POWER, POVERTY AND WEALTH IN RURAL ETHIOPIA: LESSONS FROM FOUR CASE STUDIES

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Abstract

This paper constitutes one output from the Ethiopia Wellbeing in Developing Countries Research Programme. Using a dynamic open social systems framework, a case-based approach, and a multi-method data set, the paper explores connections between power relationships and struggles and quality of life for people in four rural sites in the Amhara and Oromia Regions of Ethiopia. Quality of life is conceptualised and studied from both 'objective' and 'subjective' perspectives. 'Objective' perspectives are rooted in (social) science; 'subjective' perspectives in local cultures. Interest in quality of life rather than poverty leads to a focus on 'people' rather than 'individuals' or households. 'People' come in two genders, a range of ages, and with a variety of social and cultural histories, social roles and relationships and personal interests and goals. This 'individuality' means that 'quality of life' concepts and research instruments must be sensitised, particularly to take account of differences in needs, desires, meanings and actions associated with different gendered ages. However, 'individuality' does not mean randomness. People's lifetime experiences and opportunities are socially patterned and highly influenced by location in local social and cultural structures. Institutionalised power relationships and collective mobilisations to change or maintain them are the key to the constitution of these structures. The paper describes a number of (interacting) power relationships, institutions, discourses and struggles which have recently affected objective and subjective quality of life in our rural sites, and which are associated with class, gender, generation, social origin (family, clan, ethnicity, religion, occupational 'caste', race), and command.

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1.   Introduction[1]

Poverty has long been a problem for Ethiopians. From one perspective it can be associated with context; the geographical, economic, political and cultural niches Ethiopia has historically occupied in wider and changing global structures. From another perspective it is possible to identify a range of historically-constructed, internal power relationships[2], structures and dynamics that re/pro/duce[3] poverty and these are the focus of this paper.

The paper introduces a conceptual framework for use at community level to explore interactions between power relations and poverty. Poverty outcomes are conceived at three levels: individual, household, and community. The paper draws on a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data generated in 1995[4], and through the ongoing multi-method WeD research programme[5], to examine reproduction and change in community power relations, and poverty consequences in four geographical and cultural contexts, and to consider the operational consequences of these local processes.

In the following section we very briefly review the historical macro context of poverty in Ethiopia, focusing on attempts by successive government regimes to exert

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[1] This paper is based on a longer paper prepared for the World Bank Poverty Reduction Group (Bevan, Pankhurst, and Holland, 2005). The data was collected as part of the ESRC WeD programme. Many people have been involved in the design, implementation and initial interpretation and analysis of the research. The chief site Research Officers for the data period covered in this paper have been particularly important: Tsega Melese and Damtew Yirgu in Dinki; Bizuayehu Ayele and Yohannes Gezahagn in Turufe Kecheme; Asham Assazenew and Lewoyehu Ayele in Yetmen; Aster Shibeshi and Workeneh Abebe in Korodegaga. We have also benefited from discussions with Feleke Tadele, Yisak Tafere, Bethlehem Tekola, and all the Research Officers employed during our 16 month fieldwork period (see www.wed-ethiopia.org).

[2] Some of these supported by power relationships with outsiders.

[3] Produce, reduce and reproduce. Much poverty is chronic and reproduced. In some arenas, new poverty has been produced, while in others poverty has reduced.

[4] Through the University of Addis Ababa and the Centre for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University

[5] The main goal of the ESRC Research Programme on Wellbeing in Developing Countries (2002-2007) is to produce a conceptual and methodological framework to guide empirical research aimed at better understandings by academics and policymakers of the roles of power relations and cultural processes in the re/pro/duction of poverty and human suffering. The framework is being developed in an iterative dialogue with fieldwork research in four countries: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru, and Thailand. In Ethiopia fieldwork in each site has involved a household survey, a subjective quality of life instrument, and 17 months of protocol-guided fieldwork by a male and female researcher completed by early November 2005. For more information see below and Appendix 1.

hierarchical forms of control, to stimulate economic development and social and cultural change, and to provide social protection. Section 3 describes the conceptual framework and the related case-oriented methodology. Section 4 summarises key empirical findings, while Section 5 reflects on some implications for donor and government discourses and interventions designed to change power relations and/or reduce poverty. Section 6 concludes.

2.   Poverty and Power in Ethiopia: A Very Brief Macro History

Ethiopian society is characterised by extreme poverty and extreme forms of hierarchy. In Western terms most Ethiopian residents are both asset- and income-poor and many are extremely poor; and, while there is a growing urban middle class and political elite their numbers are relatively tiny. Most power relations between social groups or categories have historically involved well-established hierarchies of status supported by norms and rules favouring superiors which are often violently enforced. Historic status discriminators include age, gender and class and various manifestations of ethnicity, clan, religion, occupation and race.

However, during the period of military socialism known as the 'Derg' (1974 – 1991), as part of a Marxist-Leninist modernisation programme[1] a number of accepted status distinctions came under ideological attack, including those related to class[2], gender, age and occupation[3] while religious activity was controlled in various ways and many customary practices were suppressed. Those who grew up in this context, the oldest of whom are now in their thirties, have a different 'habitus' (Elias: 1994, Bourdieu: 1977) from that of older generations. The EPRDF regime, which came to power in 1991 as a result of winning a civil war, has attempted to involve or sponsor other allied parties based on ethnic identity but remains dominated by one ethnic group (from Tigray) and, while its approach to the economy and religious and customary

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[1] Which in addition to education and literacy programmes included for many forced villagisation, producer co-operatives, and resettlement.
[2] Land ownership and control of labour and tribute from tenants were important during the imperial period from the late 19th century. Land was nationalised in 1975.
[3] Freeman and Pankhurst (2003) showed that the Derg tried to impose equality for the artisan/hunter occupational groups

activities has been more liberal[1], it has retained an underlying socialist approach to community politics and mobilisation.

The most important power resource in Ethiopia has always been the State, and competition to control it has involved recurrent, ethnically-complex conflicts, which occasionally break out into open war. These conflicts have undermined and sidelined economic development, diverting precious resources, increasing indebtedness and leading to loss of life, disabilities, war traumas and an enormous diaspora. Control of the state has brought with it control of political decision-making, and the military, control of the main agricultural means of production (land), access to donor funding, control of government budgets and food aid distribution, government-related employment and related incentives (housing, vehicles, travel etc), control of the 'private sector' through monopolies or EPRDF-sponsored 'private' enterprise and, until the recent introduction of modern communication technologies, domination of ideas and information.

Two major goals of the Derg and to some degree the EPRDF have been (1) economic, social and cultural modernisation conceived in socialist terms and (2) the control of political opposition; a major means towards both has been what Clapham (2002) describes as 'the project of *encadrement*'. This involves incorporation into structures of control based on a single party system directed from above, to be achieved through control of land and state resource allocation, the organisation of farmers into peasant associations and a hierarchy of lower-level structures, and peasant mobilisation through campaigns, meetings, direct orders and collective labour. With regard to social protection, Ethiopia has a long history of 'famines that kill'. Neither the Imperial regime in 1974/5 nor the Derg in 1984/5 had effective safety net systems in place to deal with the devastating droughts which occurred in those years. Working with donors and NGOs the EPRDF has developed a food aid programme on which a large proportion of households depend annually and which saved many, though not all, lives at risk during the 2002/3 drought.

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[1] It was precisely their ethnically based mobilisation that led the EPRDF to assume – in the face of the collapse of the communist ideology and soviet power, that other groups could/should mobilise on that basis, and they promoted allied ethnically based parties. Therefore the EPRDF was actually quite supportive of revitalisation of ethnic/cultural consciousness, and has been involved in affirmative action for minorities in education, linguistic policy, and parliamentary representation,.

The projects of *encadrement* and local development are playing out to varying degrees and in different ways dependent on the particular Ethiopian context (James *et al.*, 2002) and the activities of other external agents. In this paper we take two community cases each from the largest regions, Oromia and Amhara. At this meso level, key power resources are access to the means of production,[1] status discriminators of various kinds, occupation of culturally-valued local positions, access to government resources including official positions, and human resources such as farming or house management skills, ability to speak well and argue in public, and literacy, numeracy and education.

3.   Conceptual   Framework   and   Case-based Methodology

3.1.   Ontological Assumptions

In social ontological terms we conceptualise our case communities as 'dynamic and complex open social systems' (see for example Sawyer 2005) nested in the larger Ethiopian social system which is also dynamic, complex and open. Each open social system is constituted by a division of labour whose pattern structures a set of more or less open and inter-penetrating sub-systems, or organisations and networks, including households and kin networks, economic organisations and networks, political organisations and networks and cultural organisations and networks. The operation of open social systems depends on power relations which may be more or less unequal, more or less effective in generating wellbeing for socially-stratified community members, and more or less stable.

This social ontology assumes the importance of *relations* in the constitution and change through time of physical, personal and social being (Harré: 1994, 1983, 1979). Lives are lived in social systems constructed of constant interaction, with relationships influenced by status relations, role norms and values, and personal habituses and challenges to these. Exploration of such social systems requires us to describe local social structures or institutions. While the key social institutions of family, economy, polity, religion, education, and status hierarchies retain a measure of independence, they are also interdependent. A change in one institution is likely to

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[1] Particularly agricultural and grazing land, livestock, labour and in some sites capital to buy irrigation pumps.

lead to changes in others. In broad terms social systems may be equilibric, as in the case of effective dictatorship, collective commitment, a balance of power between conflicting parties, or a collective security bargain, or disequilibric, as exemplified by resource depletion and/or conflicts, unsustainable population growth, a shift in the balance of power or the collapse of a collective security agreement. At times social systems disintegrate.

The characterisation of these small social systems as 'open' focuses attention on the historically-changing physical and social environments to which they have adapted, and in which they reproduce or transmute. Recognition that these social systems are dynamic, or operating in time suggests we must identify social changes as well as social persistence, explore how social action in the past has shaped present structures, and identify how these shape, and are shaped by, current human agency and social action (see Figure 1). Of particular interest for the purposes of this paper are (1) endogenously-generated social change processes, (2) exogenously-planned change policies, and (3) the playing out of the interaction between exogenous interventions and local processes.

Figure 1. The relationship between social structure and human agency.
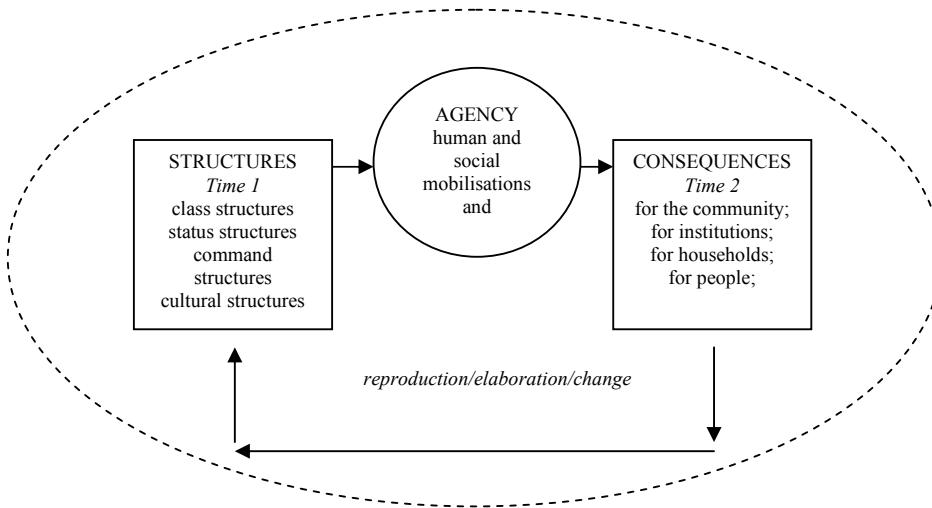
3.2.   Conceptualising Power

Power is vital to the operation of social systems but as an 'unobservable' we have to approach it from a number of angles. Here we conceptualise it under four headings: individual agentic power; structural power; collective agentic power; and episodic power.

Table 1: Conceptualising Power

Individual agentic power	internal individual 'power to' (result of personal history individual 'power within')"
	external individual 'power to': from current resources, roles and relationships
Structural power	'controlling power' structures
	'collaborative power' structures
	'competitive power' structures
	dispositional power
	facilitative power
Collective agentic power	collective 'power to'
Episodic power	controlling 'power over'
	collaborative 'power with'
	competitive 'power against'

The *Individual Agentic Power* angle is associated with the capacity of individuals to make potentially life-transforming decisions and act on them. The exercise of agency comprises three types of power:
(i)   internal individual human 'power to' and
(ii) 'power within' are human power resources that are a function of health, skills, personality, habitus, moral character and reflexivity accumulated in the past[1];
(iii) external individual 'power to' depends on a person's current roles and relationships which affect personal access to the material, relational, cultural and political power resources needed for social action[1].

The *Structural Power* angle focuses on the relational and institutional context within which episodes of human action and social interaction take place. Institutional 'rules of the game' underpin the distribution of the material, relational, cultural and political

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[1] 'Internal empowerment' Diener and Biswas-Diener (2004)

power resources already identified, although it is important to remember that rules may be more or less contradictory of other rules, and more or less observed and contested by different kinds of people. Here we distinguish five inter-penetrating features of structural power:

(i) 'controlling power structures' are constituted by institutionalised structural relationships involving exploitation, exclusion, domination and destruction. Such relationships are found within and between households, other organisations, communities, and countries;

(ii) 'collaborative power structures' are constituted by institutionalised structural relationships of negotiation, reciprocity, sharing and nurturing and include the welfare mix of institutions and organisations that tackle unequal relations and their consequences;

(iii) 'competitive power structures' are constituted by sub-systems in relations of competition;

(iv) 'dispositional power' is constituted by the structuring of symbolic resources (knowledge and information, political ideologies, religious beliefs, and customary values) through which relations of meaning and membership and associated inequalities are 'naturalised' and challenged; and

(v) 'facilitative power' is the power, within the state and its agents and within society, to mobilise and organise people, and depends on the overall structuring of power resources in terms of accumulated material, relational, cultural and political capital[2] and techniques of production and discipline.

The *Collective Agentic Power* angle is associated with the capacity of networks, groups, organisations, communities, countries etc to make potentially life-transforming decisions and act on them. Collective 'power to' is more than the sum of individual 'power to' because it emerges out of the patterns of structural power found in the collective in question. Exercise of collective agentic power is likely to occur within competitive power structures, and may lead to conflict and violence.

The *Episodic Power* angle is associated with decisions made by social actors[3] involved in a given 'social episode' over how to make use of the particular resources available to them. Ensuing interactions then reproduce or change the power resource set, relations

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[1] 'External empowerment' *ibid*.
[2] This conceptualisation of 'capital' is derived from Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1987)
[3] Individual or collective actors.

and structures. Episodic power analytically comprises three types of power:

(i)   controlling power (power over), with which A makes B do something against her interests;

(ii) competitive power (power against) with which A and B struggle; and

(iii) collective power (power with / collective power to) with which A and B co-operate to the (not necessarily equal) benefit of both.

3.3.   Conceptualising Poverty

In conceptualising poverty it is important to specify the unit(s) and dimension(s) of interest, the criteria for identifying where it can be found, and whose specifications are involved in the conceptualisation, particularly whether they are local/relative, individual/subjective or theory-based/objective.

In our open social system framework structures are seen as emergent from relations and interactions among the units that constitute them. Thus, there is more to the 'household' than the sum of the individual members, and individual members have relationships outside the household which are constitutive of other, often overlapping, structures. In terms of units we look for traces of poverty from three perspectives: the community as a whole, households, and individuals. In terms of dimensions we focus on the 'economic' which is viewed rather differently in relation to each of the units of interest.

In relation to communities and households we adopt an objective approach arising from the many livelihood studies conducted in recent years. *Community poverty* is constituted by poor environmental conditions, inadequate infrastructure and services, and inadequate linkages with the outside world; poor communities may face regular communal crises which they cannot handle with internal resources. *Household poverty* is defined as the absence of key assets and insufficient household income for adequate household production and reproduction.

Our approach to *human poverty* is more complex. In the larger WeD programme human well- and ill-being are conceptualised in terms of three analytically separable dimensions: objective human needs, access to resources, and subjective quality of life (Gough and McGregor, 2006). Here we analytically separate human needs into

needs for competence, relation, autonomy[1] and meaning. Failure to meet any of these needs in a minimal way results in serious harm. We associate human poverty with failure to meet the needs for competence, basic autonomy and relation. Failure to meet the need for meaning leads to poor subjective quality of life, an area which is not considered in this paper.

The empirical approach to human poverty adopted in the paper is informed by local descriptions and explanations of serious harms suffered by people of different ages and genders[2]. From these data it is clear that human needs for competence, basic autonomy and relation may not be met as a result of (1) the presence of harm-causers, (2) the absence of needs-satisfiers, or (3) a combination of both. The key human, material and social resources and liabilities involved in the meeting of needs and avoidance of serious harm in our communities are:

1. A degree of physical and psychological health and context-specific gender- and age- appropriate life and work skills. Current human resources depend on the extent to which the person has had access to the external resources described below in the past,
2. Context-appropriate food, shelter, clothing and a low-harm physical environment,
3. A low-harm work niche in terms of working conditions, time off and reward, and
4. Low-harm relations with other people which provide social connection and appropriate care and socialisation (for the young), and a low-harm social niche in terms of practices especially violence.

3.4. The Community In/Security Regime Framework

Open social systems have path-dependent trajectories. The particular division of labour underpinning any social system generates unequal social, economic, political and cultural structures peopled by social actors involved in a variety of more or less powerful, pleasant and fulfilling social roles. 'Power' drives and structures and re-

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[1] Basic autonomy refers to 'the ability to make informed choices about what should be done and how to go about doing it' (Doyal and Gough: 1991). 'Critical autonomy' is similar to individual agentic power as described above. It is most likely to be exercised by a person whose minimal needs for competence, basic autonomy, relation and meaning have been met..

[2] In our 2003 WIDE study, conducted in 20 rural communities, we asked male and female respondents of different wealth categories to respond to the questions 'Tell me all the ways in which a baby/girl-child/boy-child/woman/man can be harmed'. See Appendix 2.

structures open social systems but power, and many other features of open social systems, cannot be directly observed. The dynamic social theory introduced above underpins the Community In/Security Regime Framework which has been used to assist in the design of the modes of data analysis and interpretation used in this paper.

We have adapted the in/security regime (I/SR) framework recently used to analyse macro regimes and regime change (Bevan, 2004a and b) for use at community level. The proposition is that, in any community, community wealth, household wealth and human wellbeing outcomes identified at any point or episode in time are linked not only to **natural and social events and processes** but also to the deep social structuring of opportunities and constraints and the playing out of unequal controlling power relations and resource competition, both of which generate different life chances for different kinds of people. In different contexts these depend on a variable depth and mix of relations and processes of exploitation, exclusion, domination and/or destruction (**controlling power relations**), often in a context of competition for resources (**competitive power relations**) which are historically embedded.

However, these unequal processes are rarely allowed to do their worst and there are usually some simultaneous redistributive or rectifying relations and processes, including reciprocity, caring, creativity, sharing, co-operation, negotiation, patronage, and protection (**collaborative power relations**) which make the outcomes less bad than they would otherwise be. In the welfare regime framework[1], from which the I/SR was derived, these rectifying processes, and the organisations and institutions which produce them, have been described as the 'welfare mix'. Welfare mix actors develop vested interests and over time become elements in the in/security regime (**stratification outcomes**).

Controlling, competitive and collaborative power relations are supported by, and contribute to, a structured mix of context-specific material, technological, social, cultural, symbolic and political power resources and liabilities. Many elements of this mix are symbolically 'naturalised' or taken for granted (**dispositional power**[2]). This structured power resource/liability mix determines the overall **facilitative power** available to and in a community. Powerful external actors may be involved in local

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[1] Developed in relation to OECD regimes (e.g. Esping-Andersen: 1990).
[2] This aspect of power is not considered here but will be the subject of analysis and writing in future.

relationships and structures. Levels of a community's facilitative power depend particularly on techniques of production and discipline.

We thus have seven research windows which give us a static, or "synchronic", picture of local power and poverty structures during the time period of the empirical research[1]:

1. Poverty and inequality outcomes: community, household and individual levels,
2. The generation of advantage and deprivation sets I: natural and social processes at individual, household and community levels,
3. The generation of advantage and deprivation sets II: unequal deep power structures involving 'controlling power relations' of different kinds,
4. The generation of advantage and deprivation sets III: competitive power structures involving power struggles among different sub-groups,
5. The generation of advantage and deprivation sets IV: rectifying institutions and organisations or the 'welfare mix' involving 'collaborative power relations',
6. The generation of advantage and deprivation sets V: 'stratification outcomes' resulting from the institutionalisation of the vested interests of the welfare mix actors, and
7. The generation of advantage and deprivation sets VI: facilitative power for the community as a collective.

While a synchronic perspective on structures of opportunity and constraint leads to the analysis of patterns of controlling, competitive and collaborative power relations at a point or duration in time, from a dynamic, or "diachronic", perspective such patterns are continuously socially and culturally constructed through the activities and inter-actions of social actors differently located in the structures with consequential differential access to power resources. Through the interactive exercise of individual and collective agentic power (**episodic power**) stable or stationary systems are reproduced, while systems which are out of equilibrium as a result of external changes, system contradictions and/or social conflicts (Lockwood, 1964) change in ways which depend on the relative power, goals, actions and interactions of the protagonists and their consequences, many of which will be unintended or 'emergent'. It is likely that state or community elites

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[1] This will vary by research instrument. During times when power structures are changing rapidly, for example the transition from the Derg to the TGE regime in 1991, this framework is not conceptually

in power will mobilise to try to maintain the structures, or at least their privileged positions, while rivals will act to try to change the structures and/or to usurp the elite positions. Subordinates will choose strategies combining elements of 'exit', 'voice' and 'loyalty' (Hirschman: 1970).

In relation to the goals of economic, social and cultural modernisation, political restructuring, and more effective social policies, any poor country in/security regime contains a set of external players in the form of market players, diasporas, international migrants, donors, and international NGOs. These external players potentially have three sets of goals; one related to the change process they are trying to put in train, the second to organisational interests, and the third to personal interests. The consequences may or may not be beneficial for their target populations, or only for some of their members. As mobilisations by social actors aimed at maintaining or changing current arrangements interact and are played out they reproduce or change the old arrangements in a path-dependent fashion involving trends and turning points.

Thus, from a dynamic perspective we have a further window through which to see the playing out of aspects of the relation between power and poverty in different community contexts:

8. Mobilisations by internal and external social actors to increase wealth through economic development/growth or maintain or change power structures: the exercise of episodic power involving 'power with' collaborators, 'power against' competitors, and 'power over' inferiors.

3.5.   A Case-based Approach

In line with our characterisation of the communities as complex open social systems we are adopting a multi-level 'case-based' research approach (see for example Ragin, 2000; Ragin and Becker, 1992; Gomm, Hammersley and Foster, 2000). Our four case communities are constituted by nested case-households themselves constituted by nested case-individuals.

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appropriate. Also during such times it is not possible to collect the kind of data demanded by the framework.

3.5.1. What can case-based approaches tell us?

The research presented in this paper is based on case studies of four rural communities, a Resources and Needs Survey (RANS) of up to 250 household cases in each community covering over a total of 4,000 individual cases, and in-depth study of selected household and individual cases on a range of topics (see Appendix 1). Currently policy-related development research relies heavily on the application of multi-variate statistical techniques to large databases with the aim of generalising or assessing the average influence of a cause across a variety of settings. This approach is variable-oriented, synchronic and abstractly causal (Ragin, 1989: viii), does not recognise the structured nature of social life, and when used to inform policy tends to produce 'one size fits all' recommendations. Social science research used to inform policy designed by international donors and, under their influence, the Ethiopian government has been overwhelmingly of this nature, and has been associated with policy recommendations which often lack realism and seem to have made little impact on Ethiopia's poverty.

In the social sciences beyond the development field there is a growing interest in 'case-oriented' approaches, which 'by their nature, are sensitive to complexity and historical specificity' and able to 'maintain a meaningful connection to social and political issues because they are more concerned with actual events, with human agency and process.' (*ibid*: ix). The recent huge increase in computer storage, power and speed has potentially revolutionised case-based research (Byrne: 2002).

Community case studies can be used in three important ways.

1. Capturing a case in its uniqueness.

Community members can be given voice. In addition a case study offers a substitute for firsthand experience. Each reader comes with a store of experiential and tacit knowledge and can use a single case study as the basis for 'naturalistic generalisation'. Thirdly, description and explanation leads to understanding of the case as a whole, and this understanding can inform evaluation and prescription tailored to the particular case.

In relation to the goals of this paper *one* case study can contribute to understanding of:

1. the longer-term fate of external planned interventions,
2. the extent to which academic and policy conceptual frameworks reflect and reveal local realities on the ground and how they might be improved,
3. how a particular case works as a whole with a view to imagining scenarios related to potential development or empowerment interventions,
4. the extent to which general conclusions drawn from large sample surveys apply in this case; might a 'horses for courses' approach be more effective?, and
5. how the case is affected by its wider context.

2. Comparison of cases.

Comparative analysis of findings from *two or more* case studies[1] can assist in identification and understanding both of common patterns or common mechanisms and of differences in the way they play out. In different contexts universal causal mechanisms combine over time in diverse causal processes. Key insights here are that variables operate in concert (Ragin, 1987) and impact at different points in time as events unfold (Becker, 2000). Outcomes can always be reached by multiple pathways and narrative accounts of events in particular cases can be used identify patterns of pathways. For larger numbers of cases potential strategies include the case survey method (Yin and Heald, 1975), Qualitative Comparative Analysis (Ragin, 1987 and 2000), and meta-ethnography (Noblit and Hare, 1988), none of which have been widely used in the development studies field.

3. Multi-level analysis

Rural communities are constituted by households and by people both of which can in turn be researched as cases using multi-level and multi-methods potentially analysable using both qualitative and quantitative procedures.

3.5.2. The four case study communities

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[1] Here we are not trying to make any theoretical inferences, nor to use the case studies to say anything about Ethiopia's country-level in/security regime. However, given appropriate selection of cases and in conjunction with other data, community case studies can be used to map regional cultural and political structures and dynamics to contribute to an analysis of the country in/security regime.

In this paper we focus on four cases of rural communities (DEEP[1] sites). We use the cases to identify the important power resources and relations involved in the recent re/pro/duction of poverty. These four cases were selected from a larger sample of twenty rural communities studied using protocol-guided interviews in 2003 (WIDE[2]2 sites)[3], which in turn were selected to 'represent' Ethiopia's major rural livelihoods and cultures. The four were chosen from the largest regions: Amhara and Oromia.
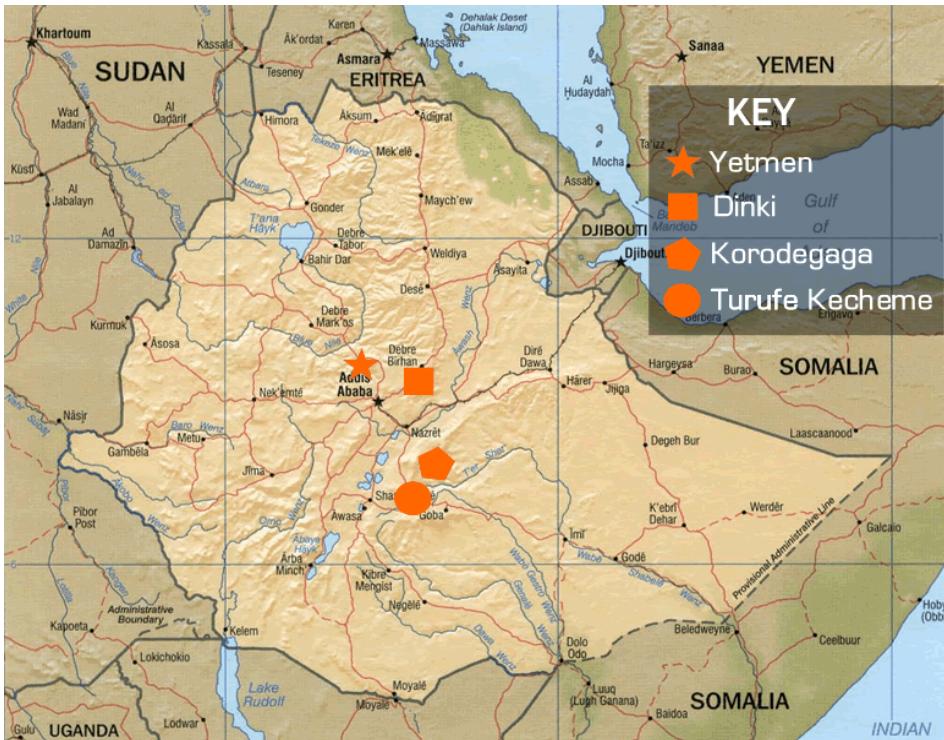
Four Major WeD Research Sites in Ethiopia

'Within an African context, Ethiopia is a relatively densely populated country[1]; yet the population has been and remains concentrated in the highlands... With gradually increasing land shortage peasants from the highlands have tended to migrate along the escarpments into lower areas.' (Pankhurst and Piguet, 2004: 2 & 5) previously used mainly by pastoralists. Our four case study sites are Yetmen and Dinki in Amhara Region and Turufe Kecheme and Korodegaga in Oromia Region. Yetmen and Turufe Kecheme are surplus-producing sites, close to major roads and relatively[2] well connected to markets and government services. Yetmen is situated in the highlands of Gojjam, while Turufe Kecheme is on the southern edge of the Rift Valley. Yetmen is the wealthier site. The other two are situated mostly in the lowlands, are relatively recently settled, are difficult to reach except on foot, are drought-prone often facing food production shortfalls, and are less well-connected to markets and government services. Korodegaga has recently been poorer than Dinki.

Table 2: The Case Study Sites

	Amhara Region	**Oromia Region**
Food-surplus and relatively integrated	Yetmen	Turufe Kecheme
Remote drought-prone and food-deficit	Dinki	Korodegaga

3.6.   The Multi-method Data Set

The multi-methods for gathering information which are used in relation to the research targets include a household resources and member needs survey (RANS) administered to a random sample of 250 households in each of the sites (apart from Dinki where all 169 households were included); a series of semi-structured interviews, with key informants of different statuses, completed in 1995, 2003 and 2004/5 exploring community structures, cultures, and histories and current activities and events, and in each of the sites six[3] monthly community diaries, fourteen adult life histories, ten interviews with old people and sixteen interviews with children/young people of different ages and their main carer. It is important to bear in mind that we still have not completed our fieldwork and the analysis on which the paper is based

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[1] The current density of 64 persons per sq kilometre is higher than most areas in sub-Saharan Africa, except for Burundi and Rwanda, (Population Reference Bureau [2003] Washington)
[2] Compared with many developing countries our 'integrated ' communities are quite remote.
[3] The data for the remaining 6 months has either not been collected or not yet entered into the database. There is information on the final Ethiopia WeD database in Appendix 1.

has been rapid and sketchy.

4. Key Empirical Findings

These are considered under the eight headings of the Community In/Security Regime Framework: poverty outcomes; natural and social processes and events; controlling power relations; competitive power relations; welfare mix; stratification outcomes; facilitative power; and episodic power.

4.1. Poverty Outcomes

a) Community poverty
Yetmen and Turufe Kecheme are richer in terms of infrastructure and services, although there are signs of rapid change in these respects in Korodegaga and Dinki. For example the growth of irrigation-based cash-cropping is leading to increasing wealth for some households. The remoter sites have still not started the process of diversification of occupations which is noticeable in the other two sites. However, in these richer sites there are signs that the supply of increasingly educated labour is not matched by a supply of appropriate jobs or business opportunities. Dinki, and particularly Korodegaga, still have a way to go to catch up with consumer life styles found especially in Yetmen.

b) Household poverty
While there are no large landlords there are consequential inequalities in access to land (most notably in Dinki), ownership of livestock (most importantly oxen), and household asset ownership. Female-headed households are not much worse off in the Oromia sites, though they are in the Amhara sites. In all sites younger men are worse off than older men. In the Oromia sites old men are wealthiest on average, while in the Amhara sites the wealthiest tend to be in their 40s and 50s. Ethnicity and/or clan membership play some role in the distribution of advantage and deprivation in all sites but Yetmen where these identity dimensions are not found.

c) Human poverty
Common problems are diseases, lack of medical treatment, inadequate food, shelter,

clothing, housing, harmful physical environments, harmful work and harmful social relations. These take slightly different forms depending on gender and age.

Babies are at risk if their mothers are sick or overworked during or after pregnancy, and if they die. They are also at risk from disease which may be related to unclean water, poor sanitation, and starvation. Problems also result from lack of clothes, vaccination and medical treatment. Poverty increases these risks considerably. It is likely that education of parents decreases them. The RANS found male babies to be rather more at risk of chronic and acute illnesses than females.

Knee and roaming children face similar risks to babies, plus some additional natural and socially-created ones including violence. When harmed, they may lack access to resources for treatment and compensatory action. In the RANS sample the main activity in the last month of around 8% of 3 to 6 year olds was either herding, childcare, or fetching wood or water.

Working/learning children also face similar risks. In addition they may be exploited by parents and other adults through too much work and/or work that is too hard. The main activity of 35% of boys and 38% of girls in the RANS sample was work. Poor children suffer from work exploitation and exclusion from services much more than richer ones; females rather more than males. Both may be beaten by adults. Girls may also suffer as a result of circumcision, early marriage, rape, and inability to dress like their friends. The proportion of boys and girls of this age who were studying was not hugely different (45.7% compared with 40.5%).

RANS results showed that in the small group of disabled children under twelve, 11 out of 15 were male. There was a slight bias towards the treatment of males under 16. Almost 90% of under-12s have been vaccinated with no gender difference.

Adolescents and **very young adults** face common problems. In addition males and females in transition to full adulthood share some problems as a result of their position in the life cycle but gender differences also become very important. Young males often get involved in drinking, fighting and womanising as well as negotiating or quarrelling, usually with their fathers, over work, income and access to their own productive resources. Young women are at risk of rape from young and older men, usually heavily burdened with domestic work, and need to succeed in the marriage market.

Additional problems for **adult women** include problems related to pregnancy, childbirth and infancy, and maternal anxieties about the survival and prospering of children. Conflicts within and beyond the household can also be damaging. The former may involve violence from husbands, and sometimes sons. In the RANS sample women between 16 and 70 had a slightly higher incidence of chronic illness than men.

Adult men face anxieties related to patriarchal responsibilities for feeding the family and protecting them in a potentially violent context. A slightly higher proportion of men than women in the RANS sample suffered from a disability, some of these associated with army service.

Old people are less respected than they were; poor old people and those without relatives are vulnerable. The RANS found the incidence of disabilities (33.3%) and chronic ill health (42.9%) is very high among males over 70, being a little less high for women.

4.2.   Natural and Social Processes and Event

Adverse weather, crop pests, livestock and human diseases, rapid population growth in a context of land shortage, illness and death of family members, and costs surrounding marriage and divorce all contribute to economic poverty. Richer households with members who are more powerful in the community have greater access to the buffers which assist in coping.

Deaths associated with drought in 1984/5 were reported from all sites but Yetmen, but only in Dinki and Korodegaga for 1994/5. Inhabitants of Korodegaga reported more than 20 deaths in 2002 mostly from malaria 'which people cannot resist at a time of famine' (WIDE2). Dinki and Korodegaga are annually at risk of rain failure, with the latter recently dependent on food aid for some months of every year. Animal diseases kill and weaken cattle, sheep and goats in all the sites, as does lack of animal feed during drought in Dinki and Korodegaga. Our community diaries mostly show very inadequate response in terms of veterinary services.

The most problematic human disease reported from all sites is malaria. It is endemic in the lowland sites of Dinki and Korodegaga and also in Turufe Kecheme. Last year for the first time it was reported that Yetmen was affected, some associating this with the introduction of hybrid maize which stores water at the base of each cob.

HIV/AIDS is a hidden problem, few traces of which have appeared in the DEEP data. One exception comes from Dinki, where it was reported that some couples considering marriage each have an HIV test before final commitments are made. Findings from WIDE2 research undertaken in 2004 in 20 rural sites suggest widespread knowledge of the illness, stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS, but not a very strong concern about the spread of the disease.

4.3.   Controlling Power Structures: Unequal Relations

Our study shows that the most important power relationship in terms of the generation of household and human poverty involves poverty itself. While there are no great extremes of wealth in terms of ownership of land and other assets, income, consumption and life chances are unequally distributed. Destitute and very poor people are economically, politically, socially and culturally excluded and sometimes simultaneously exploited by richer people. Whether they be male or female, young or old, life is a struggle which is often lost or full of suffering as they fail to access the resources necessary to make a minimal living, while those who survive often fail to make a sufficient living to enable them to participate in local social life. There is a growing category of destitute people in all sites while occupational diversification and access to irrigation are related to increasing economic inequality and associated with incipient class formation.

Relations of exploitation and domination by men lie behind the heavy workloads of women; although it could be argued that in harsh rural conditions household survival and improvement require some self-exploitation. Customary marriage rules in the Oromo sites include parental arrangement of marriages, bridewealth, polygamy, widow inheritance, replacement of a dead wife with a sister, and allowing abduction. Amhara marriage rules allow for very early marriage, and divorce is frequent. Women are customarily expected to produce many children with small allowance for problems associated with pregnancy, childbirth and infancy. Customarily women have had no rights to land, although the socialist Derg regime established the formal right of women to access land, and this has been maintained and increasingly implemented under the EPRDF regime. Culturally females have been accorded a lower status and value than males, and male violence against women has been regarded as normal.

Adult women fall into two sub-categories: those living in a household with a husband

and those who do not. Different women move more or less frequently between these two states. Relations between husbands and wives usually involve some labour exploitation, some exclusion from certain activities, domination in terms of authority and aggression expressed in violence or threats. However, particularly when men fulfil their side of the marriage bargain, many women accept these local cultural norms and some develop warm and loving relationships with their husbands. The economic poverty of a wife is usually linked with the economic poverty of her husband, except where he has more than one wife or partner or is absent, drunk or otherwise unable to perform expected male duties. On average women in female-headed households in the Oromia villages do not seem to be much poorer in terms of productive assets than those in male-headed households. This is not the case in the Amhara villages where the ratio of divorcees to widows is much higher than it is in the Oromia villages.

Child work often begins at a very early age in many cases being vital for household survival. Both adult men and women are in a position to exploit their male and female children, while violence or its threat is important in maintaining relations of domination. The need for household labour often interferes with education and school attendance increases the work burden on other children and mothers. Currently children and youth of widely different ages attend school. Across the sites the average age of males in Grade 4 is 16 and of females 13. Stepchildren are often neglected or exploited by stepfathers and may be expelled from the household by incoming stepmothers. Some regard child work as a form of education. Children are reported by some as working more than they used to. Physical violence is still regarded by many as a necessary part of the socialisation of children in all sites, though adults report that in the past punishments were much harsher.

Relations between parents and youth often involve power struggles. Young workers are important as a source of labour and support in old age. In the context of land shortage older men are reluctant to divide their small holdings to share among their sons as old men without land have little power. As a result an increasing number of young men without access to sufficient land are unable to marry. While the older generation is still keen to arrange the marriages of their children contestation of parental choice is becoming more common.

Within communities elders were customarily powerful in community decision-making

and through their roles in dispute resolution and, within the family, their power to bless and curse was effective. The Derg introduced a socialist system of government in the 1970s manned by local leaders who were usually in their forties. EPRDF cadres have been even younger and the status of the old has been in decline.

Relations of cultural, economic and/or social exclusion can underpin distributions of power resources among people of different ethnicities, religions, clans, occupational 'castes', and race ('slaves'). Different 'primordial' identities figure in all four community stratification systems. Exclusion makes people more vulnerable and consequently open to exploitative labour relations.

Community elites include those with greater wealth and those with influence arising from local informal or formal organisational positions and sometimes charisma. These include local dispute resolvers, kebele administration leaders and religious leaders. Customary elites gain power mainly on the basis of control of land and labour and greater livestock holdings, partly achieved through the management of social relations gradually built up by elderly men. Modern elites have gained their positions through wealth and control of trade and external links.

Government-people relations are complex and related to community and country histories. In all our sites we encountered the view that the current government is perceived as "Tigrayan". The government mode is viewed largely as one of domination. Kebele officials have considerable command power including the threat of removing land entitlements, approval of illegal land sales, taxation, the ability to fine and imprison, the power to mobilise people for community work, the signing of permits for people to leave the site, get medical treatment etc, and the registration of organisations such as *iddir* (burial societies). The new structures for mobilising and controlling people at lower levels have extended the reach of the state.

4.4. Competitive Power Structures: Cultural Contestations and Political Factions

Women, young men and children have been challenging patriarchal domination, exploitation and exclusion. In our four sites we have encountered intense competition among a range of political ideologies, religious beliefs and customary values and

beliefs.

Socialist ideas first introduced in the mid-70s have helped to constitute a 'cultural repertoire' of value to women, younger people, poor people, and those whose social origins have been associated with low social status. Ethiopian socialism has its own campaigning socialist language and set of practices. There is a donor-related cultural repertoire which puts particular value on democracy, 'civil society'. and formal education. NGOs have tried to introduce an egalitarian conception of 'participation' which rivals the government's hierarchical conception. In three sites Islamic Wehabi missionaries are depicting Western governments and people as anti-Islam, particularly in their dealings with Palestine and Iraq, but there is also resistance to the Wehabi infiltration. In Turufe Kecheme Evangelical sects promulgate lifestyles which involve rejection of local customary practices.

In terms of power relations ethnicity has been important mainly in the two heterogeneous sites, Dinki and Turufe Kecheme. During imperial times Amhara landlords from the highlands obtained land in Dinki, and while there were some Argobba landowners in general the Amhara had greater power and status. During the Derg period both Argobba and Amhara tenants gained access to land. During the EPRDF period the Argobba have been accorded more political prominence as an ethnic group with its own political party and representation in the parliament. However, still today in terms of land and livestock holdings and other indicators of wealth the Argobba are on average slightly worse off than the Amhara.

In Turufe Kecheme the migrant groups, particularly those from the north and especially those from Tigray, gained economic power during the imperial period through exploiting larger land-holdings and involvement in trade. The migrants' superiority continued during the Derg period with the Kembata becoming particularly active in the local regime. In 1991 at the time of the change of government the Oromo gained the ascendancy and the Kembata were expelled and their land taken over. A few Eritreans were also expelled at the time of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and very few have remained. Some migrant labourers have faced discrimination or employers not honouring payments, and there have been attempts to restrict or ban migrant labourers. The remaining migrants have been uneasy about their status, and feared expulsions if the EPRDF lost power in the 2005 elections. Although expulsions have not taken place they express feelings of insecurity.

In the Oromo sites clanship is very important with certain clans claiming superior

status, respect or precedence or numerical predominance in the area and dominating local political structures.

4.5.   Collaborative Power Structures: Welfare Mix

The main social policy activities of the government are provision of education and health services and social protection in the form of food aid/food for work. Education has expanded rapidly in recent years and has involved community labour and financial contributions to build schools. During our research it became government policy that pupils should attend for a full day although this was successfully resisted at least temporarily in Korodegaga. In places threats of fines have been used to make parents enrol sons and daughters. There are big differences in enrolment figures among our four sites.

Government provision of preventive and curative health services has been increasing, although again there is considerable variation among the sites. The Korodegaga site seems to be situated in a particularly effective *wereda*. Vaccination rates are high and there has been recent anti-malaria activity.

In Korodegaga and Dinki the form and delivery of aid (food for work, cash for work, food aid) in response to 'normal' crop-deficits and drought is complexly affected by actions and interactions among donors, NGOs and the various levels of government. While food aid in bad years has been very important for survival in both sites it has often been experienced as unpredictable. In collaboration with donors and NGOs the government seems to have constructed a relatively effective food security system which has been reported as saving lives and supporting livelihoods at times in both Dinki and Korodegaga. However, there are still complaints of lateness, unfair selection, corruption, and requests for development rather than humanitarian aid. Also the food provided cannot be fed to babies. Most food aid involves food for work which is appreciated when the work is seen as useful, although problematic for households with no-one available to work. Major complaints were about conflicts with labour needs and priorities at peak farming times, low payment rates, and the late arrival of the food worked for.

The influence of donor activities on community welfare mixes comes via government services. The Sector Wide Approaches to Education and Health guided by donor thinking and adopted using donor finance are increasingly manifest. Donors also play a key role in the social construction of food aid provision. Generally NGOs have been viewed with

some wariness by the government and they play no role in either Yetmen or Dinki. One of Korodegaga's irrigation schemes was provided, and is now supported, by an international NGO which also provides credit to a small number of women and has a scheme for fuel-saving stoves. Many NGO activities in Turufe Kecheme are linked with Christian Evangelical sects. Funds from Saudi Arabia are financing Islamic education for residents of Dinki, Korodegaga and Turufe Kecheme. All religions have organisations or institutions which provide assistance to those in need.

All the communities have social protection links with people in other communities, usually through marriage links. There is migration for begging and an example of a diaspora organisation contributing to every household in the community. Urban-based migrants, some living abroad, send remittances. Community members are often called upon to contribute to government schools and within communities there are local social protection organisations, most prominently the *iddir*. Clans are important in Turufe Kecheme and Korodegaga, while religious feasting groups (*mehaber*) play a role among the Amhara. The effectiveness of community leaders in accessing outside help in times of crisis is important. Destitute, sick and disabled people may be helped by individuals or groups, sometimes on a rotating basis. A small coterie of rich people use private education and health facilities which are of better quality. Land entitlements provide a form of social protection for people unable to farm, particularly old people, sick people and women heading households. The land can be share-cropped or rented out.

Wider blood and affinal kin, neighbours, friends, and patrons provide complex networks of social support which may be used for economic development, human development or social protection while close family and household members are key in the sharing of resources. Finally self-help is a very important part of community welfare mixes: adolescents earn money to cover the costs of their education; the first resort when illness strikes is often self-medication; in times of famine males migrate. Other strategies include begging and theft.

4.6. Stratification Outcomes

The I/S regime framework postulates that agents involved in the provision of welfare mix elements develop their own vested interests and relationships and become part of the local stratification system. There is evidence of this in Korodegaga where an

international NGO works so closely with *wereda* officials that many local people attribute its aid to government, and a local NGO made a deal with *wereda* officials under which they would provide equipment to irrigate an area of land some of which they would keep for themselves. This deal was not honoured despite the land being set aside for five years during which it became infested with a problematic weed. In Turufe Kecheme a number of religious sects have become elements in local power structures.

Donor activity has also had a recent impact in the four sites in terms of increasing funds for education and health services, including a malaria bednet project for Korodegaga. In the realm of food aid the ways in which the vested interests and actions of donors and NGOs affect local structures and outcomes need examination. Furthermore, donors and international NGOs who have become important and entrenched welfare mix actors in Ethiopia have found it difficult to respond to recent political events in a coherent way.

4.7.   Facilitative Power Outcomes

Here we are particularly interested in techniques of production and discipline or organisation. Local productive technologies involving rainfed agriculture, ox-plough technology, and season-related crop choices developed over many years in interaction with harsh environments have allowed communities to survive, though often at the expense of considerable suffering to their members in terms of survival, health, nutrition and work burdens. Customary techniques of discipline involved very unequal hierarchies partly maintained through violence whose legacy remains. Most members of these communities are very interested in 'development' though there is no clarity about how techniques of production and discipline should change to achieve this.

In relation to techniques of discipline we can identify a conflict between government and donor approaches. The donor message is that markets should be 'freed' or, more recently, constructed where they are 'missing', although they provide little detail of what should be done to achieve these goals. Ironically the food aid they supply (often from subsidised over-production at home) undermines the 'free' operation of local grain markets. The evidence is that the government has not bought into the idea of free markets in land or labour. Government policies to cope with land shortages have

had little impact in our research sites and while local people recognise the inefficiency of communal labour organised by government fiat through hierarchical structures, government does not seem to be aware that it is inefficient, while many donors seem unaware of its existence.

The idea that if markets are 'freed' old institutions will disappear and new institutions to regulate efficient and equitable markets will emerge is not supported by our empirical evidence. Rather we see a maelstrom of competing institutional forms. For example, in Korodegaga since the 1960s there have been numerous attempts to introduce irrigation farming, none of which have yet lasted for more than a few years. Two projects never worked at all: a large botched and possibly corrupt donor/government scheme in the late 1980s and the recent government water harvesting campaign. Currently in the site there are (1) an NGO-organised co-operative which does not include all community members, (2) two 'inward investors' with private pumps who acquired land from the *wereda* in some way or other, (3) a government scheme in train which, if successful, should provide some irrigated land for every household, (4) individual farmers who have bought small pumps, and (5) groups of farmers who have clubbed together to buy shared pumps. There are regular and increasing conflicts over access to irrigable land.

4.8.   Episodic Power: Recent Mobilisations

Government was particularly active in the communities in the lead-up to the May election. They organised community work and called many meetings. There were attempts to change working practices through education and the issuing of directives, which were successfully resisted in Turufe Kecheme. Many meetings were devoted to telling the community to vote for the EPRDF. Women in Korodegaga and Turufe Kecheme were more supportive of the EPRDF than the men, citing their championing of women's economic rights.

Local people mobilised in various ways to change power structures. Destitute people have been actively working on establishing patron-client relations. Children are reported as insisting on their rights not to be beaten and to go to school. Adolescents and young adults have been escaping from parental domination. Women have increasingly taken advantage of government legislation and the establishment of social courts to pursue their economic rights.

Our research on local disputes reveals a complex relation between formal and informal institutions at community level. The formal justice system relies heavily on informal institutions throughout the legal process leading to increasing formalisation of customary practices. The picture that emerges is less of separation and more of negotiation and collaboration with compromise as well as resistance.

Our case history of irrigation in Korodegaga reveals multiple mobilisations based on different institutional forms ('feudalism', communal sharing, NGO 'participation', government decree, internal private investment and 'foreign direct investment') none of which has yet proved sustainable.

All our communities have been affected by religious mobilisations of one kind or another, all with the aim of trying to control or change the behaviour and beliefs of local people. Orthodox Christianity depends on local 'taxes'; Islamic, Protestant and Catholic mobilisations tend to be externally financed.

5. Policy Discussion: Using the Case Studies

In this section we do three things. Firstly, we consider some of the implications of our case studies for development discourses, particularly the ways in which donors and government think about rural communities and how they operate. Secondly, the case studies offer a window on to the likely impacts of potential policies or their absence; we discuss the example of mobility, migration and rural-urban linkages. Thirdly, we briefly identify and describe eleven other crucial power and poverty issues we believe to be key for the future development of Ethiopia and the wellbeing of its people.

5.1. Understanding Rural Lives in Ethiopia: Implications for Development Discourses

Most policymakers and higher implementers do not know much about the processes and outcomes which follow from the policies they design, negotiate and implement, which sometimes bear little relation to their intentions. They also usually know little about the lives of the people who are affected by what they do. These case studies have indirectly given a voice to the richer and poorer men, women, youth, children

and babies who live in the four villages and an inkling of what their lives are like. They have revealed the complexity and dynamism of their lives which contrast with the simplistic and static pictures found in much policy discourse. In particular they show the importance of power relations of different kinds in the constitution of community, household and individual poverties and wealth and described them in some detail. Such power relations will always confound the rational goals of planned policies which have not taken them into account.

5.2. A Policy Example: Implications of our Findings on Mobility, Migration and Rural-Urban Linkages

The 2005 Participatory Poverty Assessment concludes that mobility is rather limited due to lack of official encouragement and land policies, negative social and cultural views on migration particularly of women, and high transport costs. The document recommends that barriers to migration should be addressed and increased migration promoted, with a shift in the balance of future poverty reduction strategies towards encouraging urbanisation.

The 2005 World Bank Poverty Assessment suggests that rural to urban migration is an important component of an urban population growth of 4.7 percent. However, this migration is seen as eroding growth, exacerbating urban poverty and putting pressure on services. Mobility in the rural areas is viewed as limited. Only 2.5 percent of the rural population in the 1999 Labour Force Survey were recent migrants over the past five years.[1] The report advocates promoting diffusion of information and linkages, and sees advantages of migration out of food insecure and marginal areas. However, it warns of the risks of aggravating urban poverty, and too much population concentration in high potential areas, and advocates agricultural intensification, risk reducing inputs, diversification out of agriculture, public works, and market development.

The WeD research suggests that out-migration from rural sites is important on a seasonal basis to cope with food shortage, fertiliser indebtedness, and raise cash to purchase clothing, livestock and consumer goods. Longer term migrants have

sometimes been able to establish occupational niches in towns.

Female out-migration particularly from the North is in part associated with inequalities and limited access to rural resources, marriage practices, divorce and death of parents or spouses. Limited urban opportunities tend to push them into low paid and/or dangerous occupations, notably as house servants, commercial sex workers, fuelwood carriers or petty traders.

Though migration can be a means to cope with famine and seasonal difficulties and some success stories encourage others to migrate, few make significant savings, send remittances or are able to use migration as a strategy out of poverty. Some earlier migrants have been able to assist newcomers who require guarantors to obtain jobs.

Rural-urban linkages are extremely important, particularly in terms of trading opportunities and the sale of cash crops. Small towns provide a range of opportunities to diversify incomes. Such linkages also largely explain the emergence of elites who have been able to use cash crops from irrigated agriculture in two sites and control over grain trade in a third to become prosperous.

The policy implications include the following:
- More effective agrarian policies could reduce distress migration and the need for some seasonal migration to pay for fertiliser debts,
- Promotion of small-scale irrigation, alternative livelihoods, off-farm employment, more appropriate extension services and agro-industries could address the needs of the rural youth who would have to migrate due to growing landlessness and limited agricultural opportunities,
- Promotion of small towns could enhance rural-urban linkages providing opportunities for trade and employment, stimulating diffusion of information and technologies and improvements in social services notably in health, education,
- Affirmative action in terms of women's and girls' rights, education, training, and rural technologies could provide greater opportunities for women within their communities and as migrants. Issues of violence against women, land rights on

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[1] "Sheer remoteness and isolation epitomizes life in rural areas, rendering it extremely difficult to reach the rural population, limiting cross-fertilization, and perpetuating ongoing knowledge patterns, traditional practices and customs." (2005:69).

divorce and work opportunities for migrant women deserve greater emphasis,

- Migrants tend to join the ranks of the urban poor, are often not organised but rely on former migrants, cannot easily get access to housing and services, and are perceived as exacerbating violence and crime. Therefore access to housing, services and social security for the urban poor should address the constraints faced by migrants, notably the youth and especially problems of migrant women,
- In the past migrants' networks have played a role not just in their survival and adaptation but also in advocacy, fund-raising and promoting rural development in their areas of origin, despite tendencies to brand such activities as purely political. Such networking for development should be promoted, and
- Rural urban-linkages are key to development and should be encouraged in all ways including facilitating roads, communications, trade, development and extension of health, education and justice services, credit and banking, investment by migrants' associations etc.

5.3. Other Key Policy Issues Identified from the Case Studies

In this section we identify a number of power and poverty issues which we will be investigating in future analysis. A key message emerging so far from the data produced through our complex open social system approach is that everything is connected and that a choice which may seem good from one perspective may seem bad from another and *vice versa*.

The issues include:
- Drought, animal diseases, malaria and HIV/AIDS and how they are dealt with
- The impact of land shortage on the lives of young men and policies to increase off-farm employment
- Women's workloads, childbearing and socialisation responsibilities, and health
- Social protection for the elderly, disabled, chronically ill, and destitute
- Child work and education

There is a disconnect between the demand for education and its supply. Government insistence on full day attendance may be counterproductive given the dependence of many household economies on child work in the form of herding, farming, domestic work, and fetching wood and water. Given that many young people seem to be going

to school at a much later age than assumed to be conventional, often into their twenties, there is a case for considering more flexible options. The extent to which schools are involved in the dissemination of hierarchical and gender-biased principles needs to be investigated (Poluha, 2004).

- *Government style*

The government's style of mobilisation may be assumed to enhance efficiency of communication and implementation of government policies and NGO projects. However, it may also be perceived as intrusive, competing with existing informal institutions and undermining community autonomy.

Attempts to make use of community institutions to promote overtly political agendas may also be perceived as running counter to community interests. In one site the authorities sought to use the official structure rather than traditional work parties to collect harvests and banned migrant workers resulting in increases in the rate peasants had to pay to employ wage labourers. Funeral associations during the Derg period were involved in conscription, and currently are expected to contribute to costs of development initiatives. Such co-opting of local informal institutions may tarnish their legitimacy.

The standardised campaign approach has negative implications including doing things in too great haste, mobilising energies on single tracks to the detriment of applying human, material and other resources to ongoing activities, a tendency to go for increasing numbers and quotas set from above to the detriment of quality, experimentation, and adoption of what works, assuming that the same solution is valid everywhere without taking due consideration of regional, altitudinal, climatic, and socio-cultural variations.

- *Empowerment as a policy goal*

This is a complex topic which needs further elaboration. While the 'internal empowerment' of individuals may seem relatively straightforward, especially when it turns into a call for more primary education, the other conceptualisations of power used in this paper reveal a number of pitfalls. Empowerment in the context of controlling power relations requires the disempowerment of dominant parties which takes us into the realm of politics. The empowering of collectivities may lead to competition and conflict. Appropriate techniques of production and discipline require institutional designs which can connect efficiently with existing institutions. What can

the role of donors be in this context? How do 'outsiders' change open complex unstable social systems? Or if, as argued above, donors are 'insiders', how should they comport themselves?

6.   Conclusion

In this paper we have used a dynamic open social systems model, a case-based approach and a multi-method data set to explore connections between power relationships and poverty outcomes for people, households and communities as a whole in four rural sites in the Amhara and Oromia Regions of Ethiopia. We have identified some common patterns of exploitation, exclusion, domination and violence, described the welfare mix of organisations and institutions involved in redistributive social policy, and investigated some poverty consequences at community, household and individual levels.

We have found that people in these communities are embroiled in a welter of change processes the future directions of which are hard to envisage, especially given macro political uncertainties following the May election.

We completed fieldwork in November 2005 and are now involved in a more rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the larger data set, including data on two urban sites. This analysis will enable us to deepen our understanding of power relations and their relationship to poverty and subjective wellbeing outcomes, and to offer further policy-relevant insights. It will also enable us to develop our theoretical, conceptual and methodological frameworks, with a view to producing a 'lite' version for use by those with less time to devote to research.

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Appendix 1: The WeD Ethiopia Rural Database

Note: The urban database includes parallel material for two sites; one in Kolfe, Addis Ababa and the second in Shashemene. All the rural research instruments were adapted for urban use except WIDE2 and the household migration module.

Fieldwork was completed in November 2005. The complete database will be put in the public domain.

7. A Resources and Needs Survey (RANS).
Information on this is/will be available on the WED website

8. The development and piloting of an instrument to measure individual subjective quality of life (WeD-QoL).
Information on this is/will be available on the WED website

9. Protocol-guided process research at individual, household and community levels (DEEP) conducted by one male and one female researcher in each site.
In most cases households and individuals for research were purposively selected from the RANS respondents. In all cases a sample of males and females of different wealth/poverty was chosen. The WeD-QoL pilot was mostly administered to people for which we had other information.

Community Level
WIDE1   Village Studies 1   1996   csae website address
WIDE2   2003
DEEP   Village Studies II   January 2006   www.wed-ethiopia.org
Community Organisations
Poverty-related Event History
Poverty Dynamics
Collective action
Elites and destitutes
Young Lives1: the Cultural Construction of Children's Lives (aged roughly 3 –18)
Old Lives1: the Cultural Construction of Old People's Lives
Disputes and Resolutions
Migration
Exploratory QoL
Community Diary: September 2004 – September 2005 inclusive

Household Level
Household Poverty Dynamics: change, shocks, inter-generational mobility
Migration
Household Diary Pilot
Household Diaries (12 households): October 2004 – September 2005 inclusive

Individual Level
Adult Lives: 14 men and 14 women
Old Lives2: the Personal Experience of Old People's Lives (10 old ancient men and women)
Young Lives2: the Personal Experience of Young People's Lives (16 males and 16 females between roughly 3 and 18)
Migration for work/survival (men) for marriage (women)
Pilot QoL (31 males and 31 females of different ages and wealth)

Appendix 2: Local Identifications of Causes of Harm to People of Different Ages

These questions were asked of richer and poorer men and women in 20 rural sites in *Kiremt* 2003. The tables include the answers from all four types of person.

Tell me all the ways in which a baby can be harmed	
Yetmen	Illness
	A baby can be harmed if the mother is unable to take care of him and unable to feed him
	A baby can be harmed if the mother can't buy enough clothing
	Can be harmed if the baby can't get enough to eat when they need to eat
Dinki	If the mother's health is poor during pregnancy and if she has not been given good care.
	Health problems If there is occurrence of accidental disease like malaria, vomiting, and if her mother might not give breast at right time.
Turufe Kecheme	Disease
	Starvation
	Lack of enough food
	Lack of balanced diet
	If the baby's mother is harmed
	Not getting balanced food
	Lack of vaccination
Korodegaga	Waterborne diseases
	Their hygiene is not kept well and they do not get the necessary care due to poverty
	Malaria
	They do not get medical treatment at the right time.

Tell me all the ways in which a girlchild can be harmed	
Yetmen	Illness
	She will be harmed if she doesn't get enough care from her parents
	Death of parents She can be harmed if she gets sick and unable to play with her friends
	When she doesn't have good relation with her friends
	She can be harmed if she is abnormal/disabled
	She can be harmed if she can't dress as she wants and as her friends did
	Drought
	Early marriage
	Heavy work
	Lack of adequate food
	Being beaten
Dinki	Children are more prone to diseases like small pox and meningitis
	Lack of modern education
	If she does not marry.
Turufe Kecheme	Lack of education
	Disease
	Heavy work
	Starvation
	Circumcision
	Abduction
	A girl child cannot be harmed except for work pressure
Koro-degaga	Abduction
	Early marriage
	If she is abused
	They are burdened with work. They are the ones who accomplish all the housework and also many of the farmwork many of them go and collect firewood.
	Malnutrition
	Not allowed to go to school
	Malaria
	Lack of medical care

82

Tell me all the ways in which a boychild can be harmed

	Illness
	Death of parents
	Drought
	Lack of adequate food
Yetmen	Being beated
	Heavy work
	He can be harmed if he doesn't get enough care from his parents
	He can be harmed if his parents can't fulfil what he needs
	When he can't play with his friends
	Children are more prone to diseases like measles and meningitis.
Dinki	If his mother faces shortage of food
	If his mother may pass away.
	Lack of modern education..
	Lack of education
Turufe Kecheme	Disease
	Heavy work
	Starvation (famine)
	Through beating
	If he is abused
	Malaria
	Absence of treatment when sick
	Not getting enough food
Korodegaga	No clothes to wear
	Not allowed to go to school
	Not able to go past grade 4
	They are also burdened with work
	Off-farm work
	Carrying firewood to market

Tell me all the ways in which a woman can be harmed	
Yetmen	Illness
	She can be harmed when she lose her children or husband by death
	Divorce
	She can be harmed when there is no good harvest season and when she looks her family get starved
	She can be harmed when here children don't face a good future and when they become sad
	She can be harmed when she doesn't have good relation with the society
	Drought
	Lack of adequate food and clothing Hitted by her husband
	When she doesn't have good relation with her friends
Dinki	Women are more harmed during pregnancy because they are bleeding When she gets ill she would be more harmed than men because of work burden in her life. The same is true during famine years.
	Due to drought woman can find their alternative so as to live, for instance, reselling or trading during this time, they may face another problem
	A woman who works in somebody's house as a servant.
	A woman who wants to marry but she didn't get.
	A woman who divorces from her husband.
	Lack of education
	Work pressure
	Having too many children
Turufe Kecheme	Diseases
	Famine/drought
	If her husband has many wives
	If there isn't peace at home
	Not having peaceful relation with neighbours
Korodegaga	They are burdened with overwork. They do all the housework as well as many of the farmwork.
	Carrying fire wood to the market; Cutting/burning charcoal
	When giving birth; Birth without gap
	Because most families are very poor women do not get enough food to replace the energy they lose
	Lack of balanced food
	They do not get medical treatment when sick (because they are burdened with overwork and lose more energy, they are the ones who become sick frequently).
	By inheritance (a STD infected man could inherit her)
	Most mothers are unable to fulfil the basic needs of their children and this affects women psychologically

Tell me all the ways in which a man can be harmed	
Yetmen	Lack of adequate clothing and good housing
	Illness; Death of a family member
	Lack of peaceful marriage life
	A man can be harmed when he lacks a land to plough and unable to feed his family
	Loss of landholding Shortage of agricultural land
	Drought; Harvest failure; When oxen get sick or die
	Loss of properties by theft and other destruction
	Social exclusion as a result of conflict; War and conflicts
	When the rain is absent during winter
Dinki	Those who have no land usually work on somebody's plots and would be harmed.
	Those who have been employed as 'Iole' may not be paid and the salary is very low.
	Malaria
	A man who doesn't have good wife and child.
	A man who doesn't have a male child keeps him in farming for the future.
	War
	Work pressure
Turufe Kecheme	Famine/drought
	Disease
	Lack of education
	A man cannot be harmed. He can cope with everything. (Woman's response)
Korodegaga	Drought; Lack of food
	Lack of right clothes
	It is poverty and inability to satisfy many of their needs that affects them both physically and psychologically. Inability to fulfil basic needs of their family affects them psychologically
	Malaria; Lack of medicine
	Water born diseases
	The aluminium sulphate by product disposed to Awash river by the factory at Awash Melkasa