

でも作られていることが確認された。これは注目に値する。今回確認された棒状の羽毛貨は、形状こそ一般的なベルト状のものと異なるが、現在においても製造されていたのである。

これらの羽毛貨が、現在どのような役割を果たしているのかは、今後の調査が必要である。可能性としては、ネンド島への輸出を目的として製造されており、またネンド島では伝統的儀式や、何らかの取引に用いられるというものである。

婚資や結婚式においてすらも、既に羽毛貨は使われなくなっていたが、羽毛貨がまだ消

滅したわけではない。羽毛貨についての記録と、現代における役割の解明が必要なのである。

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Saviors to the Citizens or Mere Entrepreneurs? Fluidity of the Informal Management of *Tera Askebari* in Addis Ababa

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Cell Phone Pickpocketed at Minibus Terminal
As many of the *faranji* (foreigners) who often use minibus in Addis Ababa know from experience, taking a minibus requires great attention because the moment you let your guard down, you may lose your personal belongings! This happened to me around six years ago when I was taking an Amharic class

at Addis Ababa University (AAU). One day, my friend Chen, a Chinese student working on her master's degree at AAU, and I decided to go to the central post office to pick up some parcels. Since I was not used to taking minibuses, Chen kindly instructed me about which routes I should take. After completing our errand, we went to a nearby station in

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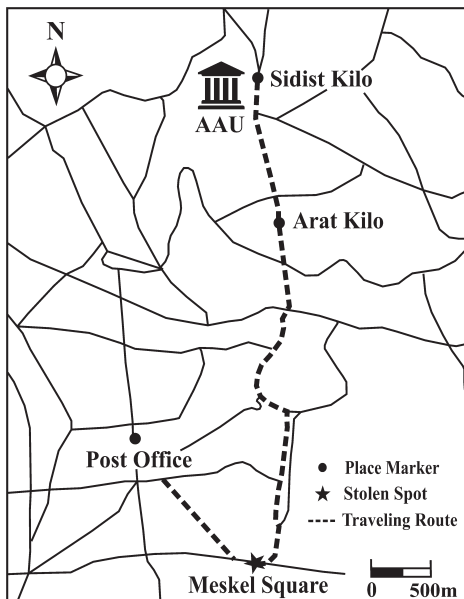


Fig. 1. The Travel Route Chen and I Took and the Place Where Chen's Cellphone Was Stolen

Meskel Square. We needed to take a minibus bound for Sidist Kilo or Arat Kilo, where the university is located (Fig. 1). When we arrived at the terminal, many *radat*⁴⁾ were announcing various destinations at the same time. Amidst the blaring sounds, both Chen and I were bewildered. Some *radat* teased us, saying *chung chung* in mockery of the Chinese language, and some of them even tried to pull and drag us to their minibuses. Finally, we settled in a vehicle and heaved a sigh of relief. However, our relief was premature because I heard Chen screaming, “Oh my god! I lost my phone!”

Tera Askebari as Saviors?

Taking a minibus was not always comfortable for me. Sometimes, I was blocked from getting into the vehicles merely because I was *faranji*. I was not the only one treated this way; I observed hundreds of people, waiting in the middle of the street to take a minibus, hoping that one would stop for them. Under these circumstances, I discovered a group of people called *tera askebari*, who manage the minibuses in some terminals. Under the guidance of the *tera askebari*, passengers were lined up and the minibuses are arranged in a fairly manner. In 2014, I found *tera askebari* in major terminals, like Bole Bras, Markato, Piazza, Megenagna, and Kazanchis, but in 2017, I observed them on almost every corner of the city. For someone like me, who has faced difficulties getting on a minibus, *tera askebari* were lifesavers. Standing in line was much more pleasant than being jostled by the crowds (Photo 1 and 2).

“Big Men” Seized a Business Opportunity

Tera askebari maintain order with regard to minibuses and passengers in the minibus terminals. In Amharic, the word *tera* means “turn” or “shift,” and *askebari* means “someone who maintains something.” In the late 1980s, people of the gangster group figured out that tussling and disorder often occurs

4) Minibus attendants who collect money and call out destinations.



Photo 1. People Flocking to Get on a Minibus

among minibus workers. In a ping-pong like situation between passengers' haste to ride minibuses and the profit-seeking behavior of the minibus operators, the latter were acquiring a bad reputation. They become aggressive in response to passengers who were in a hurry. In this situation, street youths, who tend to be thuggish and seek to act like "big men" in the terminal (i.e., in their "territory"), started to exercise their influence. They gave minibuses orders and demanded a small service charge for their efforts. Following multiple rounds of trial and error, they solidified their reputation as the sole supervisors of minibuses.



Photo 2. Tera Askebari Managing Minibuses and Passengers at Gerji Mabrat Hail Bus Stop

Tackling Unemployment through the MSEs Development Scheme

Around the mid-2000s, the government started to take notice of the importance of *tera askebari*. Initially, street life in the city had not been a major concern for the government. However, the government learned the significance of urban youths during the 2005 protest, in which youth played a major role with regard to the integrity of the election [Di Nunzio 2014]. As the informal sector's prominence and youth bulges became a threat to political stability in many countries, the Ethiopian government began to view unemployment as a cause of crime [Bayat 2004; Urdal 2006]. Thus, providing employment for urban youth became an important issue in constraining future political threats [Chinigò 2019]. In order to implement their aims, the government launched the micro and small enterprises (MSEs) development program, to appease the unemployed youths and regulate



Photo 3. Photo of Terminal X

the informal workers under their control.

The MSEs development program is a city-wide project that the government aimed to register three million people in government-led growth and transformational project schemes [Ministry of Finance and Economic Development 2010]. After the program was launched, many informal workers were obliged to register at MSEs development agency in order to operate their businesses legally. The information was disseminated within the street business sector, from shoeshine boys, street vendors, to parking attendants. Hundreds of *tera askebari* operating in various terminals registered their groups to MSEs agency as well. However, this formalization process, specifically concerning the legalization of *tera askebari*, did not guarantee the “formality” of *tera askebari*. The process kept within the

bounds of legalizing “private enterprises,” instead of incorporating their businesses into the public service. The major concept of the MSEs development scheme was to develop private enterprises by supporting them “publicly” [Eversole 2008]. This means that *tera askebari* were able to operate and manage their business autonomously without the government’s instruction. This condition allowed them to develop various methods for monitoring minibuses based on informal elements, such as personal relationships or intimacy with minibus operators.

The Informal Management of *Tera Askebari* in Terminal X

Tera askebari in Terminal X are responsible for three tasks (Photo 3). They oversee minibuses and passengers, and apprehending thieves in the event of a robbery. They collect 7 *birr*⁵⁾ per vehicle every time a minibus uses the terminal; and since their major role is to manage the minibus queue, they intervene if a vehicle tries to commit a foul act, such as working in an unassigned location or cutting the line. However, there is some flexibility with regard to the service charge, which can change conditionally. In cases where *tera askebari* cannot chase infringers out, they request a fee of 10 *birr*, which is 3 *birr*

5) *Birr* is a unit of Ethiopian currency. 1 USD was equivalent to 29.28 Ethiopian *birr* during the time of this fieldwork (October 1, 2019) retrieved from <https://combanketh.et/exchange-rate-detail/>.

expensive than the normal service charge. However, *tera askebari* often prioritize personal acquaintances and give advance permission to specific minibuses without collecting a service charge, which is an act against their duties.

In the case of managing the passengers, *tera askebari* asks passengers to line up in a row. While it is an unwritten rule that passengers who cut in line are deterred to ride on minibuses, *tera askebari* shows some mercy to them. For those who cut the line, they permit such passengers to take a portable chair onboard, instead of a regular seat. As such, *tera askebari* was acting flexibly according to the situation, rather than acting by static rules. The variety sums of the rules *tera askebari* apply when handling queue-jumper, or imposing them penalties, or exempting some minibuses from the service charge, and offering special treatment to passengers who cut the line, shows the fluidity and variability in their informal regulation.

Discussing Urban Informality through *Tera Askebari*

Tera askebari act as major performers in creating and re-creating the dynamics of informality by negotiating with related actors, even though they have been “formalized.” There are pros and cons to the service they provide. At present, leaders of the *tera askebari* groups are gaining a huge amount

of money by hiring young people. Informal service provision can breed discontent among minibus operators and passengers. On the other hand, for young people who have difficulties finding a job, working as *tera askebari* is a good opportunity to earn a living. The government could lower the administrative burden without investing a lot of money. Citizens like me who suffer difficulties while trying to take a minibus can get on the minibuses comparatively easily with *tera askebari* there to provide guidance. For some, *tera askebari* are saviors, but for others, they are mere entrepreneurs who run a business by using minibuses. These dynamics of *tera askebari* activities, which possess both social contribution and informal aspects, coexist and illuminate the need for a careful and detailed approach in analyzing informal urban activities. At the current stage, discussing whether their system is sustainable may be premature. However, it is certain that this work has been and will continue to support of the citizens until the emergent systems are introduced.

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