seen, lack of proper formal supervision led to the leapfrog spatial development of smaller settlements as well as the emergence of informally developed structures.

In 1974 the Ethiopian Revolution established a socialist regime. The new regime introduced radical land reform, arresting all private land and extra houses. The government became to be the only responsible body for new development constructions. In spite of the rigid political and administrative system the situation of urban growth managed to be raised; since 1980s urban population have tripled³². Growing urban population and urbanization process since then, can be described by many small emerging cities and fast expansion of few bigger urban centres. Such changes are associated with an increasing provision of services, new roads and the growing interest of the international sector, therefore new investments. The period during the socialist regime is marked as a political repressions time. This influenced urban planning and social capital. The social sector in weak democracy countries is weak, small. Public spaces were rather seen as a threat for political stability, where people can express political will (protest), therefore 'public' was rather functioning as common, where access to spaces was limited. The transition from traditional society started after 1991, after the political scenery changed. However, it is a slow process, requiring a close look at the spatial and social hierarchies and a lot of awareness.

Urbanization in Ethiopia is not directly related to industrialization as in the Western World. The agricultural activities, which still up to date plays a vital role in Ethiopian economy did not create enough economic power to accelerate urban growth. Furthermore, economic activities affected the perception of the urban fabric. In terms of public spaces, they remained to be seen as rather a threat to political stability and as an unnecessary element than a tool to facilitate a social, economic exchange, hence to stimulate growth and those traditions were carried over centuries and applied to the newly emerging towns.

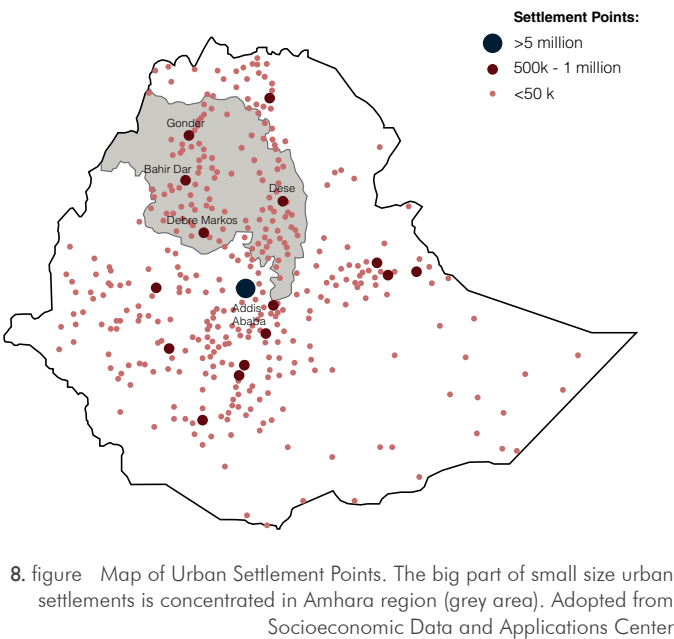
Small Size Cities

The rapid urbanization pace in the country brings both, new opportunities as well as new challenges and requires fast responses to complex matters. As a huge part of the society in Ethiopia is rural, the highest population growth is experienced in rural areas. Overpopulation in the rural areas is causing the overuse and overgrazing of the land and

32 CSA, 2012

deforestation, meaning that more and more people, especially the younger generation, is forced to move to the bigger cities or expand the existing settlements. Consequently, existing villages are being densified and expanded. As a result of many new small size towns, which recently are emerging as new urban settlements. Such strategy, promoting the development of the small or medium-size towns and cities in Ethiopia to control urbanization phenomenon, is favoured by many local decision-makers and urban planners, as well as by the international community.³³ Moreover, as we can see from the chapter above since the early origins of Ethiopia's urbanization, small towns always have played a vital role in the entire urban landscape. Ethiopia, since the early times is characterized as a country with only a few bigger urban centres. A great number of small towns and cities have been formed naturally or unintentionally rather than as expanding existing urban centres. One could argue, that such a situation could have been developed due to the lack of economic surplus and the absence of industrialization, which would have triggered the economic growth. However, underdevelopment of equal city size distribution resulted in the phenomenon, where only a few bigger urban centres existed. Such situation constrained cities like Addis Ababa, because the majority of the society was migrating to the one urban area. In nowadays urban planning practices, it is believed that such urban structures, small towns, can provide a better job and life opportunities in closer proximity to the society, living in rural areas and helps to distribute the pressure of the migration from the bigger cities. As a fact government released a plan to expand 8000 rural settlements into new towns.³⁴ The concept of emerging small towns is seen as an efficient solution to offer a sustainable and livable environment, securing basic needs and preparing for future growth. The process of the new towns' implementation is a continuously challenging task, requiring in-depth knowledge of the society, and the way how it adapts the space to its needs. Hence, the investigation of similar size settlements was chosen to gain a better understanding of the nature of the small towns and spatial configuration peculiarities.

During the socialist regime period in Ethiopia, urbanization processes in the country were relatively abandoned. The very little political attention was paid to urban planning.



33 Ermias, Bogaert, & Wogayehu, 2019.
34 Müller, 2018; Terefe, 2019.

Present Urban Planning in Ethiopia

The main focus during this time was on agricultural development and industry and urban planning was rather uncontrolled.³⁵ After the Derga regime period, under the new government, the development of urban planning was put again on the political agendas. The new government aimed to decentralize the National Urban Planning Institute (NUPI). The Regional Urban Planning Institute (RUPI) was established in four National Regional States forming Ethiopian Federation.³⁶ “the sectoral planning approach stayed dominant in the overall planning framework. Since there was no adequate methodology for regional planning in place, inconsistencies across the zones allowed sectoral planning to pertain.”³⁷

In order to have a better understanding about the planning system, it is important to look at the administrative system in Ethiopia. Currently, the country is organized in a federal system with nine states (Tigray, Amhara, Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Harari, Oromia, Somali, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' regions) and two chartered cities (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa). Basically, the country is divided into four-level administrative levels. Each region itself is subdivided into 68 administrative zones, but the exact number is not clear as well as given names. Zones are second-level administrative sub-division and consist of districts. Districts, or woredas, are the fourth-level administrative division which further is subdivided into kebele (wards) or neighbourhood associations, which are the smallest administrative unit in the Ethiopian government. Woredas are governed by the council which represent each kebele.³⁸ The urban planning system, the provision of new master plans is organized accordingly to the administrative system subdivision. The study case was conducted in the region of Amhara state, which itself has 9 zones (Agew Awi, East Gojjam, North Gondar, North Shewa, North Wollo, Oromia, South Gondar, South Wollo, Wag Hemra, West Gojjam and special zone of Bahir Dar)³⁹. Each zone itself is subdivided into 108 woredas (districts).⁴⁰ The Regional Urban Development Department (in this Bureau of Industrial and Urban Development located in Bahir Dar, BIUD) based on the urban settlement size, prepared two plans: Structural Plan and Strategical Plan and General Framework for small towns.

Urban development structure for small, emerging towns in Amhara region is based on the so-called General Framework. General Framework is a type of plan consisting of 3 different plans:

- Land use plan;
- Street network plan;

35 Adejumobi, 2006, Gebregiorgis, 201.
36 Appelhans, 2016, pp. 15–18.
37 Egziabher, 1998, pp. 704–705 in Appelhans, 2016, p. 102.
38 Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2008.
39 Selected zones are: North Wollo & West Gojjam).
40 CSA, 2011.

- Environmental protection plan;

The urban planning process simplified scheme consist of five steps. As an initial step BIUD, sends 3-4 professionals to investigate and analyze the conditions in the selected settlement. The group of experts, consisting of an inspector (surveyor), urban planner, economist and sociologist are sent to the town/city to collect basic data such as population size, its composition, growth rate, the economy of the town, its topography and spatial expansion and many other features of urban settlement. At the same time, the first participation is organized to understand the needs of residents and set the basic guidelines of the new master plan. After the data collection step, experts are preparing the initial draft of land use, street network and environmental protection plans, which again will be presented to the settlement residents and kebele authorities. During the second participation, the experts from BIUD introduce the society with the prospective expansion, land-use changes and similar plans again will be adapted in the Regional National Department based on the participatory feedback. The last, fifth step is when the group of experts return to the city to present a final master plan for Kebele. The facilitator of the plan here is the authority of Kebele.⁴¹

However, often Kebele’s authorities or the residents do not have any power in influencing the planning process. Moreover, such plans are often a redevelopment of street network and land use restructuring, changing land uses for new housing developments. In the case of Gashena, the new redevelopment plans have been drawn without considering the existing urban fabric and local authority works rather as a facilitator of new plans than a negotiator between regional government and residents.⁴² The administration was claiming, that new plans are neglecting existing urban fabric and the needs of the citizens. Meanwhile, the case of Mer Awi is quite opposite. During the interview with Tsesaye,⁴³ and other council members it was stated, that plans are adjusted to the local cities and negotiated with local inhabitants, aiming to meet their needs and trigger a faster urban growth. Such a situation reveals an existing inconsistency in the formal planning system which might result in the unequal development and neglection of certain regions.

Land-hold System in Ethiopia

This chapter reflects a brief overview of urban land ownership and the leasehold system existing in Ethiopia, which allows gaining a better understanding of the urban settlements growth and development patterns.

Land ownership and its usage continuously has been a source of power, an important social and economic aspect, determining the material wealth and socio-spatial relations and

41 Based on the interviews with Tsesaye, 2019; Terefe, 2019; Workneh, 2019.
42 Ibid.
43 Based on the interview with local authority members.

development of the communities. The land, as a form of property, is a subject of ownership and rights to use it. In this sense, the property is legally defined and protected resource, meaning it must have to be entitled and regulated by formal institutions. In Ethiopia, land ownership can be divided into three periods: before 1975 or before the socialist revolution, from 1975-1993 or Derga regime and period after 1993. During the imperial era (until 1975), there were at least three landownership classes. All land was in the hands of the emperor and was distributed to the individuals, institutions or military. During the times of Derga regime, all land was nationalized and redistributed to the Ethiopian people.⁴⁴ The land from the bigger landlords was confiscated without any compensation and was strictly prohibited to be sold, leased or mortgaged. All urban land was owned by the government. It became the sole owner of landowner and rent fee collector, therefore a main responsible body of any development projects. After the period of the socialist regime, from 1993, the land remained controlled by the government.⁴⁵ “The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the State and in the peoples of Ethiopia. The land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange.”⁴⁶ The rural farmers and pastoralist have a landholding right, which allows them to use, rent, donate or inherit the land. EOC, however, has a very exclusive right to the land and is the second institution holding most of the land rights. Meanwhile, urban residents can gain the rights to the land by leasing it from the government under the 99 years agreement (an lease hold contract for 99 years).⁴⁷ The new urban lease system established after 1993 and after some of the corrections in the following decades, allowing a sale, mortgage or share the urban land. The urban land is transferred to the land users according to the master plan of each area, while the rest urban land which is not leased is held by the government. The advantage of such leasehold system in the first place is the power the government has, to facilitate urban development and manage the growth. Land can be reserved for a public purpose aiming to provide open spaces or control housing or other governmental facilities. The notion of public purpose means, that the government can expropriate leased land when the land is needed for general public use (such as open spaces, schools, hospitals, etc.) or in the case of structural plan changes. It is responsible for administrating and managing open land and space. Since the open land is managed and administered by the government and the responsible departments for urban development, it holds the biggest power in the decision-making process towards creation and the protection of the open public spaces in the cities. Moreover, responsible governmental bodies, cities’ administrations hold full responsibility how the process of land commodification will evolve: deciding either to profit from the land for a short-term thrive, neglecting the importance of public open space for economic growth, or choosing a long-term

44 Ambaye, 2013.
45 Ibid.
46 FDRE Constitution 1995., Article 40 (3).
47 Ambaye, 2013.

perspective to create more inclusive, resilient cities instead of indulging private sector.

Considering public space from an economic perspective, it is considered as a public good. It constitutes 15%-50% of all covered land of the urban settlements and greatly contributes to the land value as well as the overall urban economy.⁴⁸ Therefore the government, which controls the land use needs to take a decision for future strategy how to maintain or redevelop existing space structures and what approach to take in the future to avoid the ambiguity and depletion of land for a common use.

Institutions

Institutions play an important role in shaping socio-cultural values, therefore, influencing socio-spatial characteristics. They act as an instrument building the tradition and perception, which are then later transferred into a build-up environment. Generally talking, institutions can be formal and informal. Formal institutions are local and regional administrations as well as religious organizations. Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) was the main state religion since the 4th century until the socialist revolution in 1975, when its power was reduced and Islam gained more influence. Christianity has been playing a significant role in the socio-cultural development of the Ethiopian society. For centuries, church owned nearly one-third of the land⁴⁹, what reveals, that EOC was not only guiding social life, but also had power over administrative and even spatial development matters. Up to this day, it is clear, that EOC has a major impact on Ethiopian everyday life, therefore how people tend to use spaces they live in (outdoor and indoor) and what meaning to everyday routines they have. On the other hand, the legal administration institutions and prevailing political settings have influenced the spatial and behaviour patterns. A good example to illustrate this statement is the ancient legal provisions called Ser’ata Mengest and Ser’ata Geber⁵⁰ which means “order of government” and “order of task”. “These documents dictate how activities in the imperial court should be carried out and how imperial camp should be organized spatially, among other instructions”⁵¹ These documents represent what influence for spatial configuration and the use of those spaces the administration had. And one could argue, that such regulations might be outdated, not having a real impact on the nowadays socio-spatial developments. However, the traditions of how we live, how we arrange and appropriate our spaces, how we behave forms over a long time periods and are transferred from generation to generation, therefore, do not change radically. Hence, these institutions have a longevous responsibility and power to create the guidelines, what is appropriate and more importantly the control as well as resources over the spatial development.

48 UN-HABITAT, 2018.
49 Gebregiorgis, 2011, p. 88.
50 Gebregiorgis, 2011, p. 97, Kropp, 1988.
51 Heisel & Kifle, 2016, p. 100.

Nevertheless, informal institutions, such as community-based organizations, neighbourhood relations or friendships are influencing the society in a more direct way, in a smaller, an individual level.

In Ethiopian society community relations and church are perhaps one of the strongest influencers, shaping the perception, values and norms. However, usually, it is a community-based organization, which decides, where the church should be located, therefore, it partly controls the formation of urban fabric, thus the network of public spaces. Based on the ancient traditional rules, the land of the religious activities mostly belongs exclusively to the church. It would be inconceivable to examine urban fabric formation, aiming to understand a contextual spatial configuration, social necessities and preferences without looking at these institutions and their impact.



9. figure Church in Kon. EOC plays a big role not only in everyday’s life, but also in the administartive levels, as an important formal institution.

Public Space & Society

“The subdivision of our social world and the spaces we inhabit into public and private spheres is one of the key features of how a society organizes itself.”⁵² The distinction between public and private domain characterize our cities and urban life. It is well known, that public spaces reflect the society, its values and is marking the development process.⁵³ Understanding, how society divides private and public realm and what relations exist in between these two spheres, can help to understand, how it affects individuals’ behaviour, mentality, the values that society advocates or how people circulate in the city. Moreover, it “superimposes a long-lasting structure onto human societies and the spaces they inhabit”.⁵⁴ Therefore, it is essential to define the public realm, clarifying what is considered as ublic space and what relationship the society has with its inhibited spaces.

Definition Of Public Spaces

There exist numerous studies, aiming to define what is public space. The complexity in defining open public spaces lies in its multiplex nature, which combines different ownership levels, social and political, economic patterns as well as cultural values. Despite this complexity and its hybrid nature, the definition of public spaces, is mostly related to the cities.⁵⁵ Generally talking, public space in the urban planning were described as physical open space, referring to the unbuilt area in the city, which is publicly owned and publicly used as outdoor space, such as street, square, park, etc. These spaces are open and accessible to enter or use for all people, despite their gender, age, ethnicity or religion and similar, providing space for citizens to interact and more. “Accessibility is what guarantees the free circulation of persons and goods. It is also what allows the emergence of collective representations from where images of the city are produced”⁵⁶ Such definition, however, does not take into considerations privately owned or limited access public spaces, nor the social or political notion behind it. From the perspective of social sciences, public spaces are qualified according to its physical and psychological accessibility and functions, which provides a more accurate definition. According to Manadipour⁵⁷ public space can be defined as “space that allows all the people to have access to it and the activities within it, which is controlled by a public agency, and which is provided and managed by public

52 Madanipour, 2003.
53 Gehl 2004, Krier 1975, Madanipour, 2003.
54 Madanipour, 2003.
55 Nissen, 2008
56 Tonnelat, 2010, p. 2.
57 Madanipour, 2003, pp. 148

interest”. Carr et al.⁵⁸ defined it as “publicly accessible places where people go for group or individual activities”. However, the definitions based on the accessibility or ownership rights do not reflect a full notion of public spaces. Since it is inseparable from society and it’s a product of the society, the usability of the space is another important factor, determining public spaces. “Public spaces in common use, like streets or squares, are open to the general public for unlimited use within the framework of their functions and without the need for special permission.”⁵⁹ In addition, Low and Smith discussed, that “Public space is traditionally differentiated from private space in terms of rules of access, the source and nature of control over entry to space, individual and collective behaviour sanctioned in specific spaces, and rules of use. Whereas private space is demarcated and protected by state-regulated rules of private property use, public space while far from free of regulation is generally conceived as open to greater or lesser public participation.”⁶⁰ The right to exclude someone to access or to enter the spaces clearly distinguish urban spaces from private ones. These dimensions “usability” “accessibility” and imposed “ownership” here will serve as a main conceptual pillar of distinguishing public spaces.

Public Spaces in the African Context

It is obvious, that urban planning should offer context-tailored strategies. To achieve this, it is important to reconsider and perhaps, even to re-conceptualize some of the basic concepts and definitions. In example, the use and the role of public spaces in the global south, differ how they are perceived, for example, in the global north cities. Public spaces in Africa for instance, are not that much related with socializing or relaxing activities. It is more seen as a space for local, often informal, retail economies or ceremonial gatherings.⁶¹ Often, public spaces are understood based on the European example, where open spaces are clearly defined, accessible and aesthetically pleasing, providing various facilities and functions, contributing to the welfare of the city’s life. Therefore, it would be misleading to impose the same, uncorrected concepts to the different environments. “The definition should be context-specific because public space is a complex reality of social, economic, political, cultural, religious and geographical interpretations and origins.”⁶² Cities and its authorities, in different continents and contexts, are facing many challenges and are having different mechanisms on how to cope with occurring issues. One of the main challenges in African countries, therefore in Ethiopia, is that public spaces are not yet

58 Carr, 1992, p. 50.
59 Nissen, 2008, p. 1130.
60 Low & Smith, 2013.
61 Nikitin, 2011.
62 Rangeley in UN-HABITAT, 2015, foreword.

recognized by the governments as an element to accelerate the growth of the cities.⁶³ The perception of public space needs to be reconceptualized and adapted to the context to meet its residents' needs. One of the main struggles is that urban planning or urban design, centred around the development of public spaces is rather a new, unrecognized concept and even the fact, that government is controlling the land ownership, therefore the user is not playing a big role here. Many complex challenges, which cities and its governments are facing nowadays first are deriving from poor economic conditions. The land is rather seen as a commodity to produce other goods (agricultural products, timber and such) or as a resource to gain a private profit and provide more housing units. The governments and urban planners in the difficult contexts, focus rather on the housing and infrastructure provision which are undoubtedly a sensitive problem. However, those many issues could be avoided or perhaps even reduced, if only a proper look to the urban life would be given. A lack of context-specific planning vocabulary and tools in African countries might be a big part of such a situation. The value of social capital, which is generated by public spaces is not acknowledged yet - planning of public spaces is rather seen from the perspective of land use, but not yet from the perspective of urban design nor from the more comprehensive point of view, to see the social-economic profit in the future.

Another problem of neglecting the importance of public spaces in Ethiopia could be deriving from the political perspective. Open public spaces for a long time were seen as the places for social gatherings to express a political will. Seen rather as a threat, the importance of open public spaces was neglected in many levels such as academic teaching, professional practices and similar. Therefore, the awareness of the public space importance was not formed. Nor it is started to be formed.⁶⁴

The different perception towards public spaces every nation has, creates a challenge to understand the needs better. Identifying, how the existing spaces were created, used and appropriated and for what purpose they serve could help to learn, what is needed and wanted by the culture or individual.

Production of Space

The understanding of the complexity and multidisciplinary of the spaces, the form, structure and organization are essential in aiming to create more inclusive socio-spatial environments that have the capacity to develop and thrive. Lefebvre in his "The production of Space" provides a critical view, of how spaces are made and bounded to the society. He argues, that "space, according to this analysis, is not the outcome of quality or property of human action in general, or human labour as such, of 'man', or of social organization. On

63 UN-HABITAT, 2015.

64 Terefe, 2019.



10. figure Gashena. Image of the public space in new urban settlements.

the contrary, it is itself the origin and source – not distantly but immediately, or rather inherently - of the rationality of activity.”⁶⁵ Space, so to say, itself is a work and a product of everyday life and social activities during the historical period. In this sense, spaces in the cities are seen as constructions incorporating values, potential to growth, everyday's life and practices. Lefebvre's work helps to understand that space is not only a physical construct but rather more inclusive, social, political and economic and spatial structure. According to the author, spaces are produced by the interactions and relationships, and ever society in the historical

period appropriates the space to meet its needs for social cohesion, political economical and/or cultural systems, dependant on the context. "Therefore, the public space is not a natural consequence of human coexistence. It is artificial: created by a human "web of relations" developed from continuous new beginnings."⁶⁶ In other words, space is a social product and the process altogether. Stating that space is the product, he provides a concept of production:

- explaining that space is first perceived by those who inhabit it: "produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it."
- later, it is conceived or represented by those who control and manage it, having a power to shape the space, representing the ideology. "conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic sub-dividers and social engineers, ... all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived."
- and finally lived: "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', "⁶⁷

Lefebvre provides a crucial, context-detached knowledge of how urban spaces are produced, for whom, by whom and what does it reflect. He argued that such knowledge of space provides the possibility of using and making space in more humane and just ways, to 'make' space to suit the needs and priorities, the values and meanings of not only capital but also the urban population at large."⁶⁸ This analysis helps to deconstruct the nature of urban spaces and provided a proof of the theory, that cities, therefore its elements such as spaces, are linked with society, therefore the image of spaces, in its broadest sense, varies from context to context. It is a product, a creation of society, appropriating its spaces to meet the needs.

65 Lefebvre, 1991, p.35.

66 Thuma, 2011, para. 3.

67 Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 38-39

68 Zieleniec, 2018, p. 7.

Planned & Unplanned Urban Settlements

This study virtually focuses on the morphological differences of public spaces in planned and organically grown cities, therefore it is crucial to define each category for a clearer understanding. This chapter tries to identify the relationship between planned and unplanned urban settlements and define the nature of each of them. However, the distinction between such settlements is far more complex and often hard to determine, thus in this study only the morphological, spatial character of the towns from their historical development point of view is considered under the definition of spontaneous urban grow and controlled planning.

Planning, by a definition, means controlled development. It is a projective, propositional process always related to politics and always highly contested. The purpose of urban planning in the first place is to control urban development for the common good by imposing a modest amount of order and providing infrastructure.⁶⁹ The planned urban settlement, in other words, is defined by the overseeing authorities, an urban settlement with an imposed urban fabric. Often it is following a grid or a centrally planned scheme or combining several complex geometries.⁷⁰ The morphology of planned cities or town is characterized by a ridged urban fabric, straight street segments.

The other type, ‘organic’ city or unplanned, spontaneous or self-developed urban settlement is a grown structure, as against imposed layout. In most of the cases, it is geomorphic fabric without the intervention of urban planners/designers, rather a reflection of the time, the daily life of residents and the culture itself. “The irregular city is the result of development left entirely to individuals who actually live on the land. If a governing body divides the land and disposes of it before it is handed over to the users, a uniformly patterned city will emerge”⁷¹ The urban character of mentioned type appears over time and the layout of such towns, is directly linked with topography or other geographical conditions combined with socio-political and cultural aspects. In the context of Ethiopia, such urban structures occurred from the merged residential clusters or even smaller villages located in close proximity. While the occupied area of the residential clusters is expanding, it incorporates new residential groups where each is physically and socially distinct, until these clusters merge together, after it is saturated by the new units. During this period, the new settlers are adding new residential structures within existing boundaries yet following the existing spatial and geomorphic structures.⁷² Such process in some cases can be either controlled by the local administration, with a purpose of the creation of the new urban centre, or without any centralized institution intervention, as an unconscious action of society. Kostof & Tobias (2009) argue, that uncontrolled urban developments pose

69 Blau, 2017.
70 Kostof & Tobias, 2009.
71 Appelhans, 2016, p. 124.
72 Interviews with local people, slums occurrence tendencies, Kostof & Tobias, 2009.



11. figure Map of Gashena illustrating urban fabric of planned urban settlement.



12. figure Map of Kulmesk illustrating urban fabric of organically developed urban settlement.

a structure of the city form, what integrates the uses the spatial hierarchy and structure and nodal points which are formulated by the tradition and social structure.⁷³ Such growth model also explains the natural (without an intervention) formation of public open space. Farmers tend to settle around, leaving a core space for a kettle. Over time, when settlement expands, these core spaces are slowly transformed into open public or common spaces.

Considering urban fabric from more a socio-spatial point of view, it is then a product of a long process of spatial structures appropriation. It reflects values, traditions and daily life traces of the society, which shaped it. According to Kohl⁷⁴ tradition is the local knowledge of what is passed from generation to generation. In a similar manner, Benz argues, that urban form reflects the needs and wants of communities and that urban form is built or shaped through the experience of the past, meaning the tradition of the community. “The deliberate retention of urban artefacts, on another hand, particularly in the face of newly emerging forces, symbolize a reaffirmation of traditional values – symbolized an assertion of the continuing relevance of earlier generations’ beliefs, opinions and customs.”⁷⁵ He claims that build-up environment is a creation of each individuals’ efforts and is the outcome of past experiences. In this sense, the build-up environment is a reflection of

traditional values, needs and wants. The first type, planned cities, reflects the relation local governments/administrations and planners have with the society they produce and work for as well as a way, how that society appropriates formed spatial structures. It can provide knowledge of what official typologies have occurred, what political-economic aspects have been shaping the city and the relation between formal and informal. Another type, self-developed settlements, reflects what spatial structures have been formed during the time period in the relation of uses. From this point of view, one could argue, that the urban fabric is an expression of the social traditions and values.

73 Kostof & Tobias, 2009, p. 64.
74 Kohl, 2015, pp. 99–101.
75 Banz, 1970, p. 111.

13. figure North Wollo. A typical street view.



3

Data & Methodology

This chapter explains selected methods for data collection and the investigation process to achieve the research objectives. It explains the followed strategy, selection of data sources and sites as well as analysis techniques used in this study to answer the posed research questions.

34
Research Strategy & Process
35
Selection of the Study Areas

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Data Collection & Methods
38
Data Analysis

39
Validity of Data

14. figure North Wollo. Church
schooling in open public spaces -
church yard



Research Strategy & Process

The research strategy defines the selected process to answer the research objectives and how the methodology was implemented. To achieve that, a combination of different data collection and approach methods were used. Both, quantitative and qualitative research strategies were used to achieve the research objectives. This empirical study is basically divided into three parts: theoretical background analysis, data collection and data generalization. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods here is an essential point. Qualitative research was conducted to identify human behaviour, aiming for an in-depth, contextual analysis while quantitative research helped to produce the generalized data, showing the prevalences. In other words, qualitative research helped to identify sociological aspects, while quantitative methods were used to investigate the build-up environment and by combining them, allowed to bridge findings. Generally talking, scientific research consists of two main components – theoretical and empirical levels. The theoretical level is a development of concepts, building theories from already existing knowledge, meanwhile, the empirical level is built upon observations, while testing developed theoretical concepts.⁷⁶

First of all, the theoretical study was the primary point of the research. It was important to look at the background of the study. During this step, the existing studies and data were examined, by investigating the historical development of Ethiopia and its urban centres, the current socio-political, economic and cultural setting. Since the study is tightly bounded with society it is necessary to look at it. It provided the understanding of the evolution of urban spaces and socio-cultural past. Another equally important step was to look at the existing studies in the research area, which helped to identify gaps in the knowledge and the data sets. Moreover, such step helped to avoid repetitive or overlapping analysis works. As already mentioned before, the field of this research is relatively abandoned and there was rarely any previous studies conducted about the public open spaces in the selected region. Furthermore, this part of the study was a crucial step in defining the exact objectives as well as the direction of the study and determining the methodology.

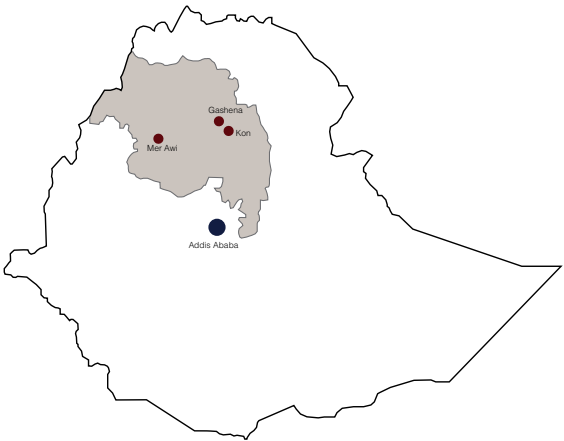
The second step of the study was preparation for collecting data and data collection itself – an empirical level. The literature review helped to define the concepts and create the theoretical base for the research. The big part of the data collection was a preparation trip to a study case. Selecting the right locations as well as the right investigation methods was a significant part, helping to achieve a better outcome.

Especially, minding the fact, that Ethiopia is in a very different cultural, geographical backgrounds and some of the basic concepts, ordinary for, in example, Europeans, cannot be applied there. However, cultural and linguistic differences played a significant role in the whole study, limiting the process. As a final step, the collected data was generalized and analyzed by using multiple methods which will be described later.



15. figure Satellite Image of Africa. Ethiopia is considered among Sub-Saharan countries.

Selection of the Study Areas



16. figure Map of Ethiopia. Selected case cities are located in Amhara's region.

The study areas in Ethiopia were selected based on many reasons. First of all, Northern Ethiopia, to be more specific, the Amhara region was selected due to the background data availability. The existing research and historical documents about north Ethiopia provided much more information about this region. Amhara region is important not only because it is the main dominant ethnic group in Ethiopia (92%)⁷⁷, but also due to the fact, Amharic culture basically laid down the foundation for other groups to operate

(see section about historical development). As it is known from existing historical sources, the Amhara region, together with Tigray is the nest of urbanization in Ethiopia, indicating that the region has long-standing traditions of use of urban spaces. Moreover, the Amhara is one of the fastest-growing areas in Ethiopia. Based on the statistics, in the last decade, the number of cities in the Amhara region have been doubled.⁷⁸ Secondly, the research areas were picked in north Ethiopia due to the personal network. Differences in language and culture, ethnicity was essential while conducting the research. Thankfully to the partnership, established between Bauhaus University Weimar and EiABC, the personal connections with students helped tremendously in carrying interviews with residents or contacting professionals without great expenses.

The decision to select a town or small-size cities in Amhara region was made based on the information gap in such field. Public spaces in Ethiopia is an overlooked topic, and especially if it comes to the smaller settlements - mainly all researches, which in general are very few, were conducted about the largest Ethiopian cities as Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar or Gondar. Unfortunately, there is no sufficient knowledge provided about the use and meaning of urban open spaces in the smaller urban settlements. Often planners and city administrations relay on the foreign concepts or simply neglects the existing socio-spatial relations and heritage, offering improper solutions. Moreover, small urban settlements were selected for the study cases due to the fact, it is easier to identify spatial-social relations and extract the essence of established

77 CSA, 2012.
78 Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI), 1994-2007.

structures. Spatial structures of towns and small cities are more homogenous and are less influenced by complicated, outer impacts. Furthermore, social hierarchy here is less intricate, allowing to extract the basic knowledge and data more precisely.

In order to conduct the comparative analysis, aiming to examine and determine the differences of socio-spatial relations between planned and self-developed urban settlements, different urban fabric configurations were selected. The main idea was to investigate spatial structures in planned and organically grown cities and compare them together. To represent the planned settlement city of Gashena was selected as a first sample, meanwhile Kon is representing the organically grown settlements. After this, Mer'awi was included into the study as a special case of the merged urban fabric, since the number of such settlements (a combination of both, planned and unplanned spatial structures) is rapidly growing (see figure 14). All three towns were selected based on factors such as similar settlement size, number of inhabitants, same administrative level, geomorphic conditions. More importantly, all towns are facing significant changes in urban fabric triggered by rapid expansion. As a final step, from six to eight open public spaces per each city were selected using satellite maps and which were later evaluated in the field (see appendix for a full list).

Data Collection & Methods

Based on the type of information which was needed to be collected, different data collection methods were selected. Literature review, observations, interviews and questionnaires, photographs and mapping were used to gather information. To analyze socio-spatial relations, uses and the meaning of the space, as well as the characteristics of build-up environment the qualitative methods, were implemented. Meanwhile, quantitative measurements helped to determine the relationship between different urban settings and spaces. As already indicated above, data for the study was collected in two parts: firstly, from literature and secondly, by examining study cases in fieldwork.

Literature & Documents Review

The literature review was key to form the picture of the analyzed location. It helped to build the character of the analyzed background and to explain the influences from the past, which forms the present environment. Moreover, by theoretical analysis, main concepts such as public space, unplanned settlement or the socio-spatial relations were defined and constructed to fit the study.

The next step was the analysis of cases. Here several data collection methods were applied. Multiple study cases allowed to explore the differences between various

urban fabrics within study cases and explore the emerging patterns. The applied methods to gather necessary data were conducted during the field research.

Interviews & Questionnaires

Interviews and questionnaires contributed to a great part of the study. Questionnaires and conversations with local people from the selected cities, helped to obtain information within a real-life condition, reflecting the apparent situation. By conducting the questionnaires or informal interviews with residents, it was possible to obtain information about the daily activities, which are carried in certain spaces, their significance to the society and similar. Most importantly, it allowed to investigate it throughout the view of local communities. In every town around 20 - 25 correspondents were selected, 3-5 per each space. Thankfully to the 'snowballing' effect, it was possible to get more responses in a shorter time since people tended to gather around the ones, which were interviewed based on the questionnaire. It is important to mention, that due to the time and financing limitations. The language barrier however, was a big challenge, influencing this research.

In-depth interviews were conducted with local administration members or academia seeking to gather a professional, in-depth knowledge about the present urban planning situation, the implementation processes as well as perspectives towards open public spaces from the professional point of view. This method allowed to get valuable insight into the present-day urban planning system and see what challenges Ethiopia faces. Moreover, to observe the existing differences between the theory and practice.

Observations

Data collection throughout a systematic observation of the selected environment is an important measurement, providing crucial, context-related information. It is one of the main qualitative data collection methods. Observing pre-selected public spaces allowed to obtain essential information about human behaviour, spatial configurations, space appropriation and use, thus, the relationships between humans and space in general. To enhance the validity of the information, spaces were observed based on the prepared guide. Each space in the different city was observed twice for 15 minutes: once in the morning and once in the evening. During this time, spaces were described according to the selected features such as greenery, openness, accessibility and similar. Lastly, photographs of each space were taken, providing the essential information about the activities of the space, its spatial conditions and in general, depicting urban life.

Another important measurement is taken to investigate the uses and activities in open public spaces, was human behaviour mapping on the site. As mentioned before, selected spaces were observed for 15 minutes in the mornings and in the evening during

the weekdays, mapping the behaviour of people: their routes, the number of people, using the space and the means of uses. The spaces were investigated only during the weekdays, from Mondays to Fridays, aiming to gather the data from everyday life routines. The behaviour mapping, photo-documentation and guided observation provided extremely valuable information about the daily life in the examined area, allowing to see it from the perspective of local people. Therefore, a more authentic, context-based information about how spaces are used, what role they play in everyday life, what are the occurring differences between planned and unplanned cities and many more.

It is well acknowledged that many existing researches are using a similar methodology, a human behavior observation, to investigate the social life and public spaces. Among such examples are famous works as “The Social Life Of Small Urban Spaces” by William H. Whyte or few works of Jan Gehl (“How to Study Public Life” and “Cities for People”). However, these studies intentionally have been not considered more comprehensively. Mainly, due to the reason, that such researches were conducted in northern-western countries, with very different socio-cultural, political backgrounds. Moreover, this study aims to examine the situation without a preconceptions on purpose to identify locally defined concepts, means and uses.

Data Analysis

To analyze the collected data different analysis methods were used according to the aim of what the certain data is revealing. To start with, the information from questionnaires were systematized and classified into the tables. The behaviour maps, collected during the observations were redrawn, revealing the activity patterns of the space and its uses. The information from in-depth interviews was used as a valuable source of information in the theory part as well, as in the analysis part as a reference to a certain matter. The computational analysis method was used to calculate the accessibility and centrality of the spaces within an urban settlement and in a comparison with other spaces. To run calculations for street network analysis (accessibility calculations) the basic script provided by InfAR and was slightly modified to fit the aim of the research. The reason for it was the aim to calculate the value for the set point, which represents public space, instead of the selected street segment.

All findings were classified and later on generalized and rated, so they can be used in the radar charts to represent each of the investigated space. The rating was based on the following mathematical formula:

$$A = 5 \times \frac{x}{\max(x_1 : x_n)}$$

where **5** refers to the highest value in the ranking; **max** is an Excel function which returns the largest value in a set of values; **x** is a

selected value; **x₁** -first value in the list; **x_n** the last value in the list.

Radar chart, also known as spider web chart is a graphical method representing a data set.⁷⁹ Using this type of data visualization allowed to display important aspects of the analysis in relation to different investigated aspects, therefore such method allowed to create a holistic space profile of each investigated public space. Moreover, using radar schemes with the same ranking values allowed to compare each public space typology profile between the different urban settlements.

As one of the main objectives of this research is to investigate the differences and similarities between planned and organic urban fabrics, this research follows the comparative study case analysis method. “Comparison is a fundamental tool of analysis. It sharpens our power of description, and plays a central role in concept-formation by bringing into focus suggestive similarities and contrast among cases.”⁸⁰ The selected case studies share a comparative context and characteristics (as described in the chapters above). The selected towns are seen as representative cases. Building a contextual description by analyzing existing theoretical and historical backgrounds, enhanced the understanding of the examined matter and the ability to interpret the finding more accurately. By tracing the process of formation (in this case social values and socio-spatial relationships) and systematically examining the findings, it was possible to create an analytic narrative. Finally, the cases were grouped into distinct categories with shared characteristics. Subsequently, the comparative analysis was important in systematizing each case and establishing the classification of typologies.⁸¹

Validity of Data

Validity in data collection refers to the relationship between findings and representation of the investigated matter. To ensure the validity of the data during the research, it was gathered from the different sources and during the period of time. Data from the literature was carefully checked for its authenticity, collected from different sources and compared with the information from in-depth interviews and vice versa. In order to improve the accuracy of collected data, spaces were visited twice, meaning that mapping, observation and questionnaires were held twice during the two different time frames. However, it is important to keep in mind, that there are both, internal and external factors, which might have influenced the validity, and which were inevitable. Such factors might be subject of variability and time the study was conducted, subject population size and the characteristics and similar.

79 NIST/SEMATEC, 2003., Wikipedia, 2019.

80 Collier, 2013, p.105

81 Esser & Vliegthart, 2017.



17. figure Gashena. Spaces in and around church compounds are used for church schooling as well as various religious ceremonies.

4

Build-Up Environment & Society

43

Introduction of the Case Cities

50

Typological Classification of the
Open Public Spaces

Kon

Located in Wadla woreda, approximately 72 km to the South from Lalibela, the town of Kon is supposedly settled there since a couple of centuries. The road going through the centre of Kon is known as an old road from Lalibela to Addis Ababa, indicating that Kon was strategically well located. The geographical location of the town is relatively similar as in Gashena, both established on the plateau in the highlands (3100 meters above the sea level). Due to this fact, Kon has a relatively colder and drier climate than the rest of the region. This, as well as a barren soil, consisting mainly of rocks and clay, complicates any agrarian activities in the town. However, as in the rest of the country agriculture remains the main source of incomes. Most of the residents here are working in retail, service fields, owning a small café or shop or are engaged in husbandry and agriculture. The life quality in town remains difficult, as most of the inhabitants still live below poverty and/ or without basic facilities as tap water or electricity.

Kon has its own city administration (kebele). Before it was connected with Gashena. Nowadays the city has these following facilities: primary school, churches, bus station, bank and medical centre, police station, veterinary clinic and polytechnic college.

According to the city administration office workers, most of the inhabitants are poor, with a monthly 100 euro incomes per capita. Most of the inhabitants are practicing Ethiopian Orthodox and identifies themselves as Amharic ethnic group.



18. figure Kon. Satellite image.
Source: Google Earth

Size: 2 km2
Population: 10 000 – 15 000 inhabitants⁸²
Population density: 7 500 inh/ km2
Woreda: Wadla
Established at: ~ 18 century
Main religion: Ethiopian Orthodox Church

82 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Central Statistic Agency, 2013.



19. figure Kon. Map of open public spaces.

Gashena

Town of Gashena, a small district town in Wadla district, located approximately 64 km to the South from Lalibela city. The town is established on the crossing of two important roads – Debre Tabor - Weldiya also known as ‘China road’ and the roadway from Lalibela to Dese/Addis Ababa. The China Road, which connects Lake Tana and Weldiya was constructed approximately 40-50 years ago. There is not much-known information about the development history of the town, but the setting of the town on the two roads intersection indicates, that Gashena most likely expanded from rural settlement approximately around the 1980s, when the China Road⁸⁴ was constructed.

Situated on the plateau, in the Amhara’s Highlands (in the altitude of 2900m) the town is in one of the most drought and famine prone areas. The climate here is relatively unfavorable for any agricultural activities. The relatively colder, drought climate and infertile soil, which consist mainly of rocks and clay is not very suitable for a more traditional, common livelihoods – agricultural activities. Consequently, most of the inhabitants here are engaged in husbandry. The town is well known for its meat production. Such situation is one the main reasons for the stagnant and weak Gashena’s economy since the most of its inhabitants are able to produce a very limited range of goods and only in a small amount, which is not enough to be traded for other food or manufactured goods. In 2015 only 2% of the inhabitants were connected to a safe water supply network. “The 2% are those hotels who have their own pipe water and toilets constructed privately. The rest of the population uses stream/ spring water to drink and open latrines (predominantly, the nearby eucalyptus jungle for toileting) that do not have appropriate sewerage system.”⁸⁵ Such a situation indicates that the general situation in Gashena is abandoned and relatively forgotten. Moreover, the town does not attract any socio-economic development investments nor is the government’s spotlight.

Currently, the town has these following facilities: primary school, church, city administration

84 Name given because of the Chinese investments.
85 Wondie, 2015.



20. figure Gashena. Satellite image.
Source: Google Earth.

Size: 3.4 km²
Population: 15 000 - 20 000 inhabitants⁸³
Population density: 7 000 inh/ km²
Woreda: Meket
Established at: around XX mid-century
Main religion: Ethiopian Orthodox Church

83 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Central Statistic Agency, 2013.

- 1 - Market Field
- 2 - Churchyard
- 3 - Open Green Space
- 4 - Neighborhood Open Space
- 5 - Open Green Space
- 6 - School Playground



21. figure Gashena. Map of open public spaces.

(kebele), bus station, bank and medical centre.

The connection with the surrounding area in Gashena is relatively restricted. Lalibela, the biggest town in proximity is 65 km away, or 3 hours by bus. Filakit and Kon, relatively similar size urban settlements are half an hour away by motor transport. However, due to the strategically convenient location – intersection of two big routes, Gashena is a well-known transfer point for travelling towards Lalibela, Weldiya or Lake Tana. Therefore, the town is often seen as a transit place with a lot of visitors for a short stop. The Lailibela’s airport, operating for domestic flights is approximately 30 km away.

According to the city administration office workers, most of the inhabitants are poor, with a monthly 100 euro incomes per capita and are practicing Ethiopian Orthodox, identifying themselves as Amharic ethnic group.

Mer Awi

Mer’Awi (also known as Merawi, Mecha) is a small size district town in Northern Ethiopia, Amhara Region, located approximately 35 km to the south from Bahir Dar and Lake Tana. The town recently gained a seat in the City Administration. It is presumable that the city was established around 1940. Most likely the former village was extended and gained the urban settlement status. Basic infrastructure and services like piped water, electricity and health care were established in Mer’Awi around 1980. Currently, the city has public health centre, modern hospital, city administration building, couple of churches and mosque, primary and secondary school, kindergarten, bus station, two open-air markets, bank filial, water and dam management services offices.

The economy in Mer’Awi was stagnant for a couple of last decades, but recently the town has shown the progress in the last years. However, despite a slow economic power growth, the major part of the resident’s relay on a small scale, rainfed agricultural activities, which greatly varies between a season to season. The urban settlement is the commercial centre of the area: the weekly held market attracts a lot of traders from more remote locations who often buy a bigger quantity of grains or other goods. Mer’Awi is well-known for the traditional alcohol “Tella” and “Arekie” brewing, which is the main mean of income source for many its inhabitants. A small-scale merchandise trade, agriculture and services, are the predominant economic activities.⁸⁶ The Koga Integrated Irrigation Dam project attracted more investments and new residents, offering new employment opportunities as well as an efficient agricultural means. A huge area in the east of the city was dedicated to constructing the project management office of Mer’Awi, laboratory, and residential quarters. This project leads to the city expansion in 2015, where a new part of the residential areas was constructed in a less than a couple of months.

According to the city administration office workers, most of the inhabitants are poor, with a monthly 100 euro incomes per capita. Most of the inhabitants are practising

86 Based on Interviews with City Administartion



22. figure Mer Awi. Satellite image. Source: Google Earth.

Size: 4 km²
Population: 35 540 (2015 census)
Population density: 8800 inh/ km²
Woreda: West Gojjam
Established at: ~1940
Main religion: Ethiopian Orthodox Church



23. figure Mer Awi. Map of open public spaces.

Ethiopian Orthodox and identifies themselves as Amharic ethnic group.⁸⁷

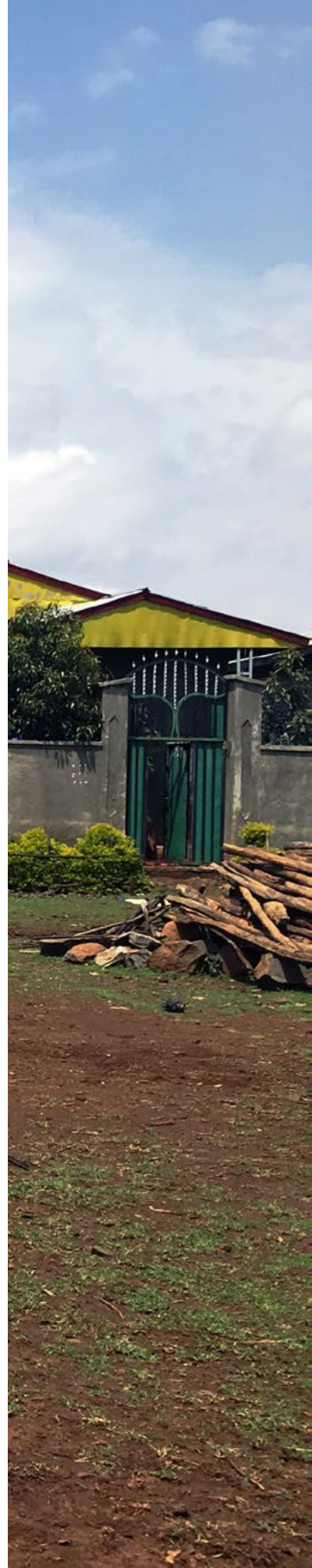
Mer’Awi is located in a relatively favourable climate area. Being situated relatively lower than the rest of the Amhara region or other study cases (1800 m altitude) Mer’Awi has a warmer and more humid climate. Moreover, the surface water is more accessible creating a more advantageous situation for agricultural activities.

The transport connection with other urban settlements in Mer’Awi is relatively well developed. Bahir Dar, the capital city of Amhara region is approximately in half an hour by minibus. The same road connects the town with Lake Tana and domestic flights airport. Intercity buses between Gondar or Bahir Dar towards Addis Ababa commute daily, crossing Mer’Awi. Similar size town, Durbete can be reached in half an hour.

87 Based on Interviews with City Administartion, Dessalegn, 2012.

Typological Classification of the Open Public Spaces

Combination of the analysis of the historical and present background, looking at the political, cultural factors and the observations, allowed to generalize and then to categorize open urban spaces found in the small urban settlements in rural Northern Ethiopia. Based on the observations, how people tend to use open public spaces, what are the spatial characteristics, cultural, political influences and finally what meaning each space has to the residents, all space were categorized into types. Finally, by comparing the observed types of spaces between different urban settlements (Kon, Gashena, Mer Awi), the occurring pattern of typologies was observed. This classification helps to define what are the most common open public spaces found in the smaller urban settlements in Northern rural Ethiopia and what spatial layouts they follow. It reveals what are the significant spatial constructions which have been formed by society a over time, indicating what traditional spatial-social organization is the most appropriate in the mentioned context.



Church Forest

Church Forest typology, found in Northern Ethiopia. Nature by EOC is perceived as a symbol of heaven, a place for all God's creatures to coexist and these pocket forest became a part of the spiritual spaces. Most of the orthodox churches in Ethiopia are surrounded by the small forest, representing the transfer from world to heaven, bringing people closer to God as well as it is a protection of the church itself. Church forest plays an important role in the cultural and sacral life in Ethiopian society.⁸⁸ The evergreen, full of wildlife spaces around churches is integral part between society and religion. Recognized as sacral land, it inhabits many functions. Especially it is important to mention the divine healing rituals, holy water ceremonies and church schoolings, which often takes places here. Moreover, many recreational activities are held here, providing a safe place to play or relax, to meet with friends or study for school. This ancient typology is dating back around 1500 years reveals its sacred and crucial role in Ethiopian society and everyday life. Besides the spiritual, cultural significance, church forests were started to be cultivated by rural communities together with their priest for the more pragmatic reasons too. Often forest around churches are important tool for the local residents to preserve the biodiversity or protect the city and its land from the wild animals like lions of monkeys. The extensive deforestation and rapid population growth exhausted countries land and depleted biodiversity and church forests' typology is extinction. The forests are often round or rectangular place with the church in its centre. Some communities have constructed low fences from stones or eucalyptus to fence-in the planted area in order to protect the forests. However, the fenced spaces are still easily accessible and the only limitation for entering it are the religious beliefs, therefore social norms.



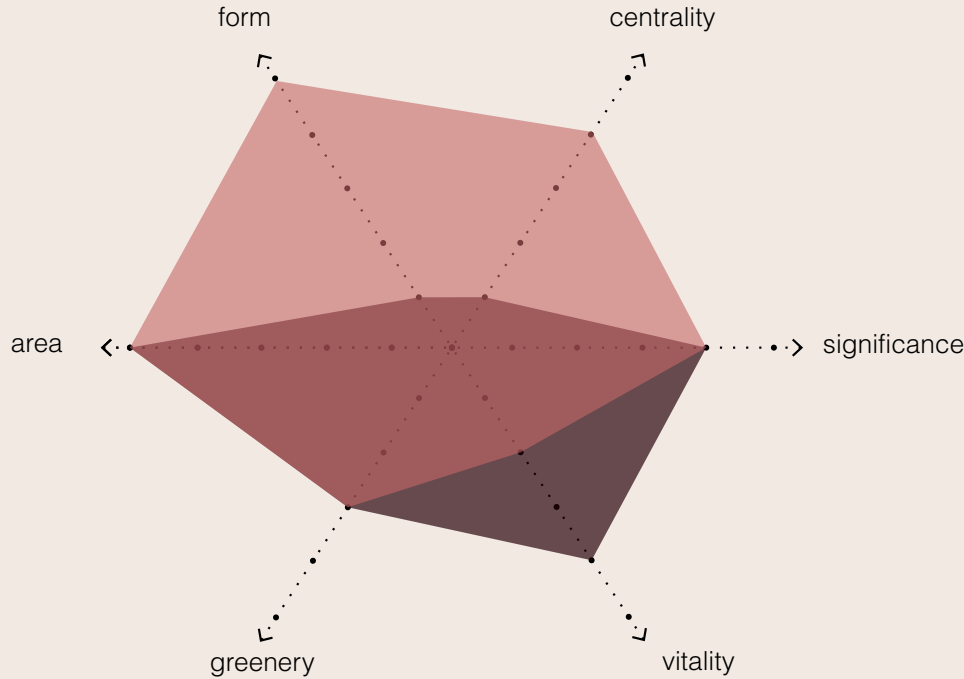
25. figure Kon



26. figure Mer Awi

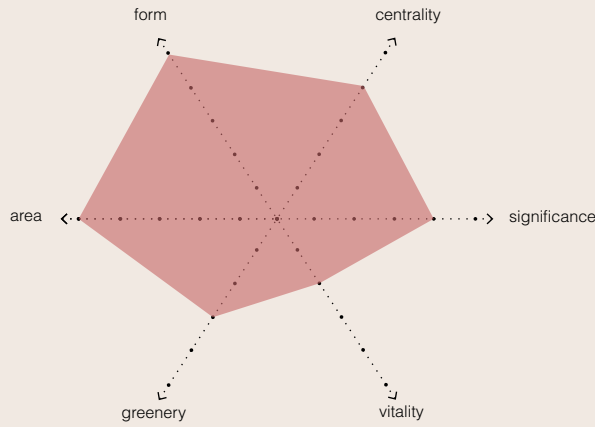
- Legend:**
- movement pattern
 - activities:
 - playing
 - working
 - sitting | standing | talking

The Church forests one of the highest importance open public spaces found in Ethiopia. Larger sites, varying in the size and the shape are found in central areas of the city as well as on outskirts. Some of the forest are fenced, but easily accessible to any member of the community. Church forests are the property of EOC, however the community and the church's priests are responsible for its maintenance. Spaces are highly significant for the entire community perceived as a sacred land, inhibiting many other recreational, ceremonial activities, visited by locals frequently: once per day or few timed per week. The ancient typology is an example illustrating the concept, of how spatial constructions are adopted by society. Often, one could find benches built from eucalyptus logs and arranged in small squares, baptism or healing facilities or even self-made swings. Church forests are considered as a traditional type of public spaces, not much related with an official urban planning practice. However, the main difference, as it could be seen in the graph below, observed between planned and unplanned settlements were the shape and centrality. Church forest found in Mer Awi are located in the city center, following a ridged planned urban grid, meanwhile in Kon it is more an irregular shape with no clear boundaries, located on the outskirts.



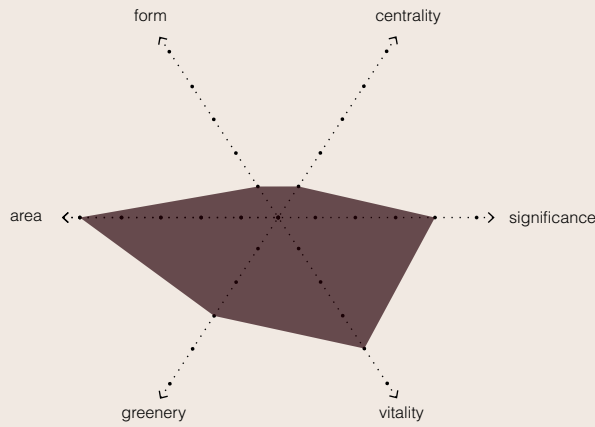
Kon

- size: 17.6 acres
- form: irregular
- centrality: periphery
- significance: high
- vitality: medium
- greenery: high



Mer Awi

- size: 5 acres
- form: regular
- centrality: central
- significance: high
- vitality: high
- greenery: high



29. figure Kon. Church forest also are seen as recreational spaces for social interactions.



27. figure Mer Awi. Apart from the important sacral role forest plays in everyday life it is also important centers for spiritual rituals such as healing, or holy water rituals.



28. figure Kon. An important role church forest plays in preserving the local biodiversity.

Church Yards

Church Yards spaces are located around or nearby churches. Such places can be distinguished as a transition space between sacral church space and city space. The behaviour mapping reveals, that most recognized use of the church squares is that it serves as a place for a short stop to pray or quiet contemplation. In some cases, the Sunday school teachings were taking places here too. In the analyzed cases, facilities for burial ceremonies were located around church squares, indicating that many rituals and commemoration events are held here. Burial, wedding, baptism ceremonies, as well as other religious celebrations as epiphany, are held here. Moreover, churchyards also serve as a platform for community's gatherings to discuss issues or for administrative announcement. Church yards are also used by community based organizations, such as idir⁸⁹. Nearly all investigated church squares were fenced in, but are easily accessible and the only limitation for entering it is the religious beliefs, therefore social norms. Legally, church land mainly is owned by religious institutions (mainly EOC), but spaces are open to use and enter for everyone. The only exception here perhaps is Islam places of worship, having more restricted rules. Similarly as church forest, it serves as a transition between daily life and religion.

89 Community organizations providing financial help to families for emergencies, like funerals and similar



30. figure Kon



31. figure Gashena

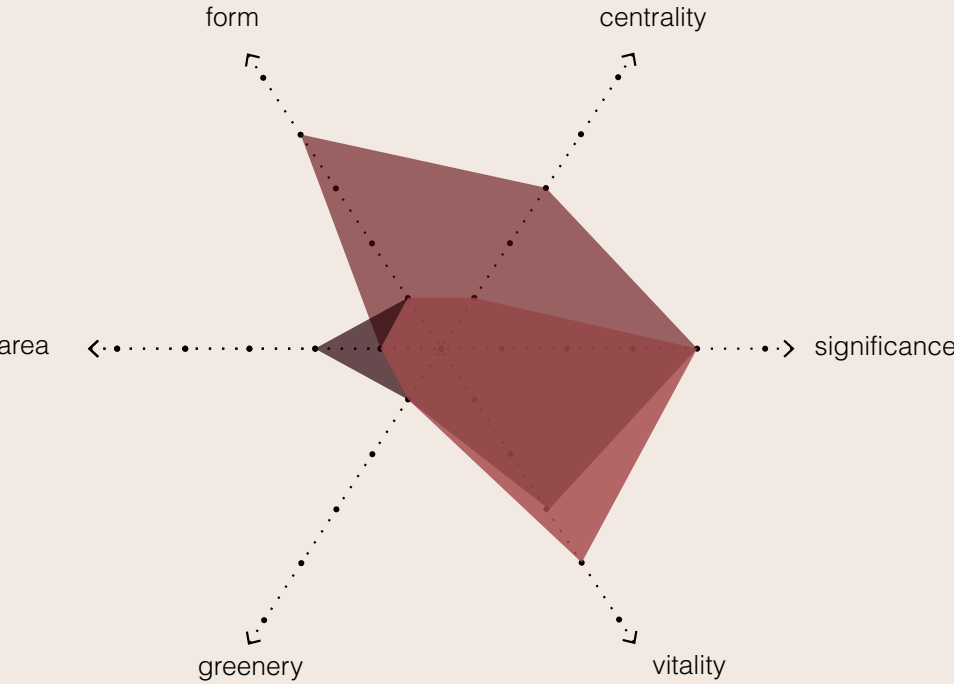


32. figure Mer Awi

- Legend:**
- movement pattern
 - activities:
 - playing
 - working
 - sitting | standing | talking

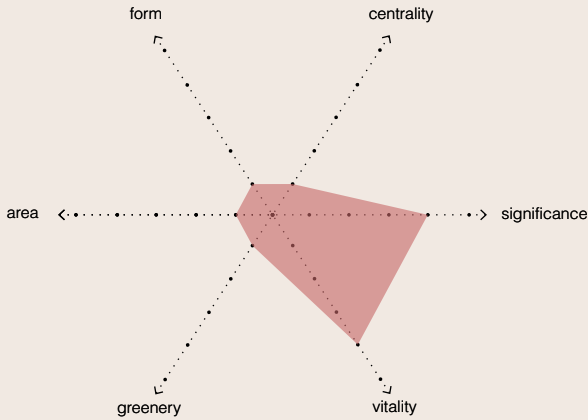
It is more an independent typology emerging despite the urban fabric characteristics, location in the urban settlement, density or spatial configuration. As a tradition, churches are often located on the highest point in the city/town and mostly in the outskirts of the settlements, church yards are found on the fringes of the city. The case of Mer Awi is perhaps more interesting from the point, that the new development neighborhoods put the church in the center area, changing the traditional spatial fabric. It is one of the highest significance spaces found in Ethiopian cities and towns, having an important sacral meaning to the local residents. Most likely it is unbuilt open spaces between residential units and church, or open spaces between different church facilities' buildings, preserved for bigger religion gatherings and similar.

The land of the church as discussed previously is mainly owned by the EOC. Usually to select a location for a church, therefore location of church yard is decided by community based organizations which determine, where the new church should be located and should make a proposal for master plan. Therefore, legal planning practice has no or very little influence shaping the typology, as it is rather socio-spatial product of society and tradition.



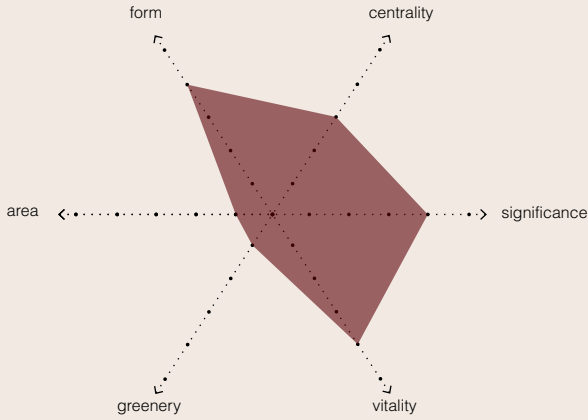
Kon

size:	0.7 acres
form:	regular
centrality:	central
significance:	high
vitality:	high
greenery:	low



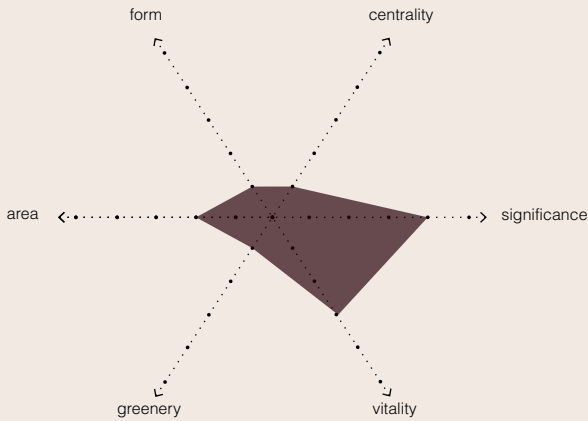
Gashena

size:	1.42 acres
form:	irregular
centrality:	core-periphery
significance:	high
vitality:	high
greenery:	low



Mer Awi

size:	2.2 acres
form:	regular
centrality:	central
significance:	high
vitality:	medium
greenery:	low



34. figure Mer Awi.



33. figure Kon. Church spaces are among very few public spaces, which are constantly maintained by the initiative of community members

35. figure Gashena. Church yard are relatively vital spaces, where local people gather nearly everyday for masses or visit it for a short contemplations.

Market Fields

Open fields for the markets play an important role in every town and bedside the sacral churchyards it is one of the most significant places. Weekly markets take place in the mornings, one or two days per week, Normally it is taking place on the Fridays or Saturdays, but it greatly varies from town to town.⁹⁰ It inhibits thousands of people from surrounding areas who visit such markets to sell their goods or trade them for other raw materials or manufactured goods. During the market time, spaces are extremely crowded and vivid, filled with a mass of donkeys, farmers spread all over the ground or in the little wooden stands. However, even from the first sight, it might appear that space rather looks chaotic and unorganized, it takes a second look to notice, that vendors are clustered together based on the commodities they sell. During the rest of the time, market fields are left quite empty and unused, only small groups of kids or single passersby can be seen here. It is a land, preserved for commercial land use, publicly owned and open to use and access for everyone. However, often the boundaries between private and public domain are blurry.



36. figure Kon. Weekly market



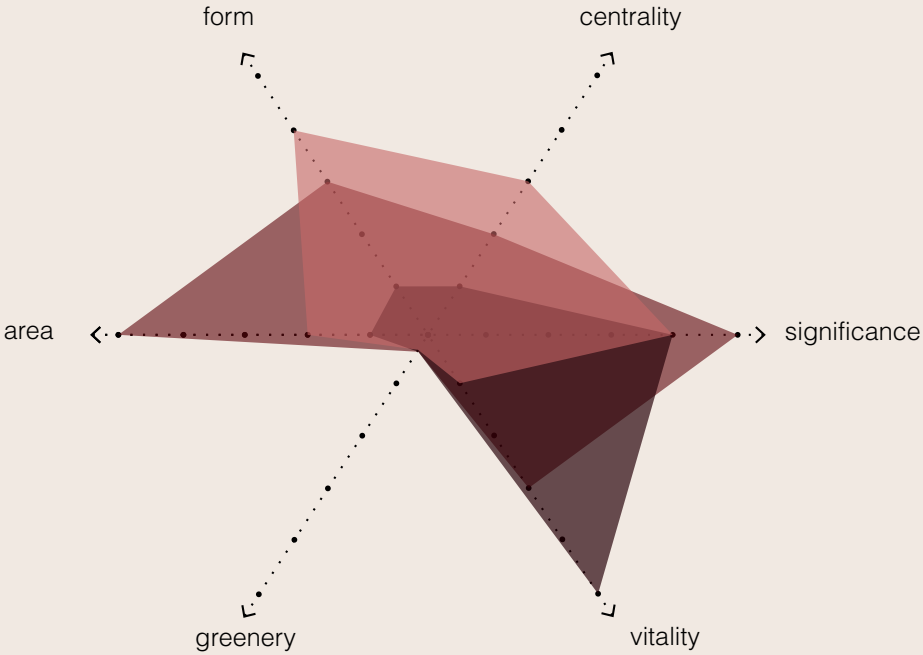
37. figure Gashena. Weekly market



38. figure Mer Awi. Daily market

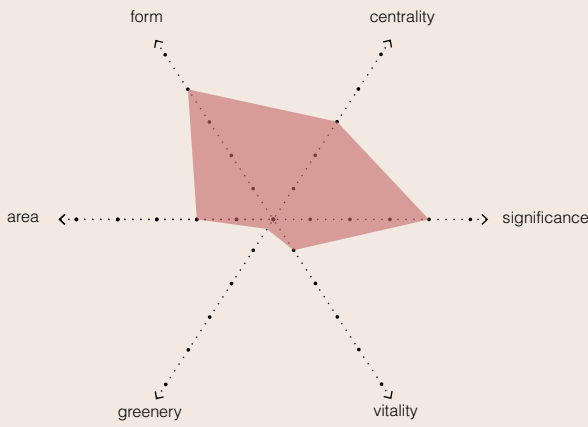
- Legend:**
- movement pattern
 - activities:
 - playing
 - working
 - sitting | standing | talking

Weekly market fields are easily accessible, one of the largest open spaces. Mostly located on the outskirts of the cities/towns, varying in the shape and the size, they are found in any size city/town. The reason for such formation is that markets in Ethiopia in the first place were established by Arabic nomads, who were traveling through the country and would settle close to the cities to trade their goods. It is organically developed, traditional typology of public spaces, emerged without any formal institutions intervention. According to the local professional community, market spaces plays the crucial role as surrounding villages merger. During the active day, approximately once per week, the open-air markets are the most vital, crowded spots, where everyone gathers to sell surplus harvest or to buy the necessary products. On the other days, market spaces stay rather as abandoned, unused. However, spaces for a weekly open-air markets are one of the most significant typology, playing a crucial role in the daily life. In terms of urban fabric characteristics, open air markets does not reveal any particular features which would vary depending on how settlement grew. In other words, markets were not much influenced by the formal planning practice and only in the most recent developments it would be possible to see the emerging practice to plan a grid based spaces, separating the private and public domains by confining market space with the buildings for public use, storage and similar.



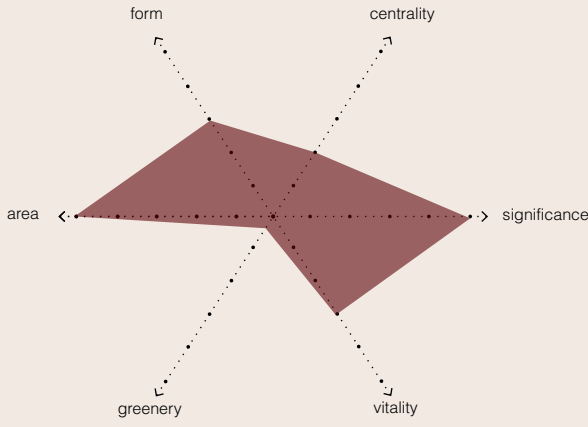
Kon

- size: 4.9 acres
- form: irregular
- centrality: periphery
- significance: high
- vitality: low
- greenery: -



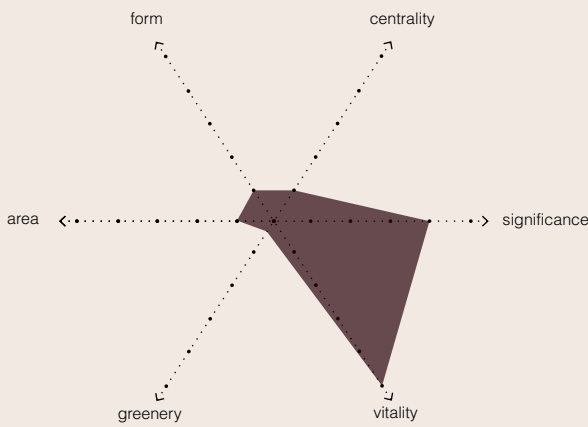
Gashena

- size: 7.9 acres
- form: regular
- centrality: core-periphery
- significance: high
- vitality: medium
- greenery: -



Mer Awi

- size: 0.8
- form: regular
- centrality: central
- significance: high
- vitality: high
- greenery: -



40. figure Weekly market in Mer Awi. The day of the open air-market varies from city to city, so farmers can attend different cities in one week.



41. figure Kon. Open public spaces dedicated for open-air markets on the inactive days are popular among children as a large open space to play.



42. figure Gashena



43. figure Mer Awi, daily market. In some bigger settlements it is usual to find two open-air market locations: for weekly and daily trading.

Neighborhood Open Space

Neighbourhood Open Spaces located in residential areas. Perception of the private domain and public domain here is blended since there is rarely a clear line of what is private, communal or public space. Usually, neighbourhood open spaces are appropriated and adapted to fit the needs of the community, revealing some interesting aspects of how people tend to use the space. The sense of ownership of these spaces is very strong. Interviews with local people revealed that often ones, living around believe, that they have a right to the spaces (despite the fact land is owned by the government). In the case of new urban development areas (case of Mer Awi), these spaces become almost like communal courtyards, where the stranger feels rather intimidated to enter it. Sometimes, local residents even fence these spaces creating a new urban spaces hierarchy. Generally, it is used for storing eucalyptus, doing woodwork, for kids to play. Moreover, these are the areas where neighbourhood residents are meeting to discuss their matters, people go to meet friends or play games. The relation between neighbourhood spaces and residents is due to physical proximity.

Neighbourhood urban spaces mainly are secondary significance spaces, as it is a public/common space for people to meet, having rather a social meaning.



44. figure Kon



45. figure Gashena

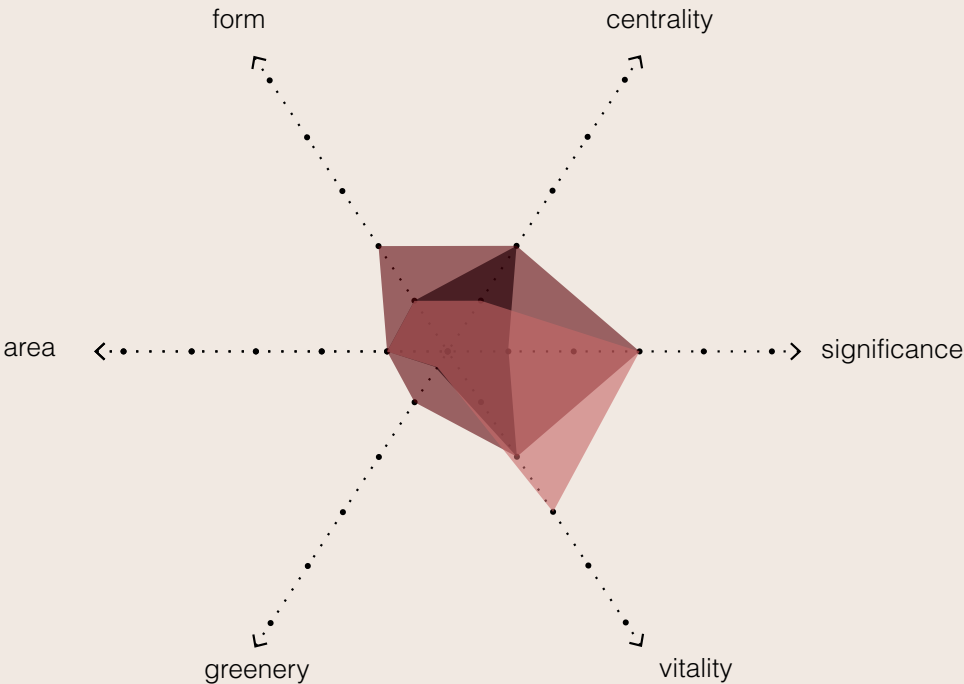


46. figure Mer Awi

- Legend:**
- movement pattern
 - activities:
 - playing
 - working
 - sitting | standing | talking

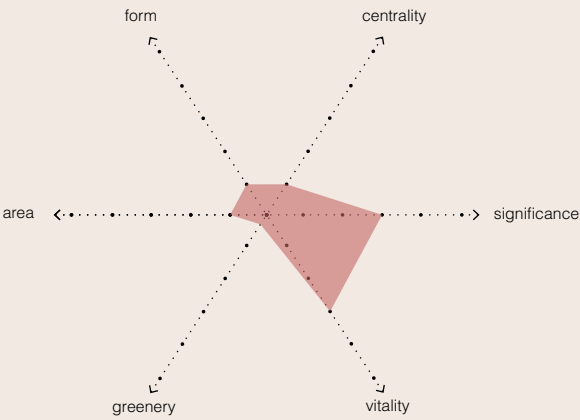
The small size open public spaces found around residential areas, with no or only very few commercial uses offered. The greenery of spaces varies from settlement to settlement, but generally, it is covered in grass with no or few trees. In the new development settlements (Mer Awi) these spaces are also used for growing eucalyptus trees which later are sold. Hence, the land is often leased to prvite person, who is using it to gain a profit. Often, a water well is also found here (especially in the case of older urban areas), but has no bigger impact on use or meaning of the space.

The typology is found in both, planned and self-developed urban areas, indicating that it emerges naturally as a basic type of open space. Depending on the settlement it can be either planned or informally emerged spaces. Such spaces doesn't vary the size, are often around 1 acre, but vastly differs in spatial form; however, it is possible to distinguish the emerging pattern difference between places found in planned and organically grown settlements. It was observed that spaces in planned urban settlements were bigger, located in less dense areas in the peripheries, while in the example of Kon or older part of Mer Awi it is more a compact spaces located in central as well as periphery areas. Moreover, those examined in planned cities (new part of Mer Awi and Gashena) were much less vivid and active compared with ones found in the organically grown urban areas.



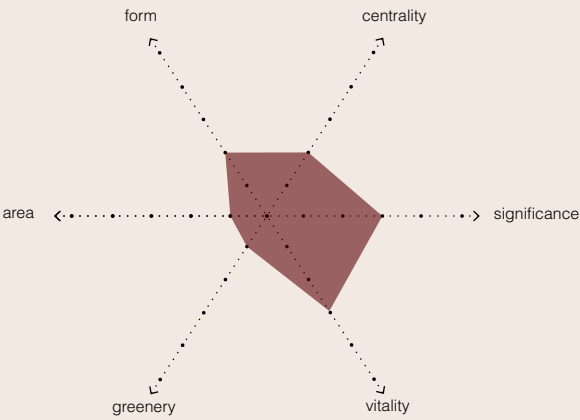
Kon

- size: 0.7 acres
- form: regular
- centrality: central
- significance: medium
- vitality: medium
- greenery: -



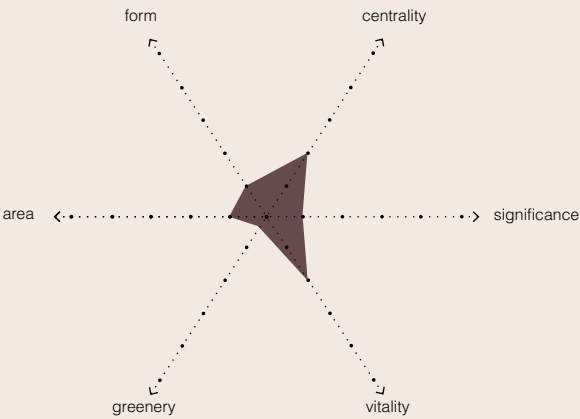
Gashena

- size: 0.5 acres
- form: irregular
- centrality: core-periphery
- significance: medium
- vitality: medium
- greenery: low



Mer Awi

- size: 1.1 acres
- form: regular
- centrality: core-periphery
- significance: low
- vitality: low
- greenery: high



47. figure Gashena. Such open spaces often greatly lacks any minimal maintenance.



50. figure Kon. Neighborhood open spaces are often filled with playing children.



48. figure Mer Awi.

49. figure Mer Awi. It was observed that planned neighborhood spaces tend to be emptier, less vital.

Open Green Space

Natural Open Green Space – publicly accessible woodlands, grasslands and other natural or semi-natural green spaces including urban and rural areas, informal green spaces. As observed during the behavior mapping, these are the spaces where kids can play games, adults meet with others to stop for a short chat. Moreover, often these spaces are used for grazing and eucalyptus wood storing. It is common to see piled logs and 3-5 men groups preparing timber. It is common to see local kids or adult men playing football or other common games. Generally talking, it is a unintentionally unbuilt spaces, the products of leapfrog urban expansion and which are mainly used for recreational purposes.

It is relatively low significance spaces, by most of the people recognized as spaces having any importance, yet, it is one of the most often daily visited open public spaces.



51. figure Gashena

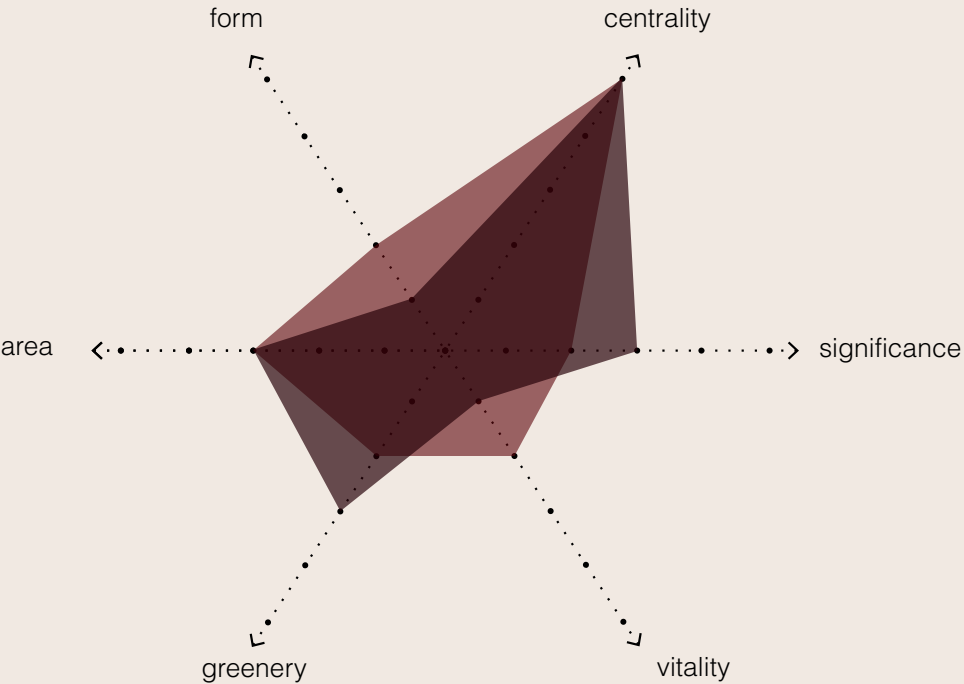


52. figure Mer Awi

- Legend:**
- movement pattern
 - activities:
 - playing
 - working
 - sitting | standing | talking

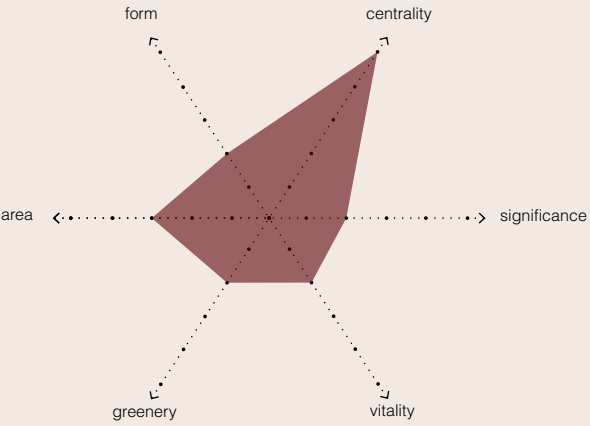
Unbuilt, larger green open spaces located in the town outskirts and lower density areas. Such spaces are often recognized as unbuilt green patches in the urban fabric, and as the areas for the future expansion. Depending on time of the day, the vitality of the spaces slightly changes: in the second part of the day one can find more kids playing, local people passing through and stopping to chat. Generally, spaces became more active in the evenings. Another feature, distinguishing such typology from the other - the amount of the vegetation: it is usual to find such spaces covered in trees, bushes and grass. In the older settlements, the water points are located here, ensuring a free and easy access to the water for the majority of residents.

The typology is mostly found in the planned settlements but did not came across while investigating organically developed town as it was considered more as an agricultural fields. However, open green spaces in the newer development settlements were much more articulated and recognized as an intentional element in urban fabric, having a clearer spatial structure, well defined boundaries.



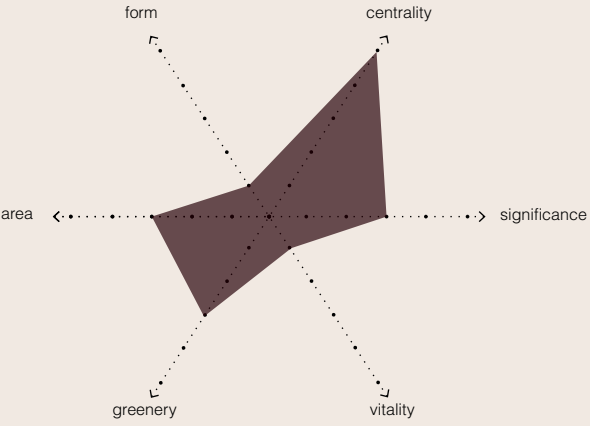
Gashena

- size: 4 acres
- form: regular
- centrality: periphery
- significance: low
- vitality: medium
- greenery: medium



Mer Awi

- size: 7.8 acres
- form: regular
- centrality: periphery
- significance: medium
- vitality: low
- greenery: high



53. figure (above). Open green space in Mer Awi. Eucalyptus grove planted with the aim to sell timber as building material

54. figure (on the right) Gashena. Football gates build by the community's initiative.

55. figure (below) Gashena. Such spaces are often used fro grazing.

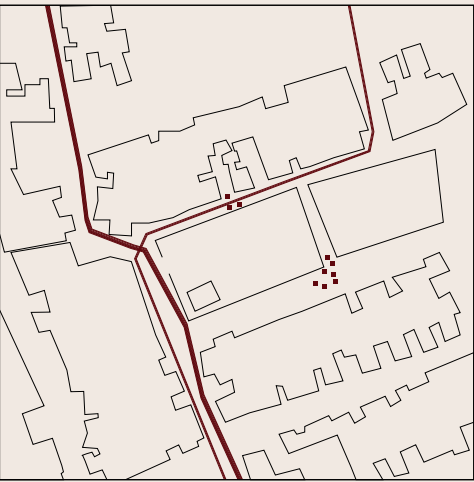


Fenced Open Spaces

It is a relatively new, very specific typology of public spaces, emerging in the new development areas. Based on the information obtained during informal interviews, the spaces are open to enter for everyone. However, it is necessary to have a key.⁹¹

In the examined urban settlements two types of fenced open spaces were identified:

- community gardens - used for official town meetings or for discussing daily issues. Found mostly around residential areas, it is also used as an allotment garden, where community members can grow fruits or vegetables. Spaces are provided by town administration and maintained by citizens of the town.
- fenced playgrounds - aim to provide a safe space for local children to play and engage. Such spaces are established and maintained by the city administration and the local community. Often, playgrounds have several climbing facilities, swings as well as a little indoor space



56. figure Kon



57. figure Mer Awi

Legend:

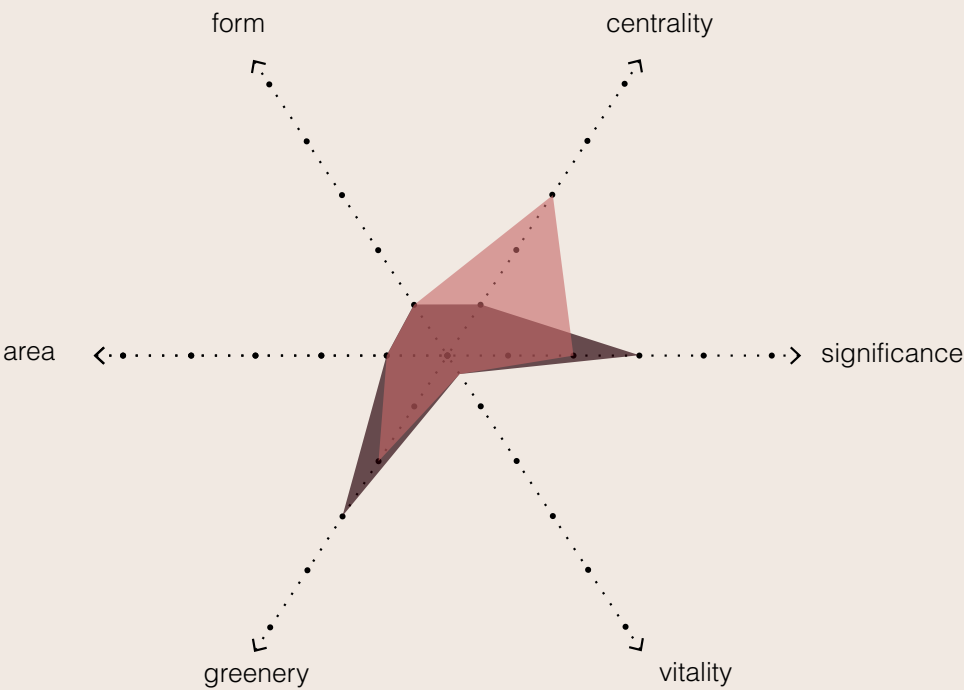
— movement pattern

activities:

- playing
- ▲ working
- sitting | standing | talking

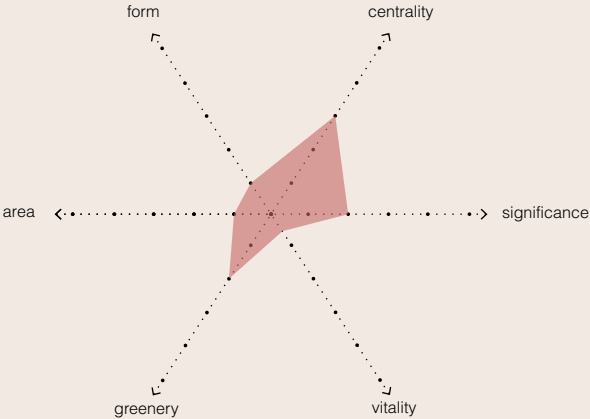
Particularly small, around 1 acre size and rectangular spaces found in the central or core-periphery urban areas. Fenced space indicates limited access, yet it is recognized by the local residents and local administration as public or communal spaces. Used as an allotment gardens or playgrounds it is very green spaces. However, in the investigated cases, such public spaces were unused and defined as public spaces only by city administration officers.

The typology of fenced open spaces is a new concept, developed by the intervention of local authority, yet found in both, planned and organically developed urban areas. The interesting point is that this type of spaces are perceived as public ones by the local community only in the planned city (Mer Awi). The same typology was not recognized by locals as public space in city of Kon, which here represents the case of organically grown urban settlements. Moreover, apart the neighborhood spaces, which are likely to emerge or to be officially planned, fenced public spaces are the only planned typology.



Kon

size:	0.7 acres
form:	regular
centrality:	core-periphery
significance:	low
vitality:	low
greenery:	medium



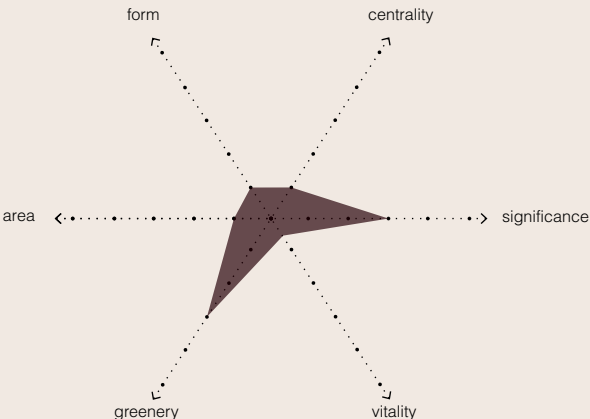
58. figure Mer Awi. Allotment garden - fenced open public spaces.



59. figure Mer Awi. Fenced open space are maintained by the community members. Often they are used as gathering places for the community's meetings.

Mer Awi

size:	0.7 acres
form:	regular
centrality:	central
significance:	medium
vitality:	low
greenery:	high



60. figure Kon. Fenced public open space - playground.



61. figure Kon. Despite the claims, this is public space, open to everyone, there were no people using it.



62. figure Wedding celebration taking place in the public space. Lalibela

5

Conclusions

This final part presents the summary of findings, concluding the study and describing the main findings to answer the posed research questions.

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63. figure Kon. Most of the spaces are lacking basic maintenance and infrastructure and are very poor condition.



The Use & Meaning of the Open Public Spaces

The previous section looked at the different types of urban open spaces, identifying factors and categorize them into typologies. This part aims to conclude obtained information about what significance different urban spaces have, as well as to identify the relation between uses and the meaning. Determining the use and significance of each typology, helped to indicate the hierarchy of those spaces. The connection between the significance and the activities held in the spaces is indisputable. By looking at the historical, cultural background and examining everyday uses, it becomes possible to determine patterns, of what meaning certain urban spaces have to the society. Such findings were compared with the spatial constructions, allowing to create contextual typologies, based on the socio-spatial characteristics.

The political and cultural (mainly religious) setting have played a crucial role in shaping the values in the past (see the discussson in chapter 2). Still, up to this day, political setting and religion are two main poles, influencing the Ethiopian society and shaping its behaviour. At the same time, these values still are very strongly affecting the perception of what is important and what is appropriate. Moreover, the political-cultural influence not only shapes the perception of what is allowed or appropriate but also, why cities were shaped in the way they are. These values, together with formed perceptions are shaping traditions and traditional uses, what becomes an important phenomenon to look at the times of changes and how it will affect the future living.

Generally speaking, the described public spaces can be divided into two groups: first and second level spaces. First level hierarchy spaces are the ones described as having the highest significance and are the most recognized as public spaces. Church forest, churchyards and market fields fall under this category. As already mentioned in the previous chapters (chapter 2), EOC is playing a major role in every day's life for centuries. Church forests and spaces in and around the church compounds (church squares or yards) are inherent from everyday routines. Therefore, it is not surprising that the spaces, having a sacral meaning has the highest significance. Based on the interviews material, people visit these spaces daily. Moreover, in all examined cases residents claimed, that

64. figure Kon. Often public spaces lack a basic maintainance.

65. figure Amhara. Kids Playing in the street.



places related to any church activities have the highest importance. Church forest, besides providing a pleasant space for recreation and preserving biodiversity is also important spiritual centres to perform many rituals as divine healing or holy water ceremony. These forests together with churchyards have been important community centres since the 4th century.⁹² As it is seen from the analysis, the importance remained up to this date. No less important are the market fields. In the regions where natural resources are very limited and agriculture is one of the main means of living, trading activities becomes especially important. Hence the market places. In most of the case markets are the nodus of the new urban areas' growth and expansion. Open-air markets are an integral part of the social and spatial structure in any size urban area in Ethiopia. It is not only a place to trade for necessary goods but serves as an important social hub, attracting people from surrounding areas to exchange news and ideas. It notably supports town economic prosperity. Consequently, market spaces remained to have a significant position.

On the other hand, neighbourhood open spaces, green open spaces and fenced public spaces can be identified as lower hierarchy ones. The awareness, of what role these places play in everyday's life is very low. Boundaries between private and public domain are rather blurry and often 'public's becomes 'common' or even as as private. Neighbourhood open spaces are the most spatially undefined typology, varying greatly from settlement to settlement, having very intangible spatial characteristics. However, it has a relatively important meaning to the neighbourhood level. Despite the fact, these are less recognized by the community members as once having any importance to their lives, they constitute greatly to the overall well being of the community. Such spaces serve as social hubs, places to play and interact and meet neighbours. They have rather higher importance on the neighbourhood, social levels.

It becomes clear, that in Ethiopian society, spaces gain the meaning according to the functions, thus, activities they inhibit. Those functions enable certain uses and behaviour patterns, which in turn, are shaped by the previously mentioned aspects (political, cultural, geographical settings) influencing behaviour in the long-time period. Hence, the highest hierarchy spaces are those, which have a clearly formed and defined, elaborated functions, mostly linked with socio-cultural background. Functions such as praying, healing, trading

and similar. These activities are strongly related to the historical, cultural background, which are the reason for recognition and value. However, it is important not to forget that the matter this study is analyzing, is highly dependent on the awareness of observed society. It was perceived that certain spaces and the purpose these spaces serve for, were often overlooked or taken for granted. Especially it is evident about small neighbourhood and green open spaces. Such places serve as a platform for many activities, varying from social encounters, to the building materials storing and does not have a clearly articulated purpose. They are a blind side of the city structures, playing a crucial role in creating more coherent, livable cities, bringing communities together. More importantly, reflecting, how people live.

66. figure Although uses and activities of public space in Mer Awi were very similar as in other towns (for wood storing, daily chores and similar) the obvious difference was the condition of spaces. More walkable, more pleasant and cleaner open public spaces were much more vital compared with the same typology in for instance in Gashena.



Formal versus Self-Developed Settlements

In the country as Ethiopia, where self-developed, organic structures are predominant, the informal developments serve as a valuable source of information. By looking at the different settlements, where each case represented planned (Gashena), organically grown (Kon) and mixed (Mer Awi) settlement, it was possible to obtain information about the differences and similarities occurring between the way how society tends to organize and appropriate the spaces they live. The comparative analysis method revealed the tendencies in spatial structures as well as social perceptions.

To start with, the most noticeable differences are observed in the network of spaces. Map here (figure 65-66) reveals a clear difference between the urban fabrics of Kon and Gashena. The network of public spaces in the city of Kon is denser compared with Gashena. Also, open spaces in Kon are distributed more equally, while in Gashena open spaces are rather located in the periphery areas and not much in the central area. Such formation could be a consequence of the urban fabric formation (chapter Planned and ‘Organic’ Cities) process. While Kon was growing organically, the situation in Gashena was rather different. New settlers in Kon most likely were dwelling around the older residents sporadically, therefore open spaces were emerging rather spontaneously, without any extrinsic influence to overlook a city fabric. However, Gashena, as a planned city, started to grow



67. figure Kon. Map of public spaces



68. figure Gashena. Map of public spaces



69. figure Mer Awi. Map of public spaces

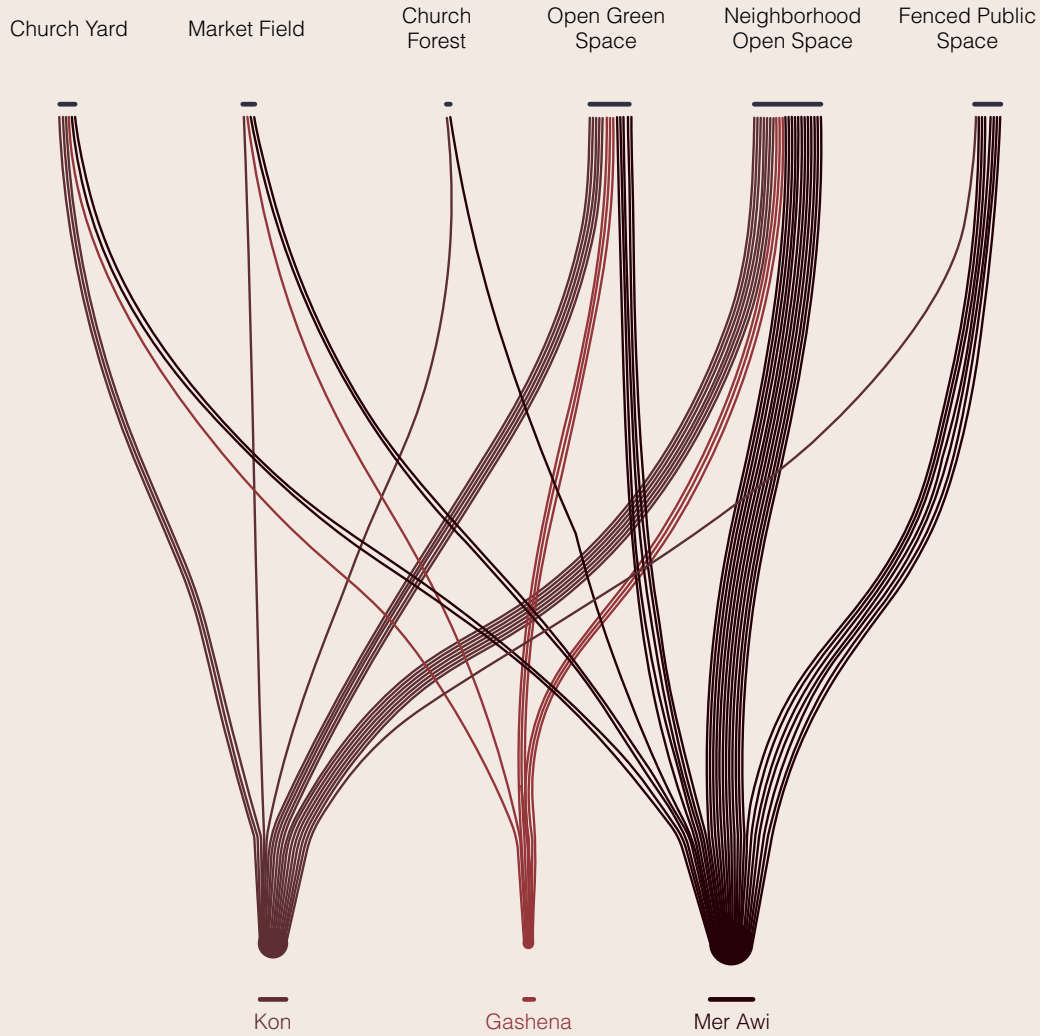
from the road intersection, where housing is the main land use, with an exception of market field and churchyard. While city was expanding, open spaces on the fringes were shifted to public space. The urban expansion and grow type also could explain the spatial characteristic of open public spaces. Compared with Gashena, grid of spaces in Kon is finer – spaces are smaller, located closer to each other (centrality values are higher, see map in appendix). Meanwhile the case of Mer Awi is illustrating a similar phenomenon: the central area is spatially more open and mainly is dedicated to housing. The only public open spaces there are the market field and churchyard. However,

the new development (finished since 2015) section in the west, is more spatially open, with a more diverse urban fabric. Basically, the new area is consisting of the low-density neighbourhood blocks and open neighbourhood spaces, which vary in size. These spaces sometimes are closed by residents and become communal or are sold by municipality to a private person which plants eucalyptus trees which later are sold as building materials.⁹³ Another interesting difference observed while investigating planned and organically grown cities – the existing typologies found there. All towns, despite their pattern, had churchyards and markets. These typologies are quite similar between each settlement: the significance, activities (uses) and morphology do not alter greatly. They are all located in core-periphery or periphery areas (similar centrality numbers) and are relatively similar sizes, form complexity. However, neighbourhood open spaces and green open spaces are the typologies more dependant on the settlement spatial pattern. These second-level hierarchy spaces were much more often found in Kon, that in Gashena (figure 68 iliuustrates the frequency dependencies in different settlements). The neighbourhood public spaces found in Kon, the city which represents an organically grown urban pattern, were often filled with playing children, passengers and local adults doing daily chores or chatting. Here mothers can easily watch their kids playing in proximity and still run their errands. Meanwhile, Gashena offers fewer places for such activities. Mainly it is neighbourhood

93 Based on the informal interview with City Administration

streets, which often are just open spaces between gated houses or open green spaces located in the outer areas of the city, therefore not accessible to everyone, or visited less frequently. Due to the lack of open spaces, and the planned functions they should provide, people tend to appropriate spaces surround them. This is how a small, sometimes private open spaces become a public or communal space (neighbourhood open space) for social encounters. In general, despite the fact, neighborhood spaces are the least recognized and has the lowest significance, this typology is the most common one. (see figure 68). Such phenomenon proofs the fact, that despite the living conditions, context and cultural, political background public open spaces are the crucial element in everyday life, hence the urban fabric. Furthermore, it was noted, that public spaces in Kon are much more vital than Gashena. The case of Mer Awi again is very specific. The older development area includes only churchyard and market spaces, while the newer part of the city, offers a great range of neighbourhood spaces, yet some of the spaces are transformed into a little eucalyptus forest or become fenced, restricting the right to enter the neighbouring space. The example of Mer Awi is illustrating a now often occurring situation of formal planning practice. These neighbourhood spaces provide a place for daily interactions, a place to meet neighbors or a safe place for children to play and for families to watch them. However, they are rarely used, lifeless, compared with the organically emerged public spaces in the older development part of the city. Such situation of inactive open public spaces in the planned cities (Gashena and Mer Awi) could have many different reasons, related to the observation time, residents daily routines an many other. However, the morphological differences between spaces in Kon and Gashena, or between older and new parts of Mer Awi are obvious. The aforementioned case of spontaneously developed open public spaces are characterized as smaller size, irregular form, located relatively close to other land uses, forming a more dense network of spaces. These spaces are indicated as unbuilt open spaces which over a time were appropriated by local residents to fit their needs. Whereas spaces in Gashena are much larger, located mostly in the periphery areas and further away from other services and activities in town.

Finally, an interesting aspect noted during the observations, was a relation between the maintenance of the space and its vitality. Especially it was perceptible in Gashena. Nearly all public spaces were very poor condition, difficult to pass, not to mention possibility for any other activities. Those few green open space or church yard, for instance were much more appreciated and active. The same counts for comparing public spaces in Mer Awi. Even the minimal level of maintenance and especially higher greenery level of spaces are much more attractive compared with ones without any upkeep and proper surface. Those spaces were mainly used only by people, passing by and not for stopping for a short chat or chosen by kids to play around. As an example, church forest, church yards and few neighborhood spaces illustrates such situation well. (see the typology analysis section and tables in appendix).



70. figure Scheme showing the relation between cities and public space typologies.

Despite the noted morphological differences found in all examined open public spaces, the general perception towards those spaces does not alter from city to city. The main uses, behaviour patterns and meaning of the spaces remained more or less the same. Such a situation allowed to classify spaces into typologies, which occurred in both, planned and unplanned urban settlements. The occurring patterns of the similar perception towards build-up environment and how it is used, reaffirm the earlier discussed hypothesis, that every society is responsible for producing and reshaping their own environment. Moreover, the same behaviour and significance patterns, reveals, that political, cultural development, to which the society was exposed to, shapes the values and, therefore, the way, how that group of people will use their urban spaces, and interacts with build-up environment.

Limitations of the Study & Directions for the Future Research

This research aimed to understand the nature of open public spaces in growing urban settlements in Northern Ethiopia and what are the differences between planned and unplanned urban settlements. To achieve it, this study examined the behaviour patterns and activities how residents of small emerging towns tend to use urban spaces and what meaning they have, and does it alter from formally planned and organically grown cities. By investigating the historical political, cultural development background, and combining the theoretical knowledge with empirical research outcome, examined open spaces were categorized into typologies, allowing to see the differences between each urban pattern. However, time and resources limitation did not allow to investigate study areas more comprehensively, looking at the most important factors and the research shall be rather seen as a sample for future investigations. The information obtained from interviews is an extremely valuable resource, but due to the time limits, it was not possible to survey larger groups of residents, focusing on the specific public space. Also, information was often lost due to the translation problem. The study area is tightly related with an awareness of citizens, therefore in-depth interviews were often the most trustful source of information, but as mentioned below, due to the limitations, it was not possible to conduct them more often or longer. Moreover, ideally it would be recommended to analyze the selected cities at least twice in the different season or years, to ensure the higher validity and assurance of the study.

Analyzing open public spaces, this study excludes the analysis of streets and communal spaces. Street spaces and street life is a very particular, complex matter and would have exploded the scope of the study too much. However, aiming to create a more comprehensive analysis following the aim of this research methodology and trying to identify what are the differences between urban patterns and how people tend to use their space, it would be necessary to include the section about the street spaces. To enhance the understanding of the meaning of space it is essential to analyze the indoor/outdoor common spaces and daily life routines what impact the use of the built-up environment.

Finally, this study aimed to investigate, what are the differences between planned and organically formed cities and what are the differences between open public space. To have an ideal study case, it is recommended to investigate small size cities located in the Afar region, Asaita and Semera. Two towns, located 60 km apart, illustrates the example, when formally planned cities fail to meet the needs of the residents and become abandoned and inactive. Asaita city grew from the informal refugees' settlement and become overcrowded. In response, the government draw plans for the city Semera, aiming to relocate some people and provide so needed jobs and housing. However, it is known that a relatively big part of the inhabitants refused

to move out from Asaita, choosing to commute every day. Such formation undoubtedly is influenced by many complex factors and cannot be explained only by one aspect.

However, this research has discussed and proofed the importance of public spaces in every day's life. As well as the fact, that informally emerged spaces are the valuable source of information, revealing how society aims to organize themselves spatially as well as what is needed. The discovered typologies of open public spaces and the hierarchical principles of open spaces can be easily adapted to the slightly different context, to enhance the understanding of what is needed and what should be improved in terms of spatial planning. The knowledge about the everyday's life and how urban spaces are incorporated in the daily routines can help to achieve more context-based, locally tailored urban planning decisions.



71. figure
Neighborhood
Open Space

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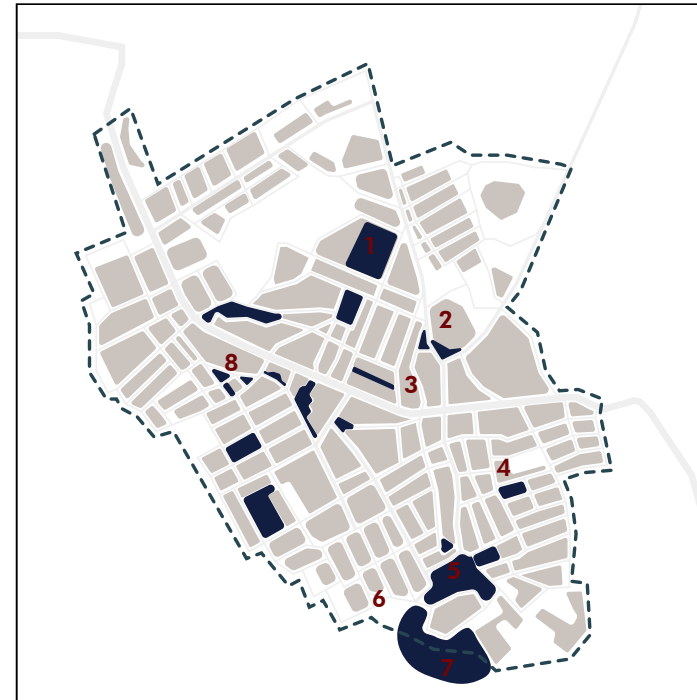
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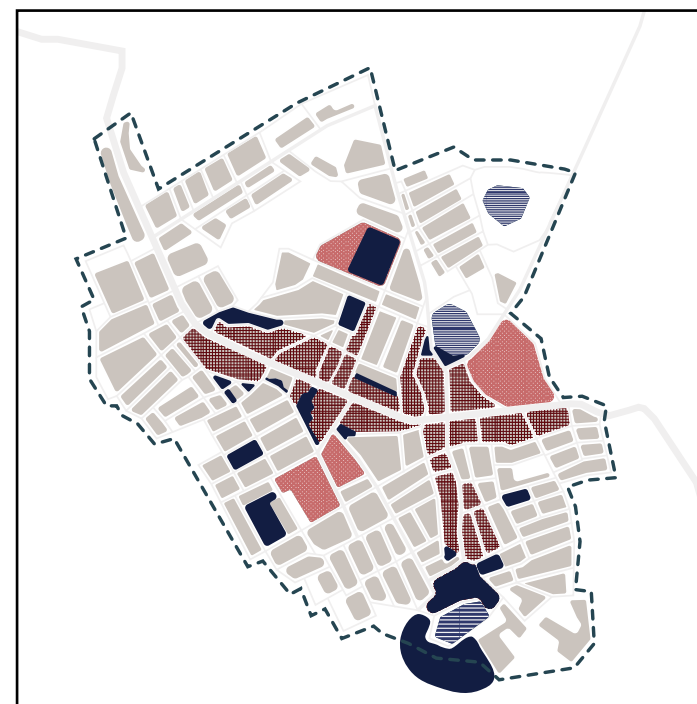
Maps

Kon



Map of public spaces. List of investigated spaces:

- 1. School playground
- 2. Church Yard
- 3. Neighborhood Open Space
- 4. Fenced Open Public Space
- 5. Market Field
- 6. Church Yard
- 7. Church Forest
- 8. Neighborhood Open Space | Water Point



Land use map. From investigations.

- Residential blocks
- Open urban spaces
- Services (school, administration, police, hospital, etc.)
- Commercial use
- Religious use
- Approximate city boundaries

Gashena



Map of Public Spaces. List of investigated spaces:

1. Church Yard
2. Neighborhood Open Space
3. Open Green Space
4. School playground
5. Neighborhood Open Space | Water Point
6. Privately Owned Open Public Space
7. Market Field



Land use map. From investigations.

- Residential blocks
- Open urban spaces
- Services (school, administration, police, hospital, etc.)
- Commercial use
- Religious use
- Approximate city boundaries

Mer Awi



Map of public spaces. List of investigated spaces:

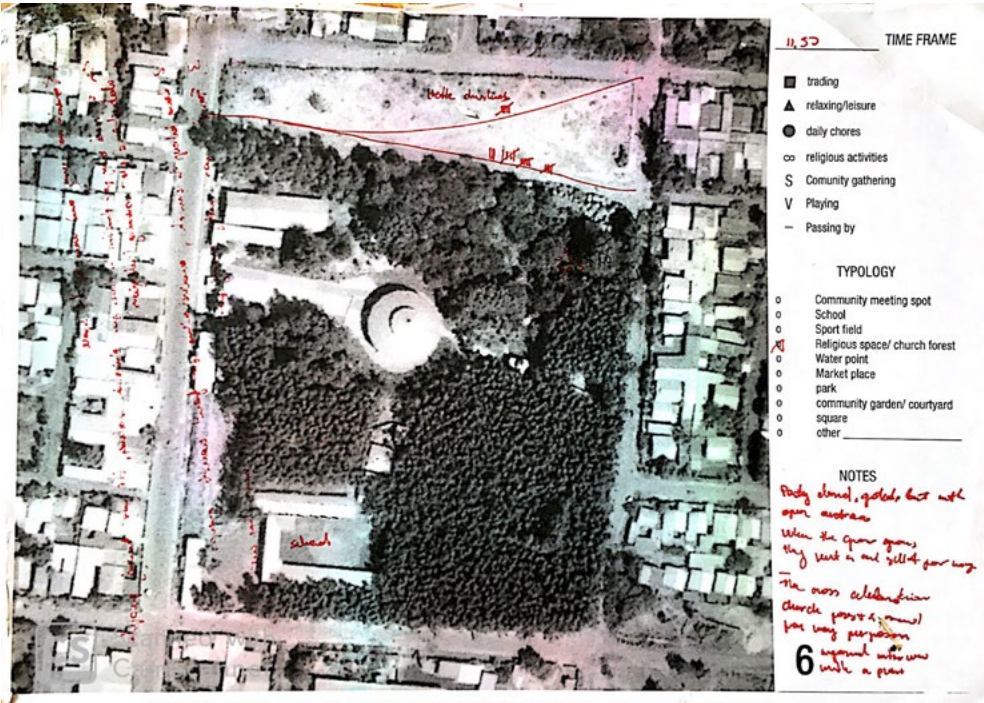
1. Neighborhood Open Space
2. Neighborhood Open Space | Water Point
3. Market
4. Church Yard
5. Church Forest
6. Fenced Open Space
7. Neighborhood Open Space
8. Open Green Space



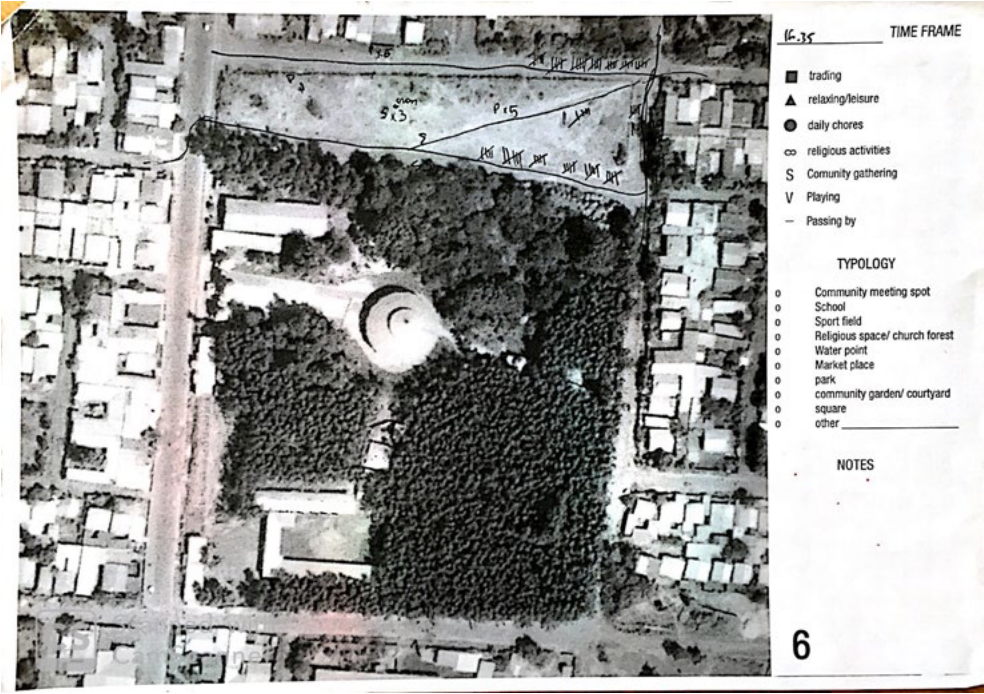
Land use map. From investigations.

- Residential blocks
- Open urban spaces
- Services (school, administration, police, hospital, etc.)
- Commercial use
- Religious use
- Approximate city boundaries

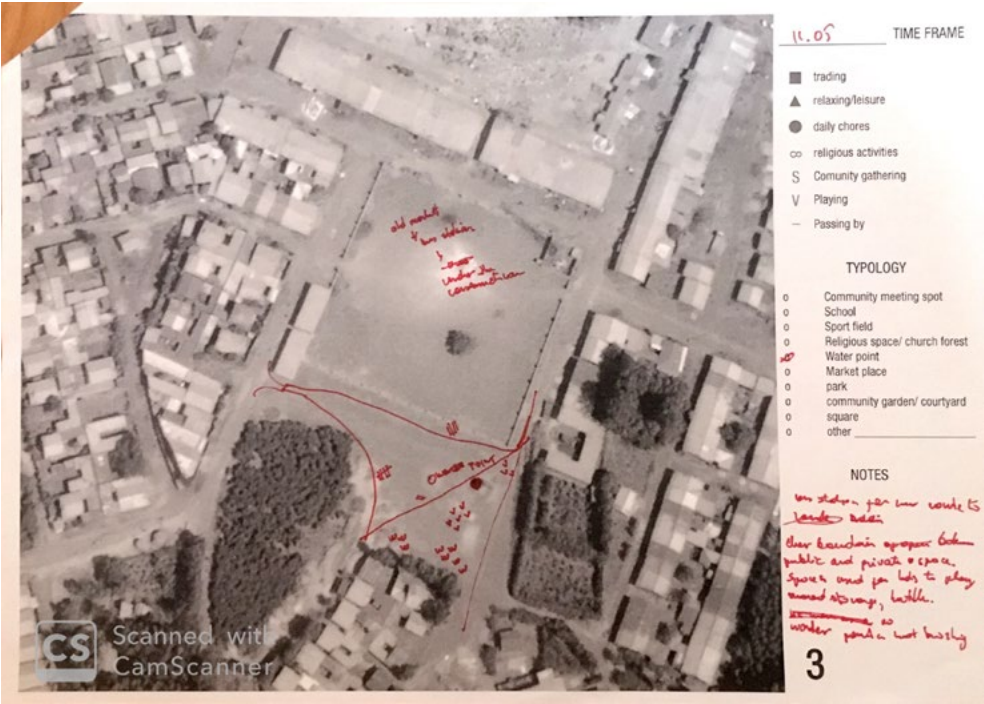
Behaviour Mapping. Mer Awi. Church Yard with Church Forest.



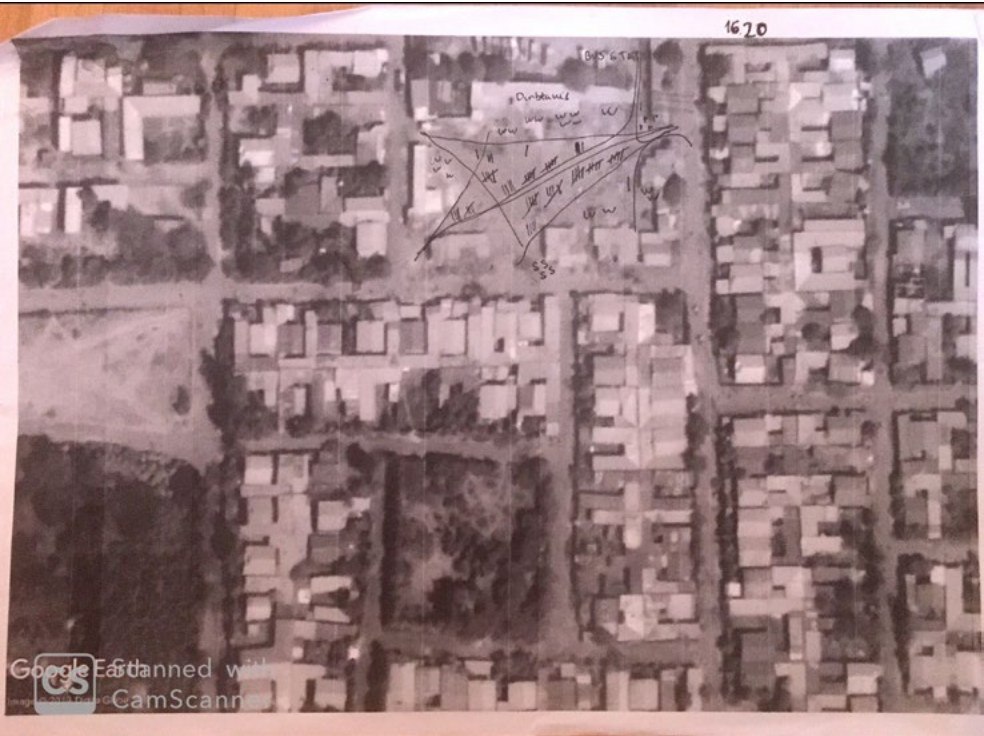
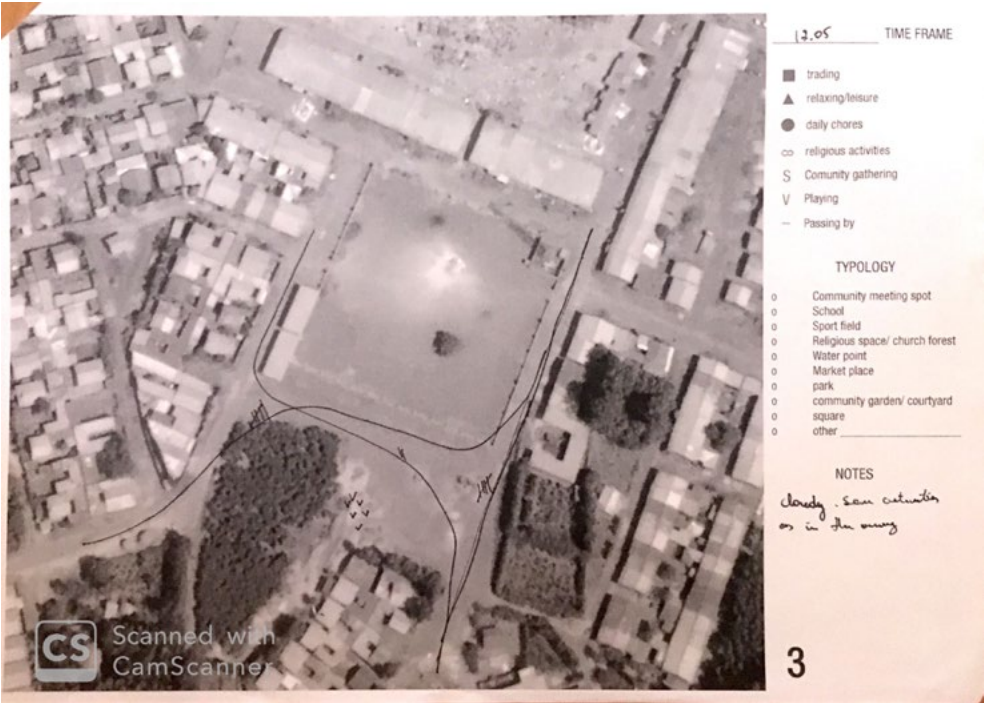
Behaviour Mapping. Mer Awi. Neighborgood Open Space



Behaviour Mapping. Mer Awi. Neighborgood Open Space/ Water Point



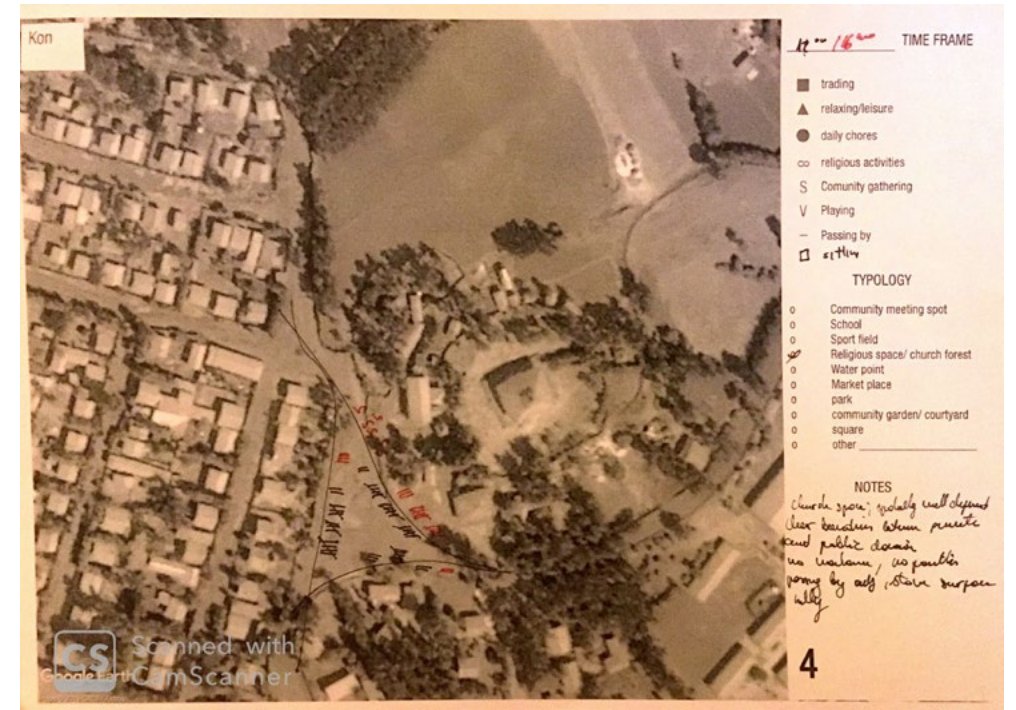
Behaviour Mapping. Mer Awi. Daily Market Space



Behaviour Mapping. Mer Awi. Neighborhood Open Space



Behaviour Mapping. Kon. Church Square



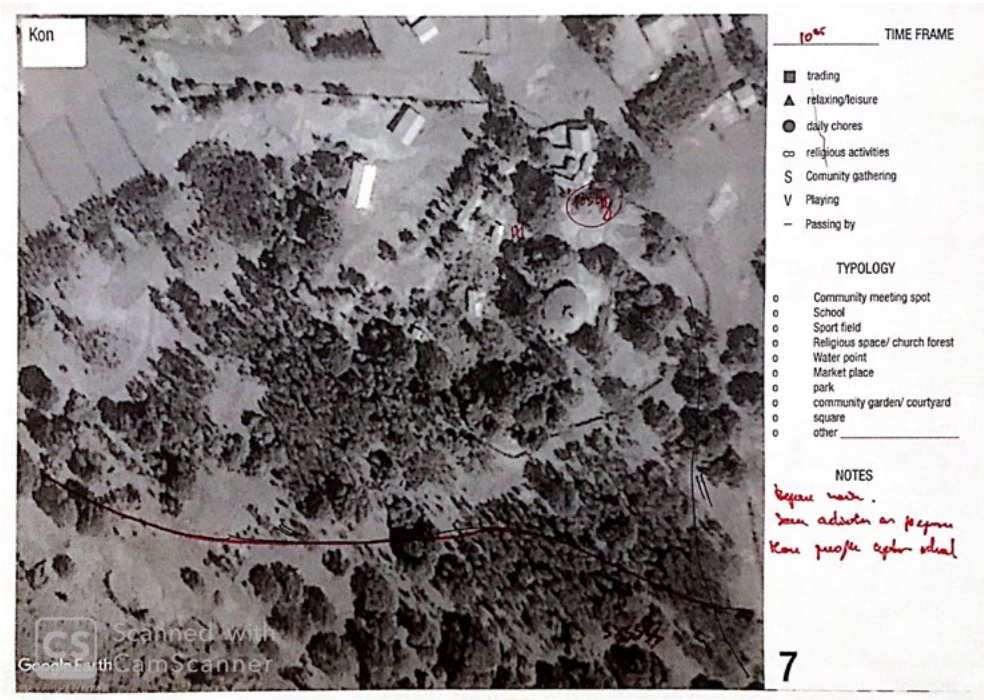
Behaviour Mapping. Kon. Market Field.



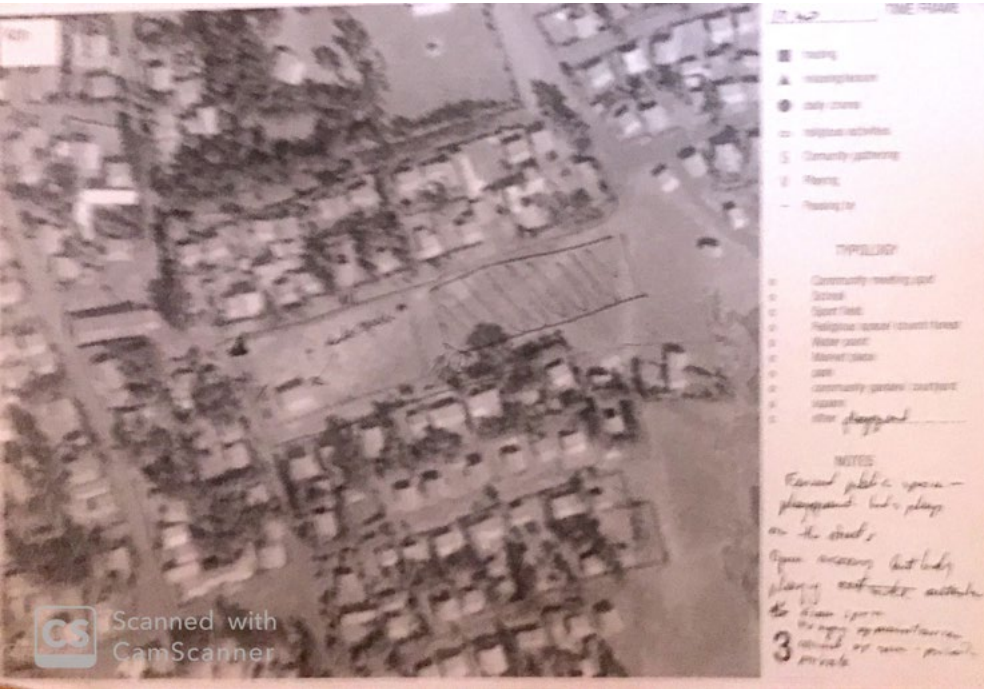
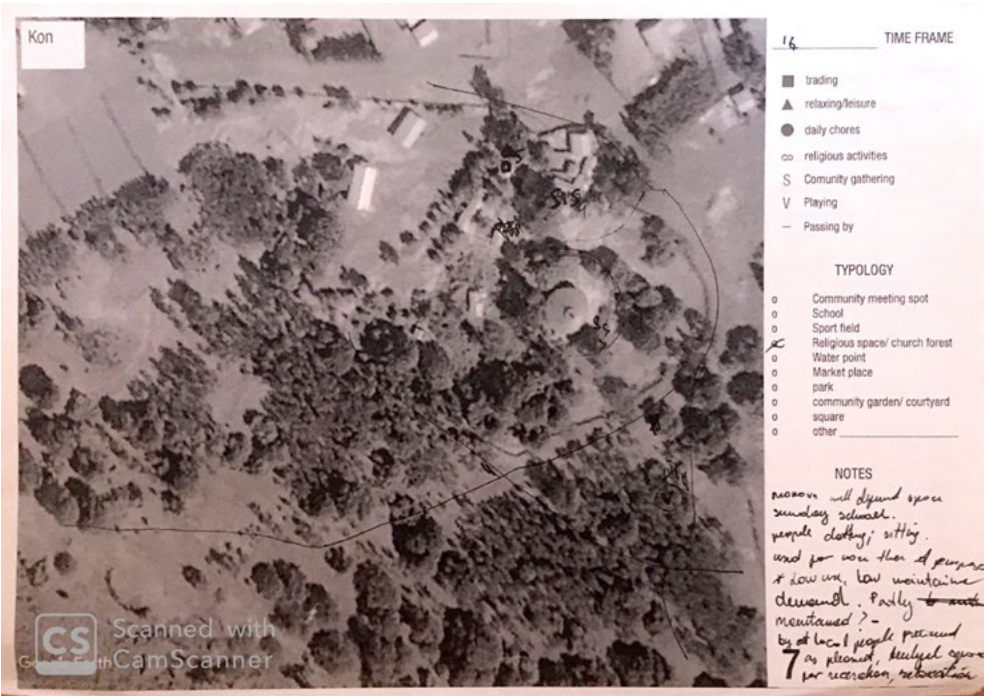
Behaviour Mapping. Kon. Neeighborhood Open Space



Behaviour Mapping. Kon. Church Forst



Behaviour Mapping. Kon. Fenced Public Space



Behaviour Mapping. Gashena. Neighborhood Open Space



Behaviour Mapping. Gashen. Open Green Space



Behaviour Mapping. Undefined Space. City Center



Behaviour Mapping. Gashena. Market Field



Combined Data Set Tables

	Typology	Church Forest	Church Yard	Market Field	Neighborhood Open Space	Opnen Green Space	Fenced Public Space	Water Point
Kon	Area (square meters)	71300	2900	19600	2900	-	2700	1500
	Morphological Form	irregular	regular	irregular	regular	-	regular	irregular
	Centrality Ratio	4	1	3	1	-	4	5
	Greenery	high	low	-	-	-	medium	-
	Vitality	2	4	1	3	-	1	3
	Significance	2	2	2	3	-	4	4
	Ownership	EOC	EOC	Government	Government	-	Government	Government
	Use	leisure, praying, playground, teaching, meeting place, passing by	leisure, praying, meeting place, religious ceremonies, passing by	retail, playground, water access, passing by	building materials storing, meeting place, playground, grazing land, passing by	-	playground	water access, meeting place, playground, grazing land, passing by
	Maintainance	community, church members	church members	no	no	no	community	no

Gashena								
Area (square meters)	-	5700	31900	1900	16000	-	-	14000
Morphological Form	-	irregular	regular	irregular	irregular	-	-	irregular
Centrality Ratio	-	3	1	1	3	-	-	3
Greenery	-	low	-	low	medium	-	-	low
Vitality	-	4	3	2	medium	-	-	4
Significance	-	2	1	3	4	-	-	3
Ownership	-	EOC	Government	Government	Government	-	-	Government
Use	-	praying, teaching, religious ceremonies,	retail, playground, water access, passing by	passing by, meeting place, passing by	playground, water access, grazing land, meeting place passing by,	-	-	building materials storing, water access, meeting place, playground, grazing land, passing by
Maintainance	-	no	no	no	no	-	-	no

Questionnaire

	Mer Awi									
Typology	Church Forest	Church Yard	Market Field	Neighborhood Open Space	Open Green Space	Fenced Public Space	Water Point			
Area (square meters)	20000	8700	3100	4500	11500	3000	8400			
Morphological Form	regular	irregular	regular	regular	irregular	regular	irregular			
Centrality Ratio	4	2	4	3	5	1	2			
Greenery	high	-	-	medium	high	high	low			
Vitality	4	3	4	2	5	1	2			
Significance	2	2	2	5	3	3	5			
Ownership	EOC	EOC	Government	Government	Government	Government	Government			
Use	praying, teaching, local religious ceremonies	passing by, religious ceremonies, praying,	retail, passing by, meeting point, other commercial services	passing by, playground, community meeting place, building material storing	passing by, building materials storing, playground	playground, community meeting place, community garden	passing by, water access, playground, building materials storing			
Maintenance	church members	church members	no	community	no	community, local administration	no			

DATE _____ SPACE NUMBER _____ SETTLEMENT NAME _____

NAME, GENDER, AGE: _____

PUBLIC SPACE TYPE:

☐ Community meeting spot

☐ School

☐ Sport field

☐ Religious space/ church forest

☐ Water point

☐ Market place

☐ _____

1. What is the main reason you come to this space?

☐ Because of the activities offered (indicate what: trading - religious – leisure - social - other)

☐ It is close to your home

2. What is the most important thing in this place for you?

☐ Services offered here (what? _____)

☐ Location

☐ Opportunity to spend free time

☐ Place to see and meet friends

☐ Pleasant environment

☐ Other _____

3. How often do you attend this place?

☐ Daily

☐ weekly

4. How far do you live from the place?

☐ 0-15 min

☐ 15-30 min

☐ 30min - 1h

☐ more

5. Do you know who owns this land?

☐ Private person

☐ Community

☐ Government

6. Who is responsible for taking care of this space?

☐ Joint community group

☐ The responsible group/people selected for this matter

☐ City administration

☐ _____

7. How important for you and your family is this place?

☐ Important

☐ Neutral

☐ Not important

8. What do you think is missing in this place?

Data from Questionnaires

Kon

QUESTION	What is the main reason for you to come to this place?	What is the most important thing in this place for you?	How often do you attend this place?	How far do you live from the place?
LOCATION				
Church forest	leisure	meeting people	> 1 x week	10-15 min
	leisure	pleasant environment	> 1 x week	15-20 min
	religion	pleasant environment	> 1 x week	5-10 min
	leisure	pleasant environment	> 1 x week	0-5 min
	passing by	pleasant environment	> 1 x week	5-10 min
neighborhood open space	passing by	-	> 1 x day	0-5 min
	playing	meeting people	> 1 x week	10-15 min
	close to my home	-	> 1 x day	0-5 min
church square	passing by	church mass	> 1 x week	10-15 min
	passing by	church mass	> 1 x week	0-5 min
	religion	church teaching	> 1 x day	10-15 min
	religion	church mass	> 1 x day	15-20 min
market	passing by	services offered	> 1 x week	10-15 min
	trading	services offered	> 1 x week	-
	trading	services offered	> 1 x day	0-5 min
	trading	services offered	> 1 x week	>30 min
water point	passing by	none	> 1 x day	0-5 min
	passing by	none	> 1 x day	0-5min
	passing by	none	> 1 x day	0-5 min

Do you know who owns this land?	Who is responsible for taking care of this space?	How important for your and your family's social life is this place? (1-very, 5 not)	Do you think this place reflects local culture values?
Church	community	2	yes
Church	community	2	yes
Church	community	1	yes
Church	community	3	yes
Church	community	1	yes
		2	
Government	no one	3	no
Government	no one	3	no
Government	no one	4	no
		3	
Church	community	3	yes
Church	community	1	yes
Church	community	2	yes
Church	community	3	yes
		2	
Government	no one	2	yes
Government	no one	1	-
Government	no one	2	yes
Government	no one	3	yes
		2	
Government	no one	4	no
Government	no one	5	no
Government	no one	4	no
		4	

Gashena

QUESTION	What is the main reason for you to come to this place?	What is the most important thing in this place for you?	How often do you use this place?	How far do you live from the place?
LOCATION				
MARKET PLACE	trading	service offered	1 x week	0-5 min
	trading	service offered	> 1 x week	0-5 min
	trading	service offered	> 1 x week	0-5 min
church square	religion	church mass	> 1 x week	5 -10 min
	religion	church teaching	1 x day	10-15 min
	religion	church mass	2 x day	5-10 min
	religion	church mass	> 1 x week	10-15 min
neighborhood open space	passing by	none	1 x day	5 -10 min
	passing by	meeting people	1 x day	6 -10 min
	I work here	work	1 x day	15-20 min
	close to home	its close to my home	1 x day	0-5 min
water point	passing by	meeting people	1 x week	0-5 min
	passing by	meeting people	1 x week	5-10 min
	passing by	its close to my home	1 x week	0-5 min
	close to my home	none	1 x week	10-15 min
open green space	passing by	none	1 x week	0-5 min
	passing by	none	1 x week	0-5 min
	leisure	meeting people	1 x week	5-10 min

Do you know who owns this land?	Who is responsible for maintainance of this space?	How important for you and your family's social life is this place? (1- very, 5 not)	Do you think this place reflects local culture values?
Government	No one	1	yes
Government	No one	2	no
Government	No one	1	yes
		1	
Church	community & church	2	yes
Church	community & church	1	yes
Church	community & church	1	yes
Church	community & church	3	yes
		2	
Government	No one	4	no
Government	No one	3	yes
Government	No one	3	no
Government	No one	3	no
		3	
Government	No one	3	no
Government	community	2	no
Government	No one	4	no
Government	No one	4	no
		3	
Government	No one	3	no
Government	No one	5	no
Government	community	3	yes
		4	

Mer Awi

QUESTION	What is the main reason for you to come to this place	What is the most important thing in this place for you?	How often do you attend this place?	How far do you live from the place?
LOCATION				
MARKET PLACE	trading	services offered	> 1 x week	15-20 min
	trading	services offered	> 1 x week	15-20 min
	trading	services offered	1 x week	>30 min
	trading	services offered	> 1 x week	10 - 15 min
	trading	services offered	> 1 x week	>30 min
open green space	school	school/sociolozing	everyday	15-20 min
	school	school/sociolozing	everyday	10 - 15 min
	school	school/sociolozing	everyday	5-10 min
church square/forest	leisure	-	> 1 x week	5-10 min
	leisure	pleasant environment	> 1 x day	10-15 min
	playing	meeting people	> 1 x day	10-15 min
	passing by	-	> 1 x week	5-10 min
	passing by	-	> 1 x day	10-15 min
Neighborhood open place	close to my home	-	1 x day	0-10 min
	close to my home	-	1 x day	0-10 min
	passing by	-	1 x week	0-10 min
	passing by	-	1 x week	0-10 min
	passing by	-	1 x week	0-10 min
Church forest	religion	church	1 x day	10-15 min
	religion	church	1 x day	10-15 min
	religion	church	1 x day	10-1 5min
	religion	church	1 x day	10-1 5min
	passing by	church	1 x day	1h

Do you know who owns this land?	Who is responsible for taking care of this space?	How important for your and your family's social life is this place? (1- very, 5 not)	Do you think this place reflects local culture values?
government	city administration	3	yes
government	city administration	2	yes
government	city administration	4	yes
government	city administration	3	yes
government	city administration	2	yes
		3	+
-	no one	3	yes
-	no one	2	yes
-	no one	2	yes
		3	+
-	community	1	no
-	community	1	yes
-	community	2	no
government	city administration	3	no
government	community	5	no
		2	-
private person	community	5	no
private person	community	5	no
private person	community	5	no
private person	community	5	no
private person	community	5	no
		5	-
Church	responsible group	2	yes
Church	responsible group	2	yes
Church	responsible group	2	yes
Church	responsible group	3	yes
Church	responsible group	1	yes

This research is the comparative analysis of the open public spaces, found in the small scale, emerging cities and towns located in Northern Ethiopia. It seeks to identify the existing socio-spatial relationships intrinsic for the context, as well as to look at the differences between use and meaning of open spaces in planned and organically grown cities.



The Use and the Meaning of Open Urban Spaces
in Northern Ethiopia. What are the Differences
Between Planned and Organic Cities?