– FORCE AND ASPIRATION: Mobility and Class Formation on the Peripheries of Addis Ababa

TOM GOODFELLOW, METADEL SILESHI BELIHU AND ZHENGLI HUANG

Abstract

While the emergence of social class is usually associated with relations of production or patterns of consumption, this article argues for centring mobility in class analysis, especially within rapidly growing cities. It focuses on the peripheries of Addis Ababa, where Africa's most remarkable state-led housing programme has produced wrenching sociospatial change. As a wide spectrum of households are sucked or expelled into these peripheries, new constellations have emerged in which varying experiences of residential mobility and everyday physical movement are redrawing lines of difference beyond categories of owner and tenant, rich and poor, formal and informal. We draw on interviews and solicited diaries from residents in various housing types within peripheral neighbourhoods. Deploying the prisms of 'displaceability' and 'motility' (the potential to be mobile), we argue that agency and confidence regarding one's mobility—the degree to which moving or staying put is a realization of aspiration rather than force—is contributing to class formation, including by sharpening relational differentiation within the urban middle class. As well as shedding light on the reconstitution of class in urban Ethiopia, the article addresses an important gap regarding the role that mobility plays in social class dynamics in contexts of rapid urban growth and transformation.

Introduction

In the burgeoning literature on mobilities, there has been growing interest in how geographic and social mobility intersect. This is mostly focused on international migration, and on the global North; yet mobility *within* rapidly growing cities in the global South is playing an underexplored role in shaping social stratification. The physical capacity or incapacity to move, aspirations to stay put or move on, structural constraints on transportation and the forced dispersal of populations are features of everyday life for many city-dwellers. Not only are these questions fundamental to social mobility (Uteng and Lucas, 2018; Williams *et al*., 2022) but, as we argue in this article, they can be constitutive of the formation and consolidation of social class itself. This has been largely overlooked in the burgeoning literature on middle class emergence in African contexts (Ncube and Lufumpa, 2015; Melber, 2016).

The relationship between intra-urban physical mobility and social class comes into sharper focus when considered in relation to housing. In cities experiencing rapid growth and change, physical mobility is often intimately connected with housing dynamics, whether due to peripheral location, eviction or the aspiration to 'move on' in search of better living conditions (Keunen and Ley, 2023). Ethiopia is home to one of Africa's most remarkable state-led housing programmes this century—the Integrated Housing Development Programme (IHDP)—involving the construction of over 175,000 condominium housing units in Addis Ababa by April 2019 (Charitonidou, 2022; Huang *et al*., 2024). These condominiums transformed the fringes of the city, generating new

spatializations of socioeconomic difference as low-income groups relocated from the city centre found themselves side by side with often better-off condominium renters, even wealthier suburban house owners, informal settlement dwellers and farmers displaced by construction (Meth *et al*., 2024). Thus, diverse social constellations have emerged that share the same peripheral geography but highly differentiated levels of wealth and social inclusion/exclusion.

We argue that variations in the *capacity to move*, or to *resist unwanted movement*, have been central to the varying experiences and identities of these groups. As people displaced both from rural farmland and dilapidated city-centre housing were sucked into these new peripheries, they found themselves able to access some of the benefits of 'modern' urban life, but often highly constrained in terms of the new demands and costs of everyday movement. At the same time, a rental and sale economy in the condominium sites, alongside other forms of real estate development, ushered in groups of aspirational and upwardly mobile residents with greater control over their mobility. In navigating their differential relationships to the wider city and to each other's mobility, these various groups are engaged in processes of social reorganization and relational collective identification that are associated with class formation (Wacquant, 1991; Fantasia, 1995). As well as marking some residents as 'middle class' relative to others, these processes can help us to better understand the nuances and 'micro-milieus' (Neubert, 2014) *within* the increasingly contested and weakly-defined category of the 'African middle classes' (Melber, 2016; Nielsen and Jenkins, 2021).

In this article we build on Williams *et al*.'s (2022) work on the links between everyday mobility and social mobility, Breines' (2021) focus on how migration *into* cities is contributing to middle class formation in Ethiopia, and Planel and Bridonneau's (2017) analysis of the links between condominium housing and middle class formation in Addis Ababa. We do so by framing social dynamics in Addis Ababa's urban peripheries in relation to the concepts of 'motility'—the capacity to be geographically mobile (Kaufmann *et al*., 2004)—and 'displaceability' (Yiftachel, 2020), which refers to structural susceptibility to involuntary movement. Through a discussion of both residential and everyday physical mobility, and the differential ability to imagine and realize freedom over one's mobility, we shed further light on the reconstitution of social class in an Ethiopian context. Yet we also aim to contribute to broader debates on how urban social classes emerge and consolidate, especially in contexts where rapid urban transformation and associated mobilities are arguably as important to social identity as employment status—or sometimes even more so in places where finding and maintaining an income often depends on mobility.

In what follows, we first examine debates in mobilities research and introduce the concepts of motility and displaceability, before considering where mobility sits vis-à-vis existing debates on social class in Africa. We then outline the research methodology underpinning this article. Next, we provide some historical context before turning to the main empirical material, which is structured into three sections: the first on 'moving in', which examines socially differentiated experiences of relocating into the urban periphery; the second on 'moving within', which examines everyday challenges of movement and how these contribute to social identities; and the third on 'moving on', which considers plans and imaginaries about future residential mobility. Finally, we discuss our contribution to debates on class formation, arguing that variable degrees of capacity and confidence regarding physical and residential mobility are significant in class formation, including with respect to distinctions within the 'middle class'.

Motility, displaceability and class formation

The flourishing of mobilities research in the twenty-first century (Cresswell, 2006; Sheller and Urry, 2006; 2016) has fostered interest in mobility inequalities, and how these relate to broader social and spatial inequalities (Cass *et al*., 2005; Pereira *et al*., 2017; Hidayati

et al., 2021). This means not only considering the social determinants of mobility inequalities, but also their social consequences; while mobility may be a 'social product' (Camarero and Oliva, 2008: 344; Ureta, 2008), it is also *constitutive* of social relations as people situate their own mobility relative to that of others. Mobility and movement are, in themselves, neither intrinsically good nor bad; although often romanticized, mobility is not necessarily always desired (Jaffe *et al.*, 2012). Mobility is mirrored by 'immobilities and moorings', which may be voluntary and hard-won, or a result of oppression and coercion (Hannam *et al.*, 2006). While neither movement nor mooring are inherently beneficial, 'to move or not to move is not trivial but rather a powerful indicator of the way societies are ordered' (Ureta, 2008: 286).

In seeking to further conceptualize mobility inequalities, some scholars have focused not on mobility *per se* but on potential mobility (Kaufmann, 2002; Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004; Flamm and Kaufmann, 2006). Vincent Kaufmann and his colleagues thus introduce the concept of 'motility' (building on Bauman, 2000), defined as 'the capacity of entities (e.g. goods, information or persons) to be mobile in social and geographic space' (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004: 750). They posit motility as 'movement capital' (*ibid*: 752), composed of three elements: *access* (e.g. to transportation), *skills* (acquired knowledge and organizational capacity to use this access) and *cognitive appropriation*: people's understanding of options available and why/how they might use these. The latter speaks to the broader claim that mobility is as much about meaning as it is about mappable movement (Cresswell, 2011; Jensen, 2009).

In urban contexts, people's efforts to include or exclude themselves from different forms of movement are laden with questions of status (Jensen, 2009; Musterd *et al.*, 2016). Across the social spectrum, daily mobilities are linked to broader socioeconomic strategies and tactics (Camarero and Oliva, 2008). At one end are 'urban elites', whose exacting control over their mobility involves choreographed and 'shielded' movement, limiting their exposure to undesired aspects of urban life (Atkinson, 2016). At the other are the mobilities of the urban poor, which often comprise tactics of survival or responses to coercion. For some, mobility involves repeated forced displacement; if motility refers to the potential to be mobile in a positive sense, its converse is 'displaceability'—the state of being constantly susceptible to involuntary distancing from the rights and resources associated with a particular place (Yiftachel, 2020). As Jackson (2012) points out, while mobility is a *resource* for some, for others it is a form of *loss*, or just a tactic of *managing*. The most vulnerable urban groups often find themselves 'fixed in mobility' (Jackson, 2012: 725) or 'living through continuous displacement' (Preece *et al.*, 2020: 140) in search of a home.

A recent collection of articles on urban mobility in Africa emphasizes the role of mobility in shaping citizenship and belonging (Morgan and Rink, 2023). We go further, arguing that mobility—and, crucially, residents' agency over it—contributes to the shaping of nascent class identities. Here we build on Webb (2023), who explores how 'mobility capital' can affect educational opportunities that feed into class dynamics in South Africa, and Williams *et al.*'s (2022) work on the relationship between housing, physical mobility and social mobility in peri-urban India and South Africa. The latter explores how the relocation of low-income households to urban peripheries generates new mobility costs, which combine with acquiring a housing asset to produce different socioeconomic consequences depending on the context. Extending this work, we seek to understand how mobility—as well as *motility* and *displaceability*—not only affect individual and household trajectories but feed into the emergence of broader social distinctions that can be conceptualized in terms of class.

–   Shifting debates on social class in Africa
The wave of interest in African class formation in the mid to late twentieth century largely focused on the emerging industrial working class (Arrighi and Saul, 1968; Sandbrook and Cohen, 1975) and their structural distinction from a 'state bourgeoisie'

(Miller, 1974; Cooper, 1996). Like industrialization itself, however, interest in class analysis in Africa waned towards the end of the century, with a focus on the functional role of 'elites' superseding analysis of class-based stratification (Bayart, 1993; Daloz, 2003). The twenty-first century has seen a resurgence of interest, but this time with a marked emphasis on the middle class. There is a clear and widespread dissatisfaction with income or expenditure-based definitions of the middle class (Lentz, 2016; Melber, 2016), in favour of a Bourdieusian concern with sociocultural identifiers (Neubert, 2014; Werbner, 2018). Relatedly, there has been growing attention to Lamont's conception of the 'boundary work' through which the middle classes actively draw distinctions between themselves and lower classes (Lamont, 1992; Lentz, 2016). The recent literature on Africa's urban middle classes reveals huge variation not only in terms of their relative size and socioeconomic significance, but also basic characteristics. Middle class identity is seen as being clearly linked to the state (including state employment/privileges) in contexts such as Mozambique and Angola (Sumich, 2018; Croese and Pitcher, 2019; Gastrow, 2020), while in Nigeria some argue that the 'new middle classes' are 'more strongly rooted in the private sector' (Orji, 2016: 133). Meanwhile, there is heightened attention to the how the concept of 'middle class' is deployed as an *ideal*, and in pursuit of particular agendas (Sumich, 2018; Nielsen and Jenkins, 2021), including in Ethiopia (Planel and Bridonneau, 2017; Bach and Nallet, 2018).

This literature pays little attention to questions of physical mobility. There is no explicit discussion of it in two landmark edited collections on the middle class in Africa (Ncube and Lufumpa, 2015; Melber, 2016). In contrast, the literature analyses 'the role of education, "intelligent" work and meritocratic values; new ideals of domesticity and gender relations; practices of consumption; and middle-class sociability and political engagement' (Lentz, 2016: 26). While a focus on 'practices of consumption' has included attention to housing and the 'boundary work' involved in distinguishing middle-class residential norms (Mercer, 2024), there has been very little analysis of intra-urban physical or even residential mobility as an aspect of class. This is surprising, not least given that wider migration into and between cities has shaped the emerging middle class (Webb, 2023), including in Ethiopia (Breines, 2021). Moreover, when one digs into empirical *descriptions* of middle-class lives, questions of travel and transport often feature significantly. For example, in Neubert's exploration of the Kenyan middle class, transport is an important aspect of consumer lifestyles, including ownership of a private motorbike or car (Neubert, 2014: 118). Similarly, in Zambia being middle class often involves the ownership of multiple vehicles, as well as foreign travel, both for work and leisure (Hansen, 2000: 191–2). These descriptions are not, however, carried forward into an analysis of how actual and potential mobility shapes social class dynamics, including the ways class distinctions form and evolve.

In this article we suggest that highly variable degrees of agency between different groups with regard to residential and everyday mobility and immobility are playing important roles in class formation. This emphasis on class *formation* rather than class structure or class consciousness is important: instead of emphasizing objective/external factors (structure) or individual and collective identities (consciousness), it highlights the intra-class processes and practices that produce class from within (Fantasia, 1995: 275–6). Class formation is not simply about the reification of boundaries between classes writ large (e.g. between the 'middle' and 'working' class), but intra-class dynamics that allow us to make sense of this amorphous category of 'middle class'.

In socioeconomic terms, to speak of a generic African 'middle class' is quite meaningless, not only because of major differences between countries but because economists suggest that around two thirds of Africa's 'middle class' are 'barely out of the poor category' and at risk of dropping back into it in the event of unexpected shocks (Ncube and Lufumpa, 2015: 2). Even within a given country or city, the sociological coherence of a 'middle class' is less significant than the ways in which it becomes

a symbolic and yet *dynamic* category, internally differentiated and in constant flux (Bernstein, 2021: 27–8). The building up of social formations that ultimately constitute plural middle *classes* takes place through everyday practices, which precede anything like collective 'class action' (Fantasia, 1995). In this view, class is a 'bundle of social practices that may or may not be conscious, but that create and mark differences between social groups, in other words: an embodied and experiential sense of class' (Lentz, 2016: 41). While practices associated with work, cultural consumption and the home have been extensively analysed in relation to class formation in African contexts, mobility practices have not. In the remainder of this article we explore how attention to mobility can help us to better understand the 'micro milieus' that combine to make up larger social and political class worlds (Neubert, 2014).

Methodology

This article draws on primary research undertaken for the project 'Living the Urban Periphery: Infrastructure and Economic Change in African City-Regions'.[1] In this project, the research team aimed to understand the lived experiences of rapid transformation on urban peripheries through a grounded approach, resting on strong research collaboration, case study comparison, and extended engagement with residents. Within Addis Ababa, we selected two study areas that offered particularly sharp lenses on questions of urban peripheral change, being the location of large condominium housing sites and new infrastructure investments as well as other forms of housing. *Yeka Abado*, located in the northeast of the city, abutted the border with the surrounding federal state of Oromia and is the site of 18,000 condominium housing units, located on former farmland. The wider area also includes informal settlements, settlements of farmers who had lost farmland, and wealthy upmarket gated communities just across the state boundary. The second area, *Tulu Dimtu*, is located in the southeast of the city, also straddling the Oromia border.[2] Here 10,000 units were built on former farmland, with the condominium site bisected by a major arterial road. The area includes informal housing and old farmers' settlements, displaced farmers, and an expansive area of co-operative housing: multi-storey, multi-household 'raw' houses developed by residents in groups of 10–20 people, through a government-sponsored scheme (Zewdie *et al.*, 2018). See Figure 1 for a map with the location of these sites in relation to the city.

Within these areas we adopted a mixed-methods approach including household surveys (400, split evenly between the two case study areas), the collection of solicited diaries (50 from Tulu Dimtu and 50 from Yeka Abado), and in-depth household interviews with participants who had written diaries (again 50 in each area). All of this data was collected between February and July 2018, with follow-up validation community workshops undertaken in June 2019. Around half of participants were female and half male in each case, with ages ranging from the 20s to the 60s. Diaries and interviews were conducted with residents in all the types of housing mentioned above; the majority were in condominiums (both renters and owners), which comprised most housing in each area, but we also enrolled residents in informal settlements, co-operative housing and private real estate. Thus, our area-based methodological approach enabled us to go beyond existing explorations of the social dimensions of the condominium programme, by situating it in relation to the other housing types in the vicinity and capturing a wide range of income groups.

---

1   This project was co-funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council and South African National Research Foundation.

2   In 2022, the city underwent a major boundary restructuring and Tulu Dimtu is now outside the official boundaries of Addis Ababa, being part of the newly-created Sheger City administration within Oromia state. Yeka Abado remains just inside the revised city boundary.
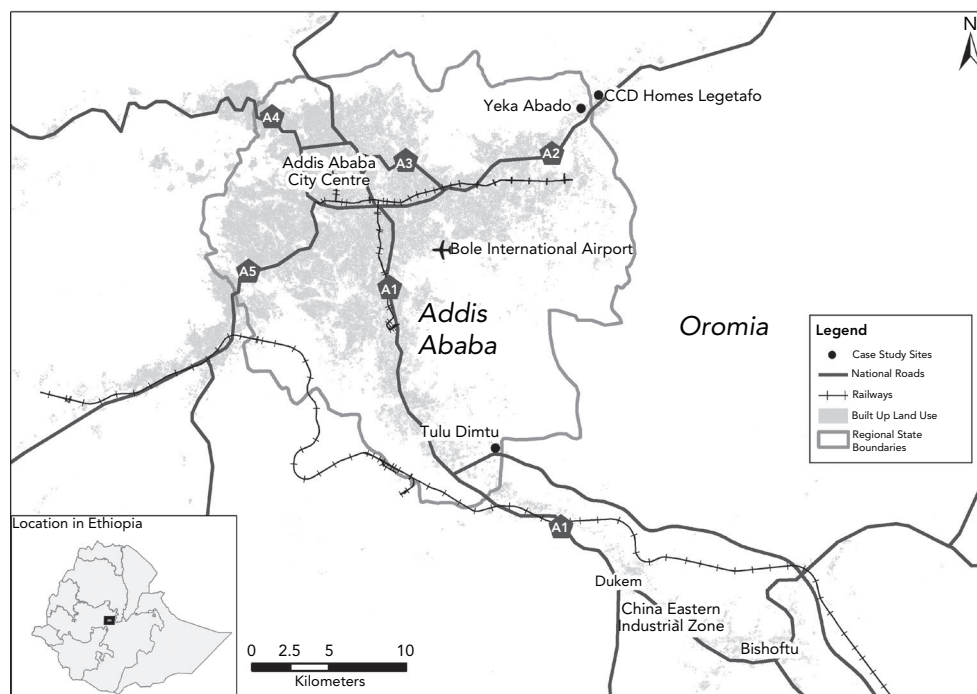
FIGURE 1 Map of Addis Ababa, indicating case study areas (*source*: Meth *et al.*, 2024. Used with permission)

The use of solicited diaries has been shown to facilitate forms of individual self-expression that offer different insights from other research methods, especially when contextualized through supplementary interviews (Meth, 2003). While diaries do raise questions of literacy, where we enrolled participants who could not write, these people were able to contribute through family members writing on their behalf. Risks relating to the interpretative role of the family member were also mitigated through accompanying interviews. Through the diaries, residents were invited to write over a two-week period about their everyday lives in their peripheral settlement, with a particular focus on living conditions and infrastructure challenges but with no fixed structure or length and a request to write as regularly as they felt they could manage. In response, residents provided observations on the housing conditions, physical infrastructure, social dynamics, daily mobilities and the challenges of accessing work and services. These diaries helped to inform the interviews, which were carried out between February and July 2018 by two Ethiopian members of the research team and, like the diaries, were mostly conducted in Amharic—a language spoken by the majority of residents of the city, regardless of ethnicity—and then translated. Social class was not an explicit focus of either the diaries or interviews, so residents were not asked about this directly; our interest in drawing out the relationship between mobility and class came following thematic analysis, when it became apparent that these dynamics were present in the relational and socially significant way that residents discussed their (im) mobilties.

This data was supported by 15 key informant interviews with actors such as central and local government officials and property developers. We also conducted community workshops around one year after the end of data collection, where the research team returned to the case study areas to share findings and discuss changes since the period of diary completion and interviews. The project therefore generated a

large amount of qualitative data, which was rigorously thematically analysed, multiple times in the case of some of the data through an iterative process whereby community workshops fed into further rounds of analysis. It is this qualitative work—particularly the residents' diaries and interview transcripts—that we draw on for this article. In what follows, we use the codes given for each resident—a number from 001-100, along with the letters 'YA' for Yeka Abado and 'TD' for Tulu Dimtu—to refer to participants, along with male/female where not already mentioned.

Contextualizing resettlement and mobility in Addis Ababa's periphery

The research for this article was undertaken in 2018–19, at the end of the period in which the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) governed Ethiopia, having displaced the communist 'Derg' regime in 1991. It is worth briefly reflecting on how the EPRDF's shifting priorities affected conditions in the urban periphery. At first, the EPRDF was far more concerned about rural than urban development (Di Nunzio, 2014; 2019) and made almost no effort to address a housing crisis exacerbated by the Derg's limits on investment in urban housing. However, their interest in Addis Ababa grew after a factional split within the ruling coalition in 2001, followed by the 2005 electoral crisis and the loss of virtually all EPRDF seats in the capital. This electoral shock prompted an acute awareness of the collective power of the urban classes, and the increasingly urgent need for the regime to invest more resources in urban development (Di Nunzio, 2014; Goodfellow, 2022).

With this renewed attention to cities from the mid-2000s came new forms of displacement. Population resettlement has been a recurrent feature of Ethiopian history, both due to conflicts and through various forms of 'development-induced displacement' (Kebede, 2009; Pankhurst and Piguet, 2009). The EPRDF's urban agenda from 2005 ushered in a new era of forced *urban* population movement. Part of this related to large-scale infrastructure construction within the city and the plan to remake Addis Ababa as Africa's 'diplomatic capital' (Yntiso, 2008; Weldeghebrael, 2022), but the IHDP also involved major displacements. As the housing programme became increasingly focused on the peripheries, the displacement of farmers to make way for condominium development became hugely contentious in Addis Ababa (Goodfellow, 2022; Lavers, 2023). Meanwhile, the simultaneous eviction of low-income communities from the city centre into the new peripheral housing estates meant that people were being ejected into the urban periphery from both directions (Di Nunzio, 2022; Weldeghebrael, 2022; Haile, 2024; Huang *et al*., 2024).

Alongside these involuntary residential expulsions, the housing programme also turbo-charged *voluntary* residential mobility as people flocked to sign up to the lottery scheme through which most units were distributed. The very nature of urban living in these areas is 'based on a singular and collective experience of both enforced—and also increasingly voluntary—displacement' (Planel and Bridonneau, 2017: 30). While reselling condominiums was formally prohibited for five years, legal loopholes facilitated a thriving resale market, which, alongside the rental market, meant that the movement of households in and out of units was more intense than intended. These dynamics, and the emergence of informal settlements of construction workers and farmers adjacent to the condominium sites, diversified the social character of these areas and contributed to intense mobility into, out of and within these areas (Huang *et al*., 2024).

Planel and Bridonneau (2017) argue that the condominium sites were 'social engineering laboratories' involving both an intentional project to consolidate an urban middle class as a key political ally of the EPRDF, and more organic processes of class formation. They suggest the city-centre condominium settlements were characterized by 'social concentration', with residents sharing broadly similar socioeconomic profiles and aspirations; but they note that 'the social trajectories in the condominiums located on the periphery are much more uncertain' (*ibid*: 32). By far the *majority* of condominium

residents now live in the periphery, with almost all new condominium development since the early 2010s being in far-flung areas such as Tulu Dimtu and Yeka Abado. Here, while residents do have shared experiences of (often multiple) residential relocation, there is a vast experiential difference between those forced to move through eviction and those who moved by choice. Moreover, because geographic peripherality creates a need for long commutes, the question of everyday mobility is much more significant than in central areas—and the manner of commuting highly varied. The question of mobility is therefore much more multifaceted and differentiated in these areas compared with central housing sites. In what follows, we argue that the role of varying forms of mobility and motility in these neighbourhoods can further illuminate the processes underpinning social class formation, starting with how and why people move into these areas.

Moving in: between liberation and displaceability

Households that move into Addis Ababa's new peripheries can broadly be categorized into voluntary and involuntary movers; but within these categories are distinct groups and varying degrees of agency. On the *voluntary* side, one primary entry route has been the condominium lottery scheme. The scheme involved three different modalities targeted at different income groups, with varying proportions of downpayment required depending on unit size and quality. These modalities were known as 10/90, 20/80, and 40/60. The first figure in each of these pairings represents the percentage downpayment; the remainder, the percentage given to recipients as a loan from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. In addition, there were those who purchased condominiums in the secondary market from lottery winners. Further voluntary arrivals consist of condominium renters, who—as discussed below and substantiated by our survey results—were often better off economically than lottery-winners, but also generally younger, and attempting to work their way *towards* property ownership. In the wider areas surrounding the Tulu Dimtu and Yeka Abado condominiums there were also a range of other housing types discussed above, including co-operative housing, private gated developments and informal settlements where some people settled out of choice, even if driven by economic need.

Involuntary arrivals largely consisted of two groups. First, households evicted from the city centre due to redevelopment and given priority access to a 10/90 or 20/80 unit as compensation—in Meth *et al*.'s (2023) words, not simply displaced but 'disruptively re-placed'. The second group are farmers displaced to make way for housing development. Residential mobility for both these groups has a very different meaning compared with the voluntary groups discussed above, who were all improving the quality of their living conditions and/or pursuing economic opportunities by moving in. For city centre evictees, the material qualities of their housing might improve by moving to a condominium, but the impact on livelihoods and broader socioeconomic prospects were likely negative. For displaced, landless farmers living in peripheral settlements, compensation proved to be woefully inadequate, as explored elsewhere (Debelo and Soboka, 2023; Lavers, 2023) and further evidenced below.

Those entering condominiums voluntarily, and who could afford the loan repayments or rent, commonly experienced a palpable sense of improvement from a previous condition in which residential mobility was often forced and rarely resulted in socioeconomic advancement. This sense of liberation through choice and fixity was particularly marked for owners, who conveyed sentiments such as those expressed by this young female lottery winner, who had previously only lived in rental housing and reported being happy about moving into a condominium 'Since it's my own house and I think I can have freedom' (YA021). They frequently allude to a contrast with prior experiences of renting a private property in which they were 'lacking a lot of freedom' (YA014; female). In contrast to lives that previously involved so much relocation that they were sometimes described as 'nomadic', the experience of becoming a property owner

in the condominiums is, for many in this group, positive because of the opportunities for 'mooring':

> I lived in many places; Arat Kilo, Piassa, Wosen … When you're living in a rental house you might not buy all the things you need for your house and your life. In contrast when you have a place that belongs to you, you invest on household materials and furniture (YA021).

For evictees allocated priority access to a unit as displacement compensation, who still had to make a downpayment and monthly repayments, things were much harder. Many 10/90 owners who had won access to a unit in the lottery also struggled. Despite both these groups being (nominally) owners, these were the poorest condominium residents; although they had managed to cover the downpayment, the monthly repayments and associated costs of peripheral living were beyond their capacity and many had to move out. When asked how the move to the area had affected them, one 10/90 resident (a male evictee in his 50s) responded:

> It has affected me extremely. The price is almost double … This is too burdensome for me. Most house owners have not managed to keep up with the expense of living here while at the same time pay for the monthly mortgage … most have rented out their houses in this area (YA015).

Even those managing to remain in their units often live under the threat having to move for financial reasons, as highlighted by this male lottery-winner in his 40s:

> There are … people who don't have the financial capacity (these people are not even able to do very basic maintenances) and we see a paper posted on their doors by the bank (YA001).

Households with greater capacity to pay often showed an awareness of the vulnerability and shame associated with this level of residential insecurity. Even some residents living nearby in informal, self-built housing that could be considered as materially inferior to condominium units had considerable sympathy for condominium dwellers facing financial pressure. One such resident commented that 'In my opinion, it's not right to force people to live in condominium houses when they can't afford to live there' (YA037; male).

Meanwhile, informal settlements adjacent to the condominiums accommodate a range of people from construction workers to farmers, condominium owners who have rented out their units due to inability to repay the loan, and people who have inherited shacks from their parents or informally purchased land from farmers prior to recent construction. Displaced farmers were a group with particular grievances. The decimation of their livelihoods had often been total, with monetary compensation unable to compensate for the loss of farming assets, as this female displaced farmer in her 50s explained:

> We didn't get enough compensation when they took our farmland. We finished the 70,000 Birr compensation my mother got while taking care of her and feeding myself and the entire family with it. There are other elderly people who have no one to take care of them … Why wouldn't they give them a single room to rent so that it can be like a pension? The government gets millions and trillions out of the condominium houses—why can't they give one room to each farmer? (YA043).

Even others who live in these informal areas, and describe themselves as living in poverty, view the displaced farmers with particular pity:

> The poor are getting evicted to build houses. The rich and the poor are living side by side. The rich are profiting while the poor are discriminated. For example, the farmer is evicted and the urbanite is settling in his place. I have seen farmers who ended up on the street. This makes me feel bad (YA044; female).

Meanwhile, condominium residents in the area perceive the injustice of the displacement that has produced their own voluntary mobility, especially if they have previous connections to farmland like this middle-aged female lottery-winner who had previously rented in the city centre:

> I'm a child of a farmer … and whenever I think of them my eyes are filled with tears. I don't understand why we have to migrate to this area when it is quite possible to reconstruct the central areas. Even though I like to benefit from the housing opportunity, the fact that they have to be evicted from their farmland is truly painful for me (TD029).

While the first of the two previous quotes appears to equate rich/poor with urban/rural, the second alludes to the distinction between urban core and periphery, pointing to the spatiality of redevelopment that has produced concentrated socioeconomic disparities in the latter. Wealth and poverty in Addis Ababa have always existed in proximity, previously mostly in central areas. In the new peripheries, however, are emerging forms of condensed inequality where the fault lines are not simply between rich and poor but between those who have come to the area to stake their claim to a 'modern' property and a stable existence, and those who have been violently flung from their homes. The latter might have previously been inner-city shack-dwellers or rural *teff* farmers, and might now live in condominiums or in informal settlements. Either way, there is a clear divide between them and those who had real agency over their entrance to the area. Moreover, they often exist in a state of 'displaceability' (Yiftachel, 2020), not only having *been* displaced but being effectively suspended in the 'gray space' of heightened vulnerability to further displacement (Yiftachel, 2009), either due to rising rents or further development. In some cases, local authorities would not even allow informal settlement residents to pay land tax, contributing to this uncertainty. When asked if he had paid such taxes, one 60-year-old male informal settlement resident—currently working as a guard on a construction site, and who had lived in the area for 26 years—replied:

> No, they wouldn't let us. We've been asking but they want a bribe to even let us do that. They come and tell us that we're illegal and that we'll be evicted (YA037).

These residents are thus prevented from doing anything that might underpin a more solid claim to their home. Although unclear whether they would actually be evicted in the near future, the sense of being in a different, 'displaceable' category of people—excluded from 'development' even though they were not opposed to it—was palpable:

> Even a wild animal lives in its wild home; similarly, we live in our hole that we constructed for ourselves. If there is a body that will legalize us we like the development, no one hates progress (*ibid.*).

This section has examined how people entered Addis Ababa's new peripheries, and the very different attitudes to residential mobility associated with this. Such stark experiential differences among people living in close proximity has heightened the sense in which agency over one's residential mobility is a critical signifier of socioeconomic difference. On the one hand, practices of intentional mooring evident in acquiring new material possessions and building one's 'own' home—or being able to move 'upwards' to the superior material environment of the condominiums as a renter—constitute identity markers typically associated with middle classness. Meanwhile, the experience of shame in the inability to repay a mortgage, and more extreme still the visceral embodied experience of repeated displacement, become markers of exclusion from such status. These differences become further evident when we consider how people talk about staying or moving on from their current home, below. First, however, we consider everyday physical mobility and how this underscores socioeconomic divides, as well as differentiation within the emerging middle class.

Moving within: everyday (im)mobilities

When discussing transport challenges for those living in the peripheries, one city official commented that the government 'only thought about transport once the housing units were ready for [handing] over to condominium winners' (interview, December 2018). For some, the relative detachment from the city centre's traffic and pollution are reasons to move to the periphery; better air quality and its benefits for outdoor exercise were repeatedly noted. This, however, is again a marker of the capacity of some groups to choose how and when they are mobile. For those who have no choice but to make long journeys into the city by public transport, this relative detachment is primarily a constraint.

Condominium residents who commute in by public transport for work or school commonly leave the house at 5.30 am in order to arrive by 9 am; one even stated that he had to leave Tulu Dimtu as early as 3 am to get to work on time (TD026). Another man in in his 40s stated that he sometimes only arrives at work at 10–11 am despite leaving at 6 am, in a journey involving four separate minibus-taxis (YA022). Queues for minibus-taxis are regularly over 30 metres long, and 'exhausting even to look at', according to a woman living in Tulu Dimtu's co-operative housing area (TD077). Yet there is at least decent and improving provision of minibus-taxis and buses in the condominium areas; those living in informal settlements a short distance away sometimes wait 2–3 hours for a shared minibus-taxi. Commuting costs were also prohibitive for many families, especially where public transport providers hike fares during rush hours. The situation is epitomized by a comment from one Tulu Dimtu condominium resident—a government schoolteacher who received his condominium unit through a government house benefit package—'I spend most of my time and money on transportation and that makes me really sad' (TD090). Meanwhile, families elsewhere in the area with sufficient wealth to afford one or more cars often seem oblivious to the realities of depending on public transport, indicating that they inhabit very different social worlds—as in the case of this 34-year-old male resident of co-operative housing:

> Though we never have to use it, we see that there are lots of taxis and buses to different directions of the inner city. ... To Mexico or Megenagna one could travel without any issue (TD051).

The lack of short cuts, for example from the commercial hub of Bole down to Tulu Dimtu, means that people have to divide transport into more stages than should be necessary, as well as travelling longer distances. Some young people even stop attending school or college due to the distances involved. Similar problems affect accessing urban amenities; the additional cost of a minibus-taxi or *bajaj* (three-wheeler) to access what

used to be local marketplaces, shops or services is a significant drain on resources. These challenges sometimes result in people effectively giving up on (central) city life altogether. One condominium resident in his 30s commented that 'Unless I have important matters I don't even think of going to the inner city for recreation; the distance is unthinkable' (TD025), with another in his 50s noting that he would only visit family in the city now 'if there are unescapable social events like a funeral' (YA017). Constraints of distance, time and cost clearly impact people's wellbeing: some residents referred to the negative feelings that accompanied even contemplating a journey, let alone undertaking it. One 30-year-old Tulu Dimtu condominium resident had his salary cut twice within seven months due to lateness, which he attributed to public transport problems (TD030), while a Yeka Abado resident in her 30s said transport was so bad that she gave up trying to find work at all (YA005).

Our data indicate that solidarity can emerge through people's shared attempts to make their journeys easier. When commenting on collective efforts to share vehicles and minimize transport stress, one Tulu Dimtu co-operative housing resident commented that 'my conscience was at peace when I saw how beneficial assisting one another could be' and described the conviviality that emerged among commuters on uncomfortable, overcrowded minibuses (TD077; female). Nevertheless, daily experiences of constrained mobility contrast strongly with agential mobilities for those living in the nearby private developments known as Ropak and CCD (Country Club Developers). Ropak is somewhat less upmarket and older, CCD a very high-end gated community. The casual way in which mobility features in diary entries from these areas is notable:

> I am able to walk, exercise in the area. ... To get health services I go to Addis Ababa. There are few available here, but I go to the city to get checked out if I am sick. For transport, it's also always available. For recreation we go to the city as well (YA097; male, Ropac).

> When you leave your house and you see how comfortable the roads are, the green plants, the way the houses are constructed, the fact that the pedestrian and vehicular roads are separated which gives freedom to take a walk, these create happiness (YA099; male, CCD).

In contrast to the 5.30 am starts and multi-modal public transport journeys above, these residents—for whom mobility is associated with availability, recreation, comfort, freedom and happiness—travel almost entirely by private cars and taxis, often from 8 am. This relatively easy mobility has only come with recent developments; a Ropac resident in her 40s noted that before proper roads were constructed, 'when we wanted to buy things, we had to go by foot for a long distance, especially during the rainy season when the road becomes much more difficult' (YA095). While the quality of roads and availability of taxis has improved, the benefits of this for car drivers' mobility are impeded by the fact that traffic is continually getting worse. Thus, with the development of new infrastructure, and an influx of new residents, some CCD residents suggest that the condominiums and associated growth in population are to blame for traffic:

> The Kotebe road is ruined and the addition of the new condominiums has worsened it. And it's going to be horrible after September too ... The Ayat route has jams at the train crossing areas. It didn't use to be like this before people moved into the condominiums (YA100; female).

This respondent was a doctor who reported that her family sometimes left the house in 'three separate cars' in the morning, due to increased traffic that made successive

drop-offs at school and work with one car impossible. The same was true among some residents of co-operative housing in Tulu Dimtu; a sense of having freedom and a range of options—including to have one car in the peripheries and one in the city—comes through strongly in the responses of this male university graduate in his 30s, who is involved in multiple businesses and described himself as a 'very successful person':

> Since our jobs would demand us that we make several journeys without restrictions, we each take a car. We might also leave the house at different times of the day. For this reason we don't go with the same car… Sometimes we do leave with one car. For example, today is Sunday and since I have left the car in the city we will leave together with my wife's car (TD051).

Meanwhile condominium residents, some of whom owned cars but would take long journeys with multiple stops, were seen as worsening the traffic. The doctor quoted above commented repeatedly on the increasing number of people, including those walking on the streets. In one diary entry, the latter appear to be resented for their mobility at time when it was denied to her as a car user:

> While I was seated in my car, I was jealous of the people who were walking. This is because they were going past me; I think it would be great if the Wossen road had some sort of flyover (YA100).

These residents saw themselves as having socioeconomically risen above the need to walk or use public transport—or in some cases, even to rely on just one car—in contrast with many around them. Other research also indicates 'boundary work' regarding how car owners in the urban periphery perceive the Addis Ababa Light Railway, which—despite being initially aimed at the commuting middle classes—is virtually never used by them, since they view it as too crowded and a source of insecurity and pickpocketing (Goodfellow and Huang, 2021). The light rail is also seen as creating crowding on the streets and new difficulties for car users. Ironically, then, the wealthier groups with more transport options have not fully transcended challenges to their mobility; but this causes them to draw a harder line between themselves and 'other' groups who are seen as *limiting* their mobility.

In this section we have seen how mobility shapes everyday life but also distinct social practices and relational ideas about socioeconomic difference in the peripheries. For those dependent on public transport, the dominant experience is of highly constrained, compromised and often protracted mobility, and limited control in relation to mobility challenges. In contrast, car owners enjoy greater agency over their mobility. But there are notable differences between condominium-dwellers involved in complex car-sharing, multi-stop arrangements, and those in private real estate developments or co-operative housing with sometimes multiple cars who see the former as blocking their own mobility. If all these automobile users are part of the emerging, propertied (or high rent-paying) middle classes, they exist in different 'micro-milieus' with respect to their own mobility practices and perceptions of others, contributing to a sense of distinct upper and lower middle-class identities. *Intra-class* differentiation thus also plays out through everyday experiences of mobility.

Moving on: location-hopping and planning to remain

Earlier we considered how people arrived in Addis Ababa's new peripheries as homeowners, tenants, displaced households or squatters. The question of whether people expect to move on again—and how they envisage themselves staying or remaining—is partly conditioned by these earlier experiences. But plans for future movement or mooring also offer potential to transcend the past. Our research reveals

remarkable differences in how intending to move, or planning to remain, features in life and social identities in the urban periphery. It is here that we see the greatest relevance not just of mobility, but of a sense of motility or displaceability.

As mentioned previously, many condominium owners cannot afford to live in their unit so are forced to rent it out (Haile, 2024). They may also *choose* to rent it out for profit—or even sell it. The massive housing shortage that motivated the condominium programme has created very high demand among renters to live in the condominiums. This leads to rapidly escalating rents, which combine with brokers' fees to force lower income people out of the area—as this condominium renter in his 30s notes:

> As the neighborhood is getting vibrant and people are moving in, rent has increased on me. The brokers ... will fix the prices high to get higher commission and the poor are unable to access housing. I wonder why the government doesn't interfere with such behavior; the reason the government constructed condominium housing is so that the poor can live in it (YA020).

Many felt the government was partly responsible, mismanaging condominium allocation and allowing absentee ownership, while 'there are many citizens who don't have houses that are going from one place to another. It seems that the government is not controlling this well' (TD090; male).

However, this does not mean steep rent increases everywhere. As new condominium sites have periodically been released, flooding the market with thousands of new rental units all at once, one area suddenly becomes relatively cheap if another condominium site is more desirable. The changes encourage residential mobility in pursuit of cheaper rents. While many households clearly feel forced to shift location by economic necessity, there is also a category of condominium residents who—whether owners or renters—feel that they have a significant degree of freedom to choose whether and when they move on. As one female condominium renter commented, 'This is just one option for us, but we plan to go to somewhere better' (YA049).

Some areas can rapidly become depopulated as other condominium sites opened with cheaper rents:

> Most people are moving out of here and going to Bole Arabsa. You see people moving every day. Most houses are not rented and they're unoccupied (YA002; male).

This sense among some renters of being able to voluntarily 'location hop' was often accompanied by a desire to eventually settle down and become a property owner. Residential mobility was not here about being 'fixed in mobility', but reflected a sense of motility: the capacity and agency to move in order to find the best circumstances available, as reflected in these comments from a condominium renter in her 30s:

> I'll soon leave this place. I was told that rent is cheaper in Bole Arabsa and so I'll move there. If I could win the lottery for the condominium house I registered for, I would be very happy. If things continue the same way, I think I'll go back to an Arab country (YA020).

While these examples highlight choice in relation to residential mobility, others reveal a sense of agency in relation to remaining where they are. This was particularly the case for condominium owners who won in the lottery and were well enough off to be able afford the loan repayments:

> I am happy about my decision to live at Abado. I am excited about it and I want to keep on living there (YA021; female).

> I don't think we'll live anywhere else. Maybe if a better opportunity arises (YA005; female).

Similar sentiments were evident among some co-operative housing residents, which were also sites of asset appreciation and aspirations for stability. As our 34-year-old 'very successful' co-operative housing resident noted:

> If you have something in this area now it will be worth much more in the future. For these reasons I would like to remain here. My plan is related to staying here (TD051; male).

However, just as there is a difference between people who fear being *forced* to move on due to high rents and those who feel that they have the capacity to move on *if they choose*, there is also a contrast between those who 'plan to remain' because they like the area, and those who feel they *have no option* but to stay. The latter are often displaced farmers, as with this woman in her 50s:

> My plan is related to living here; I have no other hope or choice (YA043).

Some displaced farmers were more explicit in emphasizing their dependence on the whims of government—something observed more widely among urban poor and unemployed in Ethiopia (Mains, 2011; Di Nunzio, 2019):

> Since the roads are constructed now it has been said that we will be here permanently … our fate depends on the government's decision (TD086; male).

This sense of a lack of residential motility is not entirely correlated to housing type; it affected some in the condominiums too. When asked about their plans to stay in their unit or move on, one former city centre evictee in his 50s now living in a 10/90 unit responded by saying 'What other choice do I have? Where else can I go from here, except to my grave?' (YA015).

For the gated estate residents near Yeka Abado, there is a strong sense of future motility. Despite stating he was very happy with his residence, on being asked whether he intended to stay one resident replied: 'No, I want to move abroad. To America. I have plans to move there' (YA097). While such plans of overseas relocation might be realistic for them, for many others travel is largely in the realm of the imagination, as with this young male co-operative housing resident:

> When we have power cuts on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, I feel like flying away from the neighborhood. … There is nothing else I could do other than watching the fence blocks of houses in the neighborhood (TD055).

This section has explored anticipated future residential (im)mobility for residents of Addis Ababa's new peripheries, and broader aspirations for mobility or mooring. The most significant distinction we find is not whether people want to leave or remain, but the degree of agency they feel they have over this decision. Many residents anticipate moving imminently; but this might be aspirational, to achieve their desired housing situation, or because they are forced out due to rising rents. Similarly, 'planning to remain' for some people means putting down roots in a situation where they see future

happiness, while for others it reflects a deadening lack of freedom. These differences in relative motility and displaceability, while linked to material circumstances, play a distinct part in people's characterizations of their daily lives, their relationship to government and to their wider social milieu. In the final section, we explore further how our analysis might enrich understandings of emergent class distinctions.

Discussion: mobile confidence and capacity among Ethiopia's emerging urban classes

Between the extremes of cosmopolitan gated community residents and forcibly relocated farmers are many condominium or co-operative housing residents who exist on a continuum between *needing* to move or stay put and feeling *empowered* to do so. While sometimes a fine line in practice, this sense of relative agency and confidence over movement is recognized as an important resource; in Bourdieusian terms, a form of capital. While class analyses rooted in Bourdieu have explored the roles of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital in the construction of class identities, mobility is not reducible to any of these. Meanwhile, Kaufmann *et al.* (2004) have theorized motility as a form of 'movement capital' through a largely individualized focus, without fully drawing this back to questions of social class.

This is not about class in the Marxist or Weberian sense, in terms of concrete taxonomic distinctions between economically determined structures in the capitalist system. Nor does motility necessarily align with conscious 'middle classness' in the way recently discussed in other African countries such as South Africa, Angola, Mozambique and Botswana, where certain urban social groups actively identify with the signifier 'middle class' (Melber, 2016). Rather, these differing degrees of motility resonate with the idea of class as a 'bundle of social practices' (Lentz, 2016: 41), which reflect and amplify differences in material positions. We have in this article delineated a range of social practices and experiences that relate to capacities and experiences of physical (im)mobility, and—importantly—to agency over one's mobility and the consequent *confidence* that one might be mobile. These areas on the urban periphery are spaces in which the differentiated motility of households living side by side forms part of emergent relational class boundaries and intra-class nuances. As they navigate their lives in close proximity, within and beyond the condominium spaces, a dividing line between the confidently 'motile' on the one hand, and the 'fixed in mobility' and/or 'displaceable' on the other, comes into focus.

We have seen this in how some property owners see themselves as being able to both 'live freely' and *invest in fixity* in ways that are explicitly contrasted with the lives of 'others', whether renters or low-income owners who cannot afford loan repayments or other costs associated with the move, who are forced into socioeconomically damaging relocations. We see it also in the contrast between 'the farmer [who] is evicted and the urbanite [who] is settling in his place', with 'eviction' and 'settlement' as marks of displaceability and motility, respectively. Yet we also see it in the 'micro milieus' of everyday transport, with multi-car households distinguishing themselves from those whose mass movement is constructed as an obstacle, while the latter aspire to the apparently easy mobility represented by car ownership. Indeed, the idealized physical mobility represented by the car supersedes, for some, conventional ideas of social advancement:

> If I have money I wish to buy a car. I don't want to be rich or a businessman. I want to travel with my car … to see good things before I die (YA037; male).

Within these depictions of differentiated mobility, and the variable degrees of force and aspiration associated with it, the role of government is often central. We see the government's 'mismanagement' of the housing situation being held responsible for the

'many citizens who don't have houses that are going from one place to another', as well as for the situation of ex-farmers. Meanwhile, some beneficiaries of the condominium programme who can afford to remain there—for whom residential mobility is not a *threat* but a potential *choice* ('This is just one option for us') express deep gratitude to government.

In this regard, the government's role in cultivating social class identities through housing was not only about creating a property-owning class as a political ally (Planel and Bridonneau, 2017). It also inadvertently stimulated other social distinctions—some of which might be seen as evolving *within* the amorphous category of 'urban middle classes'—that emerged as side-effects of urban peripheral transformations. These distinctions relate ultimately to questions of freedom and unfreedom, including the freedom to move.

We thus build on Planel and Bridonneau's work in several ways. First, rather than just focusing on dynamics within the condominium settlements, we situate these in peripheral neighbourhoods more broadly. This enables us to explore relationally how the line between those with relative motility and those without extends beyond the boundaries of the condominium sites into various forms of dwelling within the overall peripheral milieu. Second, shining the spotlight on mobility reveals how even *within* the condominiums, while the distinction between owners and renters is significant, other important markers of social differentiation are arguably more pertinent to class formation. Indeed, there is a risk of attributing more internal coherence and commonality to the categories of 'owner' and 'tenant' than is actually the case. Our research shows that some tenants aspire to be owners, but are freer and sometimes wealthier than owners, and can choose when and how to move on. Other renters feel helpless, subject to the vagaries of rent levels or government decisions. Owners, meanwhile, might be wealthy or might be low-income evictees who were allocated a condominium but have no choice but to go back and rent in an informal settlement. There is, therefore, a paradox: tenants are aspiring to the asset ownership and mooring that they believe owners have, yet they themselves often possess greater motility. Owners are sometimes more 'displaceable', having been subject to multiple displacements and being now unable to afford living in the 'asset' they own.

In sum, taken across the three forms of mobility examined here—moving in, moving within, and moving on—a line of distinction emerges that is neither as simple as tenant versus owner, or even richer versus poorer. Relative wealth is certainly important for understanding class, but it is widely agreed that alone it cannot explain dynamics of class formation, which involves more complex bundles of practices and forms of identification (Melber, 2016; Bernstein, 2021). In exploring how mobility differentials contribute to class formation, we have seen not just how practices of movement reinforce social status, but how the capacity to move (motility) and susceptibility to displacement (displaceability) play significant roles in emergent self- and other-identification. Yet we can also push beyond the concepts of motility and displaceability, since our findings highlight the varying levels of *confidence* that one *might* have the capacity to move or stay put in the future. Differentiation is then not just about demonstrable capacities, but degrees of confidence in one's possible capacities. Thus, *mobile confidence and capacity* enhance a sense of belonging in a given social milieu that can be identified as 'middle class'. The greater such confidence and capacity, the more solid this association with middle classness; the weaker, the more one is excluded from such status.

Conclusions

This article has pursued two main goals. First, it has contributed to the literature on the wrenching transformations to Ethiopian urban society, expanding the discussion of how recent investments in housing and infrastructure are reshaping socioeconomic relationships and social class identities. It has done so by exploring the role of mobility,

and crucially the related concepts of motility and displaceability, within emergent urban social identities. In so doing it has argued that there are emerging social class dynamics between those who regularly face the reality or threat of being forced to move or stay put, and those for whom (im)mobility is about realizing one's aspirations to move or stay put. As the approach to redeveloping Addis Ababa has evolved under the government of Abiy Ahmed and the Prosperity party, with rather different political and economic agendas in mind but with equally, if not more, disruptive impacts on the city (see Terrefe, 2020), this topic merits ongoing exploration in the Ethiopian context.

Second, and on a wider canvas, the article has offered a new perspective on the relationship between actual and potential mobilities and the evolution of social class distinctions. While the recent pace of transformation in Addis Ababa throws these dynamics into a particularly intense light, in many cities worldwide the mobility divide is clearly important, taking on additional significance at times of economic and spatial transformation. We have aimed to push this further into debates on social class, arguing that the divide between those who have little choice about how and when they move or stay put, and those who possess substantial confidence and capacity to control their mobility, is more fundamental to class formation than often credited. This 'motility line', and how it is materially, socially and relationally constructed, ought to be more central in explorations of social class in the future.

Tom Goodfellow, School of Geography and Planning, University of Sheffield, Winter Street, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK, t.goodfellow@sheffield.ac.uk

Metadel Sileshi Belihu, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 99421 Weimar, Germany, metadel.sileshi@gmail.com

Zhengli Huang, Urban Institute, University of Sheffield, The Wave, 2 Whitham Road, Sheffield S10 2AH, UK. zhengli.huang2@sheffield.ac.uk

References

Arrighi, G. and J.S. Saul (1968) Socialism and economic development in tropical Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 6.2, 141–69.

Atkinson, R. (2016) Limited exposure: social concealment, mobility and engagement with public space by the super-rich in London. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 48.7, 1302–17.

Bach, J. and C. Nallet (2018) Conceptualizing the middle class in a developmental state: narratives and expectations in Ethiopia. *African Affairs* 117.468, 439–61.

Bauman, Z. (2000) *Liquid modernity*. John Wiley and Sons, Oxford.

Bayart, J.F. (1993) *The state in Africa: the politics of the belly*. Longman, London.

Bernstein, H. (2021) Into the field with Marx: some observations on researching class. In A. Mezzadri (ed.), *Marx in the field*, Anthem Press, London.

Breines, M. R. (2021) *Becoming middle class: young people's migration between urban centres in Ethiopia*. Palgrave MacMillan, New York, NY.

Camarero, L.A. and J. Oliva (2008) Exploring the social face of urban mobility: daily mobility as part of the social structure in Spain. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32.2, 344–62.

Cass, N., E. Shove and J. Urry (2005) Social exclusion, mobility and access. *The Sociological Review* 53.3, 539–55.

Charitonidou, M. (2022) Housing programs for the poor in Addis Ababa: urban commons as a bridge between spatial and social. *Journal of Urban History* 48.6, 1345–64.

Cooper, F. (1996) *Decolonization and African society: the labor question in French and British Africa*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Cresswell, T. (2006) *On the move: mobility in the modern western world*. Taylor and Francis, London.

Cresswell, T. (2011) Mobilities I: catching up, *Progress in Human Geography* 35.4, 550–58.

Croese, S. and M.A. Pitcher (2019) Ordering power? The politics of state-led housing delivery under authoritarianism—the case of Luanda, Angola. *Urban Studies* 56.2, 401–18.

Daloz, J.P. (2003) 'Big men' in sub-Saharan Africa: how elites accumulate positions and resources. *Comparative Sociology* 2.1, 271–85.

Debelo, A.R. and T.E. Soboka (2023) Urban development and the making of frontiers in/from Addis Ababa/Finfinne, Ethiopia. *Journal of Asian and African studies* 58.5, 708–24.

Di Nunzio, M.D. (2014) 'Do not cross the red line': the 2010 general elections, dissent, and political mobilization in urban Ethiopia. *African Affairs* 113.452, 409–30.

Di Nunzio, M.D. (2019) *The act of living: street life, marginality, and development in urban Ethiopia*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.

Fantasia, R. (1995) From class consciousness to culture, action, and social organization. *Annual Review of Sociology* 21.1, 269–87.

Flamm, M. and V. Kaufmann (2006) Operationalising the concept of motility: a qualitative study. *Mobilities* 1.2, 167–89.

Gastrow, C. (2020) Housing middle-classness: formality and the making of distinction in Luanda. *Africa* 90.3, 509–28.

Goodfellow, T. (2022) *Politics and the urban frontier: transformation and divergence in late urbanizing East Africa*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Goodfellow, T. and Z. Huang (2021) Contingent infrastructure and the dilution of 'Chineseness':

reframing roads and rail in Kampala and Addis Ababa. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 53.4, 655–74.

Haile, F. (2024) Displaced for housing: analysing the uneven outcomes of the Addis Ababa Integrated Housing Development Program. *Urban Geography* 45.1, 6–12.

Hannam, K., M. Sheller and J. Urry (2006) Mobilities, immobilities and moorings. *Mobilities* 1.1, 1–22.

Hansen, K.T. (2000) *Salaula: the world of secondhand clothing and Zambia*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Hidayati, I., W. Tan and C. Yamu (2021) Conceptualizing mobility inequality: mobility and accessibility for the marginalized. *Journal of Planning Literature* 36.4, 492–507.

Huang, Z., T. Goodfellow and M.K. Desta (2024) Homeownership and tenure (in)security in fractured urban peripheries: Ethiopia's mass housing programme. *Housing Studies* 1–23.

Jackson, E. (2012) Fixed in mobility: young homeless people and the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36.4, 725–41.

Jaffe, R., C. Klaufus and F. Colombijn (2012) Mobilities and mobilizations of the urban poor. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36.4, 643–54.

Jensen, O.B. (2009) Flows of meaning, cultures of movements—urban mobility as meaningful everyday life practice. *Mobilities* 4.1, 139–58.

Kaufmann, V. (2002) *Re-thinking mobility. contemporary sociology*. Ashgate, Aldershot.

Kaufmann, V., M.M. Bergman and D. Joye (2004) Motility: mobility as capital. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28.4, 745–56.

Kebede, K. (2009) Development-induced resettlement. In A. Pankhurst and F. Piguet (eds.), *Moving people in Ethiopia: development, displacement and the state*, Boydell and Brewer, Woodbridge.

Keunen, E. and A. Ley (2023) Understanding residential mobility: why the African context matters. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 45.3, 335–52.

Lamont, M. (1992) *Money, morals and manners: the culture of the French and the American upper-middle class*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Lavers, T. (2023) *Ethiopia's 'developmental state': political order and distributive crisis*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Lentz, C. (2016) African middle classes: lessons from transnational studies and a research agenda. In H. Melber (ed.), *The rise of Africa's middle class: myths, realities and critical engagements*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London.

Mains, D. (2011) *Hope is cut: youth, unemployment and the future in Ethiopia*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia, PA.

Melber, H. (ed.) (2016) *The rise of Africa's middle class: myths, realities and critical engagements*. Bloomsbury Publishing, London.

Mercer, C. (2024) *The suburban frontier: middle-class construction in Dar es Salaam*. University of California Press, Oakland, CA.

Meth, P. (2003) Entries and omissions: using solicited diaries in geographical research. *Area* 35.2, 195–205.

Meth, P., M. Belihu, S. Buthelezi and F. Masikane (2023) Not entirely displacement: conceptualizing relocation in Ethiopia and South Africa as 'disruptive re-placement'. *Urban Geography* 44.5, 824–49.

Meth, P., S. Charlton, T. Goodfellow and A. Todes (2024) *Living the urban periphery: infrastructure, everyday life and economic change in African city-regions*. Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Miller, R.A. (1974) Elite formation in Africa: class, culture, and coherence. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 12.4, 521–42.

Morgan, N. and B. Rink, B. (2023) The past in present African urban mobility systems: towards a mobilities longue durée. *Urban Forum* 34.4, 413–8.

Musterd, S., W.P. van Gent, M. Das and J. Latten (2016) Adaptive behaviour in urban space: residential mobility in response to social distance. *Urban Studies* 53.2, 227–46.

Ncube, M. and C.L. Lufumpa (2015) *The emerging middle class in Africa*. Routledge, London.

Neubert, D. (2014) What is 'middle class'? In search of an appropriate concept. *Middle East–Topics and Arguments* 2, 23–35.

Nielsen, M. and R. Jenkins (2021) Insurgent aspirations? Weak middle-class utopias in Maputo, Mozambique. *Critical African Studies* 13.2, 162–82.

Orji, N. (2016) Middle class activism in Nigeria. In H. Melber (ed.) *The rise of Africa's middle class: myths, realities and critical engagements*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London.

Pankhurst, A. and F. Piguet (eds.) (2009) *Moving people in Ethiopia: development, displacement and the state*. Boydell and Brewer, Woodbridge.

Pereira, R.H., T. Schwanen and D. Banister (2017) Distributive justice and equity in transportation. *Transport Reviews* 37.2, 170–91.

Planel, S. and M. Bridonneau (2017) (Re)making politics in a new urban Ethiopia: an empirical reading of the right to the city in Addis Ababa's condominiums. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 11.1, 24–45.

Preece, J., E. Garratt and J. Flaherty (2020) Living through continuous displacement: resisting homeless identities and remaking precarious lives. *Geoforum* 116, 140–8.

Sandbrook, R. and R. Cohen (eds.) (1975) *The development of an African working class: studies in class formation and action*. Taylor & Francis, London

Sheller, M. and J. Urry (2006) The new mobilities paradigm. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 38.2, 207–26.

Sheller, M. and J. Urry (2016) Mobilizing the new mobilities paradigm. *Applied Mobilities* 1.1, 10–25.

Sumich, J. (2018) *The middle class in Mozambique: the state and the politics of transformation in Southern Africa* (Vol. 57). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Terrefe, B. (2020) Urban layers of political rupture: The 'new' politics of Addis Ababa's megaprojects. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 14.3, 375–95.

Ureta, S. (2008) To move or not to move? Social exclusion, accessibility and daily mobility among the low-income population in Santiago, Chile. *Mobilities* 3.2, 269–89.

Uteng, T.P. and K. Lucas (eds.) (2018) *Urban mobilities in the global South*. Routledge, London.

Wacquant, L.J. (1991) Making class: the middle class(es) in social theory and social structure. In S.G. McNall (ed.), *Bringing class back in: contemporary and historical perspectives*, Routledge, London.

Webb, C. (2023) 'This country beyond the township': race, class and higher education mobilities in the post-apartheid city. *Geoforum* 139, 103678.

Weldeghebrael, E.H. (2022) The framing of inner-city slum redevelopment by an aspiring developmental state: the case of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *Cities* 125, 102807.

Werbner, P. (2018) Rethinking class and culture in Africa: between E.P. Thompson and Pierre Bourdieu. *Review of African Political Economy* 45.155, 7–24.

Williams, G., S. Charlton, K. Coelho, D. Mahadevia and P. Meth (2022) (Im)mobility at the margins: low-income households' experiences of peripheral resettlement in India and South Africa. *Housing Studies* 37.6, 910–31.

Yiftachel, O. (2009) Critical theory and 'gray space': mobilization of the colonized. *City* 132.3, 246–63.

Yiftachel, O. (2020) From displacement to displaceability: a southeastern perspective on the new metropolis. *City* 24.1/2, 151–65.

Yntiso, G. (2008) Urban development and displacement in Addis Ababa: the impact of resettlement projects on low-income households. *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review* 24.2, 53–77.

Zewdie, M., H. Worku and A. Bantider (2018) Temporal dynamics of the driving factors of urban landscape change of Addis Ababa during the past three decades. *Environmental Management* 61.1, 132–46.