

# Violence of Urbanization, Poor Neighbourhoods and Large-Scale Projects: Lessons from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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*Violence in cities, whether in the North or the South, in most cases is blamed on the 'usual suspects', namely the young people living in poor neighbourhoods. In this article, we attempt to shift this blame to the urbanization process itself. We introduce the concept of 'violence of urbanization', defined as the impact of the rapid and radical transformation of cities through the introduction of mega-projects into the spatial and social environment. The overall objective of this transformation is modernization (and globalization), but it results in the marginalization of the poorer population. As an example, we present Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia, not because social violence is particularly high there (quite the contrary in fact), but because today Addis Ababa's urban spaces are produced by radical urban planning and not by maintaining an inclusive and peaceful urbanity. Some important public spaces in the city have been violently destroyed and then rebuilt, in order to achieve urban modernization (in line with the development of a capital city of the Global South). In the process the poor are forced to move further into the peripheries so that their former habitat may be replaced by 'a suitable environment' to accommodate the neo-globalization of urban Africa. The majority of the new, massive, and rapidly constructed infrastructure projects are financed and contracted by Chinese companies. This phenomenon illustrates a process that strengthens our hypothesis of violence of urbanization: it is just another war against the poor, not a war against poverty. It is one of the hardest but also the most common forms violence we face today and it is being committed in the cities around the world.*

## As an Introduction

Here we propose an analysis of urban violence through a reflection on the violence of urbanization. This means not only violent acts but also violent sequences in the history of modern urbanization – including the symbolic violence of architecture, urbanism and urban planning. We analyse the question of violence by showing how the built urban environment can be a form of material and

symbolic violence in urban spaces. Urban violence is regularly ascribed, not to cities or urbanization processes, even less to the governments who decide their progress, but to the poor. Urban planning divides the territories of cities into (rich) fortresses and (poor) slums, separated by internal boundaries, using the uncertain way of life in ordinary cities as a starting point to invent a design of fear (Pedrazzini, 2005; UN-HABITAT, 2003). Nevertheless, urbanization processes

especially in the Southern city are a fabric of social and spatial violence, due to globalized economic dynamics and their spatial implications. Thus, urban fragmentation isolates the poorest in remote and excluded areas.

Looking at the history of urban planning, large-scale projects – such as housing and transportation infrastructure – are important for the implementation of formal urban order. This is why we attempt to address this question, analyzing how these XXL or ‘bigness’ projects (Koolhaas, 1995) are major forms of violence at an urban level. Transportation and housing projects could be described as evidence of the contemporary production not of urban violence, but of what we could call ‘violent’ urban planning or: *violence of urbanization*. We propose a theoretical approach to ‘violence of urbanization’, which can be defined as radical urban planning, for example infrastructural megaprojects in emerging cities which eradicate (poor) residential areas in order to create ‘modernization’, and impacts greatly on ordinary lives and neighbourhoods.

Therefore our hypothesis is: *cities are not dangerous or violent places just because some of their inhabitants act dangerously or violently, but as the result of violent action from the dominant part of urban planning*.

To understand this phenomenon, we present Addis Ababa, Ethiopia’s capital city, as an example in which we analyze the radical transformation of public spaces through large-scale projects. Specifically, we have selected three case studies: (a) the implementation of infrastructural mega-projects; (b) the condominium project; and (c) the demolition of heritage. They were chosen to show the variety of impacts that violence of urbanization can have. Further, we explore what happens to local landmarks that are demolished in order to modernize the Ethiopian capital. Areas such as Mexico Square are an important historic symbol, and this square is only one among a number of examples which show the impact of repressing historic landmarks that should be present and

remembered in the contemporary city.

These projects demonstrate the submission of public spaces to the technical function of transportation systems. They are also part of a reordering leading to urban spaces which reinforce social control, especially the control of social outsiders and ‘ordinary people’ who become more marginalized from the global areas of cities.

Thus we propose to move from an actor-oriented approach to *urban violence* to a spatialized approach. The aim is to search for a critical theory of urbanization and, consequently demonstrate the extent to which the ‘spatialization of liberal globalization’ through architecture, planning and design, leads to a capitalistic production of urban space.

### From Urban Violence to Violence of Urbanization

Traditionally, the concept of urban violence is derived from a political perspective. It refers to street violence and gangs, especially in Latin American cities, or urban riots as occurred in France in 2005 and England in 2011. According to this perspective, the causes of urban violence are usually not attributed to municipal decisions and decision-makers, but to the populations of the poorest city districts. In fact, violence is now seen as one of the key characteristics of slums.

The phenomenon of urban violence becomes synonymous with the practices of the poor. In parallel, the repression of petty crime has transformed anti-delinquency measures into a ‘War on the Poor’ (Wacquant, 2009) – i.e. a war on those living in low-rent housing developments as well as those from *favelas* and shantytowns. The real enemy is the poor, i.e. poverty as a social and cultural lower-class environment, with the ‘marginal’ neighbourhood considered the ‘natural’ habitat in which it thrives. By definition, the poor neighbourhood is the *scene of the crime*. Thus, in big cities the poor districts are stigmatized by those who do not live there. The

inhabitants are seen as barbaric hordes, ready to kill and rob honest citizens living in affluent (or more affluent) areas. Nevertheless, poor populations are not the only source of urban violence. On the contrary, we suggest that such violent manifestations are in fact a consequence of the larger process of urbanization that generates certain forms of contemporary violence, especially because it implies the imposition of an urban order that excludes the poorest.

In a world made global by the market economy, urbanization generates certain forms of *urban* violence. And here it will be of interest to pinpoint how this global violence of urbanization – or urban form of the violence of globalization – expands and extends to the poorest neighbourhoods and those most out of step with the global age (Bauman, 1997).

Particularly in the poorest countries, urbanization is highly disorganized and generates problems due to the incoherence of its development. This in turn leaves many specialists with the impression that they cannot perceive the metropolis as a whole, but rather as a random selection of hastily assembled and disconnected elements. While expertise in a specific discipline enables us to solve some specific problems, such expertise rarely generates a critical vision or even a 'general view' of urbanization. Moreover, solution of these problems is limited in time and in most cases does not give rise to sustainable and adequate urban management solutions. Extensive settled territories are simply abandoned by their public (or other) official managers, forcing their residents to adopt self-management practices – for better or worse. This seems to lead to a parallel phenomenon which accompanies the urban context regardless of where it takes place: social and spatial fragmentation, territorial splintering between rich areas enjoying growing economic and ecological benefits and poor areas handed over to the private sector by the enfeebled state. This situation is all the more critical as 'the private

sector' today usually means a neo-liberal multinational corporation, with little empathy for the misfortunes of the local population. This population is indeed more and more globalized – but above all it subsists in highly precarious conditions.

A certain spatial form corresponds to the urban values and lifestyles imposed by these economic dynamics. The definition of these values and lifestyles by global security strategies leads to the globalization of spatial forms intended to guarantee security and a significant transformation of urban territories by what we call the urbanism of fear by analogy with the ecology of fear (Davis, 1998). The feeling of insecurity is increasing in contemporary cities and fighting against it is embodied in security strategies, which tend to isolate further those considered responsible for insecurity – the poor or the excluded. These strategies may take the form of police action against those who constitute a potential public order problem, or they may take the form of physically separating those who have fear from those who fear – gated communities are a good example of this urbanism of fear.

This realization forces us to reconsider our vision of the urban environment by focusing less on changing spatial forms and more on changes in society and urban practices as they interface with territorial changes. Everywhere in the world the city is a joint human undertaking and not the chaotic enterprise some see it as. In urbanization, 'chaos' is always less of a determining factor than it first appears, since social structures are seldom chaotic, even among the apparently most *disqualified* groups. Besides, whether it is chaotic or not, and whether we attempt to comprehend its spatial or social dimensions, the urban phenomenon for the past fifty years has definitely become *the major civilization process* in the contemporary world (Vincent-Geslin *et al.*, forthcoming). And perhaps we are wrong to worry too much: the city, the big city we call metropolis – or postmetropolis, following Edward Soja (2000) which we

usually envision as ballooning on some desolate Latin American or African expanse, is as much a place of progress and inclusion as of regression and exclusion (Agier, 1999).

Certainly, in its current state, the city – necessarily globalized – is a social unit that produces spatial segregation, which in return leads to social segregation. Today one cannot distinguish between these phenomena: there are no social boundaries that do not leave their trace on the division of urban space. But the city – a spatial segregation ‘factory’ – is also a social violence ‘factory’, although it is not just that. The phenomenon of gang wars and urban social violence is determined by global developments, notably economic ones. There is a *violence of globalization*, which is not just economic or symbolic (Baudrillard, 2002; Kurnitzky, 2000; Shiva, 2001) but expresses itself directly within urban societies, putting its stamp on their territory and the practices implemented there. More and more often, this violence of globalization comes in the guise of *violence of urbanization* (Pedrazzini, 2005), which is the origin of segregation and spatial dismemberment. Violence and insecurity are local symptoms of global change. The growing number of gangs which occupy the poor peripheral neighbourhoods is characteristic of this change. However, in and by themselves gangs are not agents of social change, they are its indicators (Sánchez-Jankowski, 2003). Of course, the city cannot be violent without certain of its social actors being violent too. But they are just another proletarian group in the social and spatial violence factory. Growing violence usually affects mainly the population of the inner cities, slums and other depressed areas. Yet they are also considered the producers of this violence.

Without denigrating a mode of popular organization, which has often proved effective economically and socially, we would like to propose a different reading of the metropolis. Starting from that point, our interpretation of its violence, its slums, its inhabitants, its gangs, is bound to change (Pedrazzini *et al.*,

2011; Pedrazzini, 2014). What should arise from this change of perspective – this shift of preconceived notions – is a new point of view on the phenomena usually grouped together at random under the tightly controlled designation of urban violence and insecurity.

### **Transportation Projects, Inclusion Strategies and the Fight against Segregation**

Urban violence is thus part of the process of urbanization itself, which produces fragmented, exclusive urban spaces and relegates the poor to the margins of the city and of society. In this context, urban transportation projects could be a tool in the struggle against social segregation.

Spatial mobility has become a key element in our societies (Urry, 2000), and is important for social and economic integration (Le Breton, 2005; Bacqué and Fol, 2007), especially with regard to access to jobs. The problems of integration and social inclusion in cities can be broken down in terms of accessibility, in the form of infrastructure and transportation networks that connect different neighbourhoods, decompartmentalize spaces and favour exchanges – at least in theory. While transportation infrastructure theoretically makes certain types of travel possible, practically speaking, it does not guarantee this. Actual movement depends not only on access, i.e. transportation systems, but also on people’s ability to use this access and, more importantly, to have reasons for this use (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004). Access only provides potential mobilities (Kellerman, 2012). Thus, even when transportation infrastructure exists in poor, isolated neighbourhoods, its presence alone is not enough to de-isolate spatially excluded populations. Nevertheless, urban inhabitants see transportation infrastructure projects as promoting greater social diversity and access to the city centre for excluded populations. For this reason, such projects are often subject to criticism and opposition, as they are suspected of attracting the

'dangerous classes' – and, with them, violence – to wealthier neighbourhoods. Transportation projects, though designed to promote greater participation in the city and broader exchanges, reveal forms of symbolic social violence in the form of withdrawal, the maintenance of self-segregation and the rejection of social diversity.

Beyond these symbolic forms, transportation infrastructure projects are also the physical expression of the violence of urbanization. Effectively, transportation infrastructure such as train stations, BRT lanes, tramlines, etc. significantly alter their urban surroundings and, as such, the urban morphology, transforming not only spaces but also the habits and routines of those who use them. From a spatial viewpoint, the construction of new transportation infrastructure requires appropriating already-occupied urban spaces – an 'occupation' that does not always play out smoothly. For example, the construction of a BRT lane means using road space – space that was previously occupied by other users, resulting in conflicts of use with drivers. Such 'takeovers' of space can occur more or less violently, including via expropriation, which in turn leads to displacements. This disadvantages mainly the poor, who are evicted from their places of residence, now occupied by transportation networks, and forced to resettle far from central areas. The construction or renovation of transportation infrastructure also engenders segregative mechanisms. Thus, the renovation of stations, most notably in medium-sized cities, results in the redevelopment of the entire adjoining area, contributing to an increase in land prices, thus relegating the poor to other, less central neighbourhoods. Such displacements express violence of urbanization as they tear people from their original habitats, forcing them to relocate far from them and to reorganize their daily lives.

Creating a strong transportation line also fundamentally alters travel behaviours, breaking routines and also marking a break (or even reversal) of previous mobility practices.

Thus, the construction of the Transantiago in Santiago de Chile has completely altered residents' travel behaviour due to its lack of integration with the informal bus system that prevailed before. Moreover, its creation has generated even greater social inequality and segregation of transportation mode uses than did the previous system (Witter, 2012).

Finally, the creation of transport infrastructure upsets the lives of resident populations and the users of the spaces under (re) construction. For instance, the construction of the Forum des Halles, in Paris – a multimodal hub with several regional train lines and a shopping centre – is a good example. Begun in the late 1970s, its construction lasted for more than ten years, upsetting the lives of residents and neighbourhood users due to the duration of the work, the major structural changes in the neighbourhood and the destruction of part of the urban space in the area. Since 2011, new renovation works have been undertaken in Les Halles, reopening the not-so-old wounds.

These examples illustrate how transportation infrastructure development contributes to the violence of urbanization by strengthening social inequalities of use, limiting the movement of resident populations near the infrastructure, and upsetting the lives of urban dwellers with phases of urban renewal around multimodal hubs.

### **Addis Ababa: An Example of the Violence of Urbanization**

Looking briefly at Addis Ababa's past, we can see that the city has a quite unusual urban history. As the only un-colonialized African country, despite of its brief Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941, Addis Ababa's urban patterns are not those of a 'typical' post-colonial African city, if there is such a thing. Though the colonizing power enforced a strict policy of urban segregation to mark the difference between civilized order and uncivilized, local settlement, colonial urban planning was not fully realized in the short

period of Italian occupation. However Addis Ababa became more urbanized and still today the impact of that occupation can be read in the city's urban pattern through its piazzas and building styles (Angélil and Hebel, 2010). Nevertheless, Italy's urban impact in Addis Ababa is much less than in most post-colonial African cities, such as Johannesburg or Nairobi, where the result of colonial urban planning (segregating social classes and racial culture into clearly divided urban spaces) can still be observed. But today African cities share one similar phenomenon: rapid urbanization, rapid growth. China in particular has considerable impact on Africa's rapid development. (Brautigam, 2009) Chinese state-owned construction firms implement large-scale infrastructure projects, Chinese-style buildings are being erected and slowly but surely a somewhat 'Chinese Urbanism' (Hulshof and Roggeveen, 2014) is emerging in African cities.

As many cities in the Global South, Addis Ababa is undergoing an enormous economic, population and thus urban growth. With an estimated population of about 3.1 million in 2008 (CSA, 2007),<sup>1</sup> Addis Ababa is growing at a rate of 3.8 per cent and is expected to reach 12 million by 2024 (UN Habitat, 2008). The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose from 15.3 per cent in 2006–2007 to a predicted 20.6 per cent for 2009–2010 (City Government of Addis Ababa and the European Commission, 2010) making Addis Ababa one of the fastest growing economic and urban centres in Africa. As with other African cities, Addis Ababa's rapid growth is leading to a new form of urbanization, involving massive urban projects implemented regardless of the existing social or local context – or the violence of urbanization. As discussed above, this violence is not violence in the sense of crime or illegal activity but a form of *violence* in urban planning and production of urban space.

Rapidly developing cities in emerging countries often strive to develop quickly to meet the aims of 'modernization' and so

become part of the globalizing world. To reach this goal, investors and developers underbid each other on projects and often the cheapest proposal wins. Buildings, roads, transportation infrastructure are produced cheaply, without proper research, using cheap materials and working with concepts that may not integrate with the local culture or existing urban patterns. Such ways of working are real-life examples of what we define as 'violence of urbanization'.

To explore these manifestations of violence we look at three spaces in Addis Ababa, shown as circles in figure 1. Two are mega-development projects that violate urbanization: (a) implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the *Gotera Intersection* and (b) demolition of neighbourhoods by constructing mass-housing projects like in *Lideta*, while the third questions the sensitivity of these processes by presenting (c) the destruction of the historic landmark of *Mexico Square*.

Between 60 and 70 per cent of Addis Ababa's road construction has Chinese involvement, mostly through financial loans and collaboration of Chinese engineers and contractors. Probably the largest, out-of-scale and thus 'violent' road implementation project is *Gotera Intersection*, formerly known as *Confusion Square*. The node was constructed in 2006 by Chinese contractors and fully financed by the Chinese Import-Export Bank. This was one of the first major urban transportation development projects after the *Ring Road* project in early 2000, which was to solve the severe traffic congestion, but simultaneously created spatial segregation by cutting through the city's urban fabric and existing neighbourhoods. Figure 2 shows the massive structure cuts through the urban fabric, unplanned and scattered with informal housing, radically segregating connected spaces and social structures.

Not only because of the growing number of vehicles, but also the vast population growth of the city resulting partly from of rural-urban migration, there is increasing

Figure 1. Addis Ababa's urban extension (2000–2010) with main existing transportation axes (continuous line) and axes under construction (dotted line). Dark grey areas show the city's urban growth between 2000 and 2010. Circles indicate the locations of the three sites discussed. (Source: Evolution of the Master Plan (2000–2010) Addis Ababa, Lyon Town Planning Agency, September 2010)

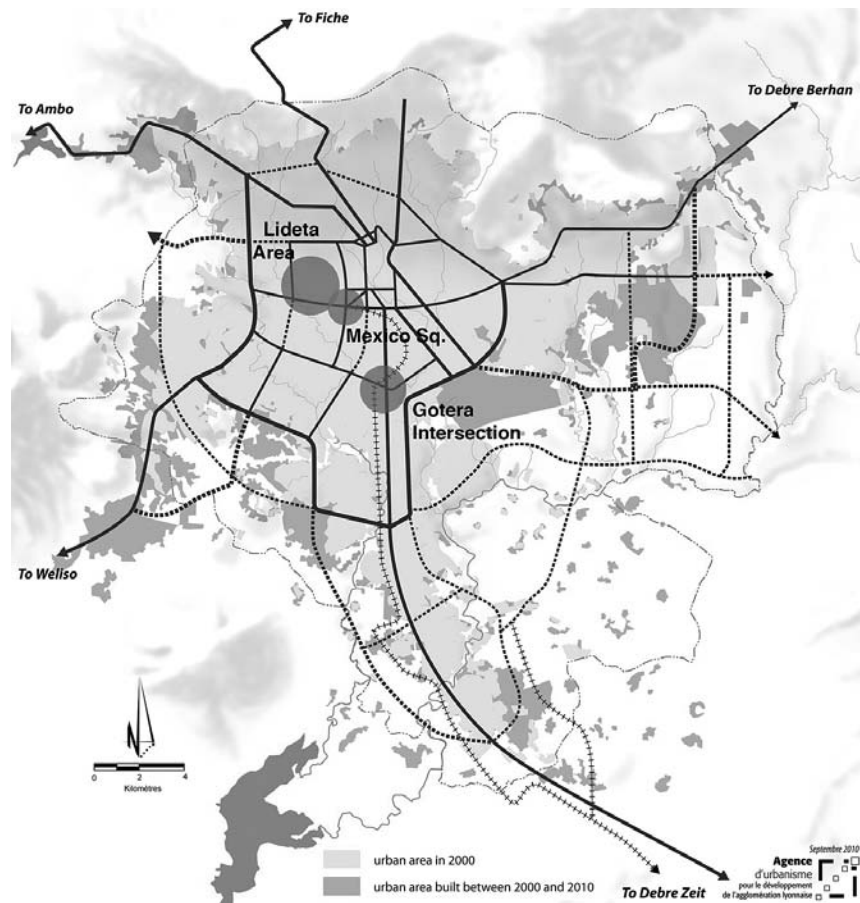


Figure 2. Gotera intersection and annexing Ring Road cutting through Addis Ababa's urban fabric. Upper left the implementation of Gotera condominium complex. (Source: Google Maps 2014)



need for transportation development, both road expansion and mass transportation. Therefore, the current construction of Addis Ababa's Light Rail Transit network (LRT) is the 'prestige project for modernization' and enhancement of the image of the city as the capital of Africa. The project will be the city's first urban mass transport system consisting initially of two lines, the north-south axis and the east-west axis. On completion in early 2015, the LRT has a planned capacity of up to 80,000 passengers per hour.<sup>2</sup>

Currently the urban transportation system is based on a large variety of somewhat chaotic taxi and mini-bus networks, which will be greatly reduced on completion of the LRT, leaving a large number of taxi drivers concerned about unemployment. The need and importance of this mass transportation project and the massive road extensions are unquestionable. However a large number of inhabitants, especially the marginal population, will be dependent on the new transportation systems, such as the LRT, to commute from the growing residential areas in the outskirts of Addis Ababa into the city centre. An additional alert, from an urban

fabric point of view, is that this phenomenon is creating a city based on the functionalism of the transportation networks: the LRT network and the massive road extension are 'cutting' and segregating Addis Ababa's urban patterns. While these developments were necessary, some of the destruction (for example, of old private houses with an architectural value) could have been avoided and sustainable solutions found to adapt to the local context and thus, following the ideas of Jane Jacobs (1961), retain Addis Ababa's structure and urban identity.

One of example of where destruction could have been avoided, or at least dealt with more sensitively, is the case of Lideta where the entire neighbourhood was demolished and reconstructed. This area resembled typical urban Addis Ababa: where slums are not segregated areas growing in the outskirts or in specific areas separated from developed and master-planned urban areas, but integrated and mixed with all social levels. This housing typology is found scattered throughout the city, rich next to poor, embassies, businesses or universities, living in an unsegregated and mixed society



Figure 3. New infrastructure forces spatial segregation: due to the construction of the LRT line the city is being spatially divided, restricting access for pedestrians and vehicles from crossing freely throughout the city. Here, an elderly lady being helped to cross the street by a local policeman. (Photo: A. Thorer, 26 March 2014)



interacting with one another, a true 'Mixcity' according to Ethiopian architect and historian Fasil Giorghis, where 'in most districts, people of different social classes live side by side as neighbours' (Peters, 2012, p. 11).

Located close to the LRT western axis coming from Mexico Square, and driven by the city's housing shortage, Lideta's land value increased drastically and was one of the first of five densely populated inner-urban resettlement projects. A population of up to 6,000 in an area of 26 hectares needed to be displaced in order to develop the site with condominium units of at least seven storeys (UN Habitat, 2010, p. 32). One should not speak of *forced resettlement*, but in order to achieve the rapid change to a modern look for a *new* Addis Ababa the planning process leaves no other alternative but to deal with it as such. This former small-scale and mixed-use way of life included housing, businesses, shops, manufacturers, and so on within one area, allowing inhabitants to live close to their workspace and thus a short distance for daily commuting in the most cases. Due to this '*forced resettlement*', many residents had to move to the outskirts as land values in the city are rising steeply, *forcing* the displaced

to travel long distances to their workspace or social activities.

Slum areas, which made up 80 per cent of Addis Ababa's urban area (UN Habitat, 2007), do not represent the modernization drive the city is currently is going through. For these Addis Ababa started a major resettlement programme (UN Habitat, 2007; 2010) to develop (social) housing units and replace the informal slum areas with multi-storey condominium complexes. Certainly, the city needs to be densified because of the population growth and urban modernization approach, but this vertical growth is changing Addis Ababa's image from a low and loosely scattered green town to a densified mid-rise sprawl city. Further, massive condominium projects are being developed on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, identical housing typologies continuing for kilometre after kilometre, in order to house the vast majority of the marginalized population.

One might even claim that these new complexes for the low- and middle-income population force a certain group of people to live somewhat alienated within these new communities, leading to predicted consequences of social segregation, ghettoization

Figure 4. The Abenet Akebabai neighbourhood resembles the demolished Lideta area. (Photo: A. Thorer, 7 April 2014)





Figure 5. Lack of identity: the new urban appearance of Lideta. (Photo: A. Thorer, 17 March 2014)

and thus violence and crime – factors Addis Ababa never faced because of its unique urban history. And these displacements favour a functional specialization of urban areas, requiring thus new transportation systems.

It is not in doubt that the current development may be thriving, and necessary. Certainly, it is spectacular to see how a city is developing from a low-rise mid-sized town into a dense and diverse mega-city. But the speed of this development is clearly violating its urbanization, not only through the demolition of neighbourhoods and social environments, such as Lideta, but through the loss of history by eradicating urban landmarks and historic symbols.

Addis Ababa is a very young city, founded only in 1886 by Emperor Menelik II. Therefore it has few urban features, which deserve to be considered as heritage, but these are currently being destroyed in the name of development. Among many urban areas, buildings and historic sights, Mexico Square is an important landmark, whose destruction will be illustrated as a 'violence of urbanization', as the conclusion to this paper.

Mexico Square is one of the main hubs of LRT east–west route according with the economic development and land-use change within this district. The police headquarters and a part of Addis Ababa University, as well

as the proximity to the old and new African Union headquarters, are already key elements situated around Mexico Square. The Square's name derived from Mexico's backing for Ethiopia, as it was one of only few countries to support Ethiopia's liberation from the Italian occupation in 1936, after Haile Selassie's appeal at the Nations of League in Geneva that year. After strengthening the relations by a visit to Mexico in 1954, Emperor Haile Selassie renamed Maichew Square 'Mexico Square' to honour Mexico's support 'during the dark days of the Italian occupation' (Addis Fortune, 2013). The iconic fountain-statue consisting of three canoes designed with characteristic Mexican colours (*Ibid.*) was an important symbolic landmark in the city until today. In 2007 Mexico donated a statue of martyr Abune Petros as a further symbol.

Mexico Square represented this important historic symbol for Addis Ababa and Ethiopia's history, recalling Ethiopian independence, Italian occupation and the Mexican relationship. The construction of the LRT has led to the square's complete demolition in order to continue the east–west axis of the line. The square, which was in fact a roundabout, will remain as 'Mexico Square' and continue to represent the good Ethiopian–Mexican relationship, though the former

Figure 6a. Mexico Square: as it was before Summer 2013; view towards west. (Photo: A. Thorer, 29 June 2013)



Figure 6b. Mexico Square: current situation during construction/demolition; view towards east. (Photo: A. Thorer, 21 May 2014)



Figure 6c. New design for Mexico Square – unrelated to the past: no fountain, no landmark, no history; view towards south-east. (Source: <http://addisababaonline.com/details-of-addis-ababa-light-rail-project/>)



historic value of the roundabout designed by the Italians in the early 1930s, then representing the Mexican friendship and now reconstructed and redesigned by Chinese engineers, will not have the same symbolic centrality of the original square, but will resemble a number of other roundabouts with under- and overpasses, so losing its uniqueness as a name and icon (Ethiopian-opinion, 2014).

### Conclusion

From a theoretical as well as empirical point of view, this article proposes a shift in the approach to *urban violence*, considering it not as emerging from the urban poor and excluded population, but rather from modern urban planning. Hence, the 'violence' is no longer individual violence, and especially not a violence produced exclusively by outsiders and criminals, but a *spatial violence*, that is always present in the production of the urban space of capitalist cities – with a particular radicalism in cities of the Global South. Thus, in considering the *violence of urbanization*, this article looks at transportation networks and how these systems 'take over' urban spaces, leading to a sort of 'trauma' linked to construction sites but also the separation of urban functions for the city's inhabitants.

The example of Addis Ababa shows how an emerging city of the Global South is undergoing a vast urbanization and transformation as a result of the urban planning process. For instance, the construction of condominiums complexes – an occidental housing typology – contradicts the living habits of the majority of modest inhabitants as well as local lifestyles and traditions that have existed for more than a century in a city that lives in 'an Ethiopian way'. This successively leads to the fact that these residential areas, which, generally speaking, are areas of spatial and even social exclusion, are often to be found far from the city centre and encourage functional specialization of land use. Additionally, they

require the development of transportation infrastructure in order to access the centre but also contribute to economic activities (socio-economic mobility) where they continue to concentrate essentially, justifying the construction of massive transportation networks. This requires the destruction of several urban areas and also the demolition of some historic landmarks. In this vision of modern urban planning the predominance of transportation infrastructure within the contemporary city imposes the hegemonic model of its production: the importance of functionality versus the history and every day life.

Paradoxically, the imposition of the top-down approach of this urbanization reinforces the socio-spatial inequalities in the city, persistently pushing – sometimes even under pressure – the poorest population to the furthest boundaries of the city. This also creates larger spatial separations that fragment urban spaces and contribute to the creation of 'urban fear', for which we cannot expect more security, but certainly more urban and social fragmentation.

However, we believe that it is possible to envision a common urban future by proposing a more equitable urban project. It is not enough to evocate the ritualistic 'inclusive city', we should ask ourselves how to design less fragmented urban spaces, for instance by having the local population participate in urban decisions or by demanding greater transparency from the decision-makers. The city is not just a functional and economic space, where flows dominate, but also a series of spaces (Elshehtawy, 2010) where people stay and live (Jacobs, 1961) and stand for both individual and collective memory.

### NOTES

1. Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia. The last census was conducted in 2007, which gave the population of Addis Ababa as 2,738,248. Based on the 1994 census the projection for 2008 was 3,147,000. UN Habitat estimated roughly 4 million inhabitants in the same year (UN Habitat, 2008). Today one speaks of a population of 6–8 million

in the city, though there are no data to support this estimate.

2. According to the Ethiopian Railway Corporation (2011) <http://www.erc.gov.et/index.php/projects/addis-ababa-light-rail-transit-aa-lrt.html>.

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