INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFER OF POVERTY/WEALTH IN ETHIOPIA: EVIDENCE FROM FOUR COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

The paper tries to examine how parents transfer poverty/ wealth to their children and how these were governed by the community norms. It aims at understanding how persistent poverty in Ethiopia could partly be interwoven in the social fabrics and calling for relatively effective contextualized interventions in reducing child poverty.

Data used to produce this paper were collected in three different levels of WeD research: the Resource and Needs Survey (RANS), in-depth household and individual interviews, and, specific open-ended protocols designed to understand the intergenerational poverty/wealth transmissions.

The research output indicated that transfer of wealth required following many alternatives until the child really sets up an independent life. Poverty transmission was largely the inability to invest on the future of the child by poor parents. But as it also involved parents' preference of child work to education, some non-poor people failed to transfer their wealth to their children. Poor parents were more likely to engage their children in income generating activities to maintain the household, whereas non-poor parents needed their children to take on family work. Some poor parents, however, used different mechanisms to invest on their children to become richer adults.

Socio-economic environment, localised norms of entitlement including gender, age and birth order, besides other factors, strongly affected parental investment on education of children. Though parents and children have significant difference in their perception of parents' obligation towards developing children's future, cultural norms appeared to favour the parents and there was no legal sanction which enforces children's expectations.

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It emerged that, norms, not only govern transfers of wealth/poverty, but also they themselves were simultaneously transmitted from parents to children. Strong family ties and interdependence between family members guaranteed the transmission of values, attitudes and customs inherited from the older to the younger.

1. Introduction[1]

This paper tries to examine how parents transfer poverty or wealth to their children within limited data. It focuses on how the trade-off between education and work affect such transfer and the cultural norms that govern it. Data from two urban and two rural communities are utilized and variations in wealth and gender examined.

The significance of this paper may be two-fold. First, it may help understand how poverty is interwoven in the social fabrics and contribute to the ever-growing interest in understanding persistent poverty in Ethiopia. Secondly, it may call for relatively effective contextualized intervention in alleviating poverty in the country.

Data used to produce this paper were collected in three different levels. First, data were collected from 250 households selected by random sampling from each community involving about 6000 individual cases. Resource and Needs Survey (RANS) was conducted in 2004 and 2005 (for urban communities) by using closed ended questionnaires. RANS provides larger community contexts to this specific study. Secondly, in-depth household and individual interviews that have been gathered for more than a year (2004/05) are used to understand each community, selected households and lives of individuals of different ages. Thirdly, specific open-ended protocols were designed and fieldwork done in the month of July 2005 in the communities to understand the intergenerational poverty transmissions. 12 adult parents and 12 young people were interviewed from each community. They were divided equally into male and female respondents interviewed by male and female researchers respectively.

In analysing this paper, relevant RANS data were extracted into tables to provide the bigger settings. The specifically collected data on parents and young people were

analysed in depth within the contexts of rural/urban settings, wealth[2] statuses and gender. This focused on how poverty/wealth is transferred between generations and how they are governed by the socio-culturally constructed norms. To understand this, normative obligations and expectations between parents and children were established and then analysed in relation to what is practically happening in child work and education. Some tables and in-depth individual cases are used to illustrate some of the findings.

The paper is organized in the following way. In this introductory part the purpose, data collection and analyzing approach are briefly described. Part two sets up very brief background whereas Part three provides some contexts of the four communities focusing on people's work and children's education. Part four examines the cultural norms that govern parents-children relationships and the practical decision of parents in the trade-off between work and education of their children. In part five the transfer of poverty/wealth within the contexts of urban/rural, wealth, gender and birth of order of children is analysed. In the final part, concluding remarks are provided recapturing some of the findings.

2. Background

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. GDP per capita is around USD 115, while life expectancy, educational enrolment, and other indicators of well-being are all extremely low (Kedir & McKay, 2003). Young people constitute 67% of the unemployed population (MYSC, 2004).

There are some evidence that younger generations are getting poorer than the older ones in the country. In the 2004/5 Resources and Needs Survey (RANS), respondents were asked to compare their wealth status with that of their parents. Among the respondents, in Kolfe 68%, Shashemene 66%, Korodegaga 79%, and in Turufe 76% claimed that they were poorer than their parents were at the same age (see Table 1).

[1] This paper is based on ESRC funded research on Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) run by University of Bath (UK) in four countries: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Thailand. I am grateful for invaluable guidance and comments secured from Drs Philippa Bevan and Alula Pankhurst.
[2] Though respondents could identify themselves as *rich, middle* or *poor*; for easier analysis wealth statues was divided into *poor* and *non-poor* (includes the middle and rich).

Access to education, early start or engagement in work, and getting married largely affect the life-course of the young and the future well-being. The need for child labor for immediate family support and sending children to school determines the future wealth of young people. This paper examines how children's education and work affect transfer of wealth or poverty in four communities.

Table 1: Intergenerational wealth comparison

How does your household's wealth compare with that of your father at the same age? (percentage)	Kolfe	Shashemene	Korodegaga	Turufe Kecheme
A lot richer	3	1	2	2
Richer	15	17	7	15
About the same	13	15	10	7
Poorer	55	53	70	60
A lot poorer	13	13	9	16
N/A	0	1	2	0

Source: RANS, 2004/5.

3. The Communities: Work and Education

The communities have different economic and socio-cultural contexts. Generally, people in the communities have varied work occupations and educational levels. They are briefly described as follows.

Korodegaga

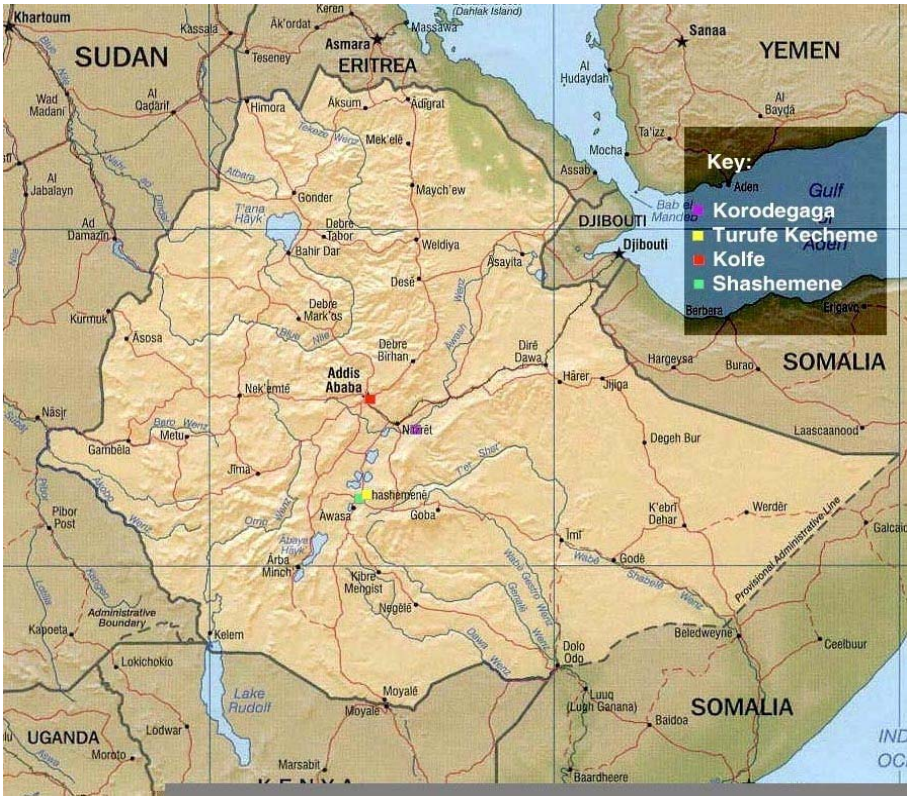
Korodegaga is located at the north-east edge of Arssi administrative Zone of Oromia Region. It is within the Dodeta-Sire Woreda. It includes nine villages. In addition to the poorly available rain-fed agriculture, there is a growing irrigation scheme in the community. The area is largely inhabited by Muslim Oromo people.

Young boys engage in farming, weeding, harvesting crops and irrigation activities. Girls perform cooking, baking, fetching water and firewood, weeding, digging, collective harvested crops in fields, irrigation works. They also herd goats and sheep.

They care for babies at home. Both boys and girls in the community are involved in daily labour.

There is only one primary school which is up to grade 4. Some may go to the nearby Sodere elementary school (1-6). Still those with some relatives can go to Itaya for the same elementary education. Parents who send their children to the elementary school must pay 10 birr as a school fee as well as 2 birr for sports and another 2 birr for a certificate in a year. Additionally, 3rd and 4th grade students must pay 1 birr as book rent for books borrowed from the school. Those who want to complete elementary school must travel to Sodere, 3-15 km far from the different villages of Korodegaga (Bevan, Pankhurst & Lavers, 2006).

Fig.1. Site map of the four communities



Many children who cannot travel the long distance or take time at the expense of family work consequently drop out of school after finishing grade 4. Most students drop out after completing primary school because the high schools are far and costly. In the time of this research, 2005, not more than 10 students, of which two were female, attended high schools.

The distance of school in the community has been one of the major reasons for the low school attendance and obvious dropouts of young people. Most children discontinue their education after grade 4 because of financial problems for educational material, paying for house rent, food etc.

Turufe Kecheme

Turufe-Wetera-Elemo kebele is located in Shashemene Woreda in the Eastern Shewa Zone of Oromia Region. The kebele now consists of three villages, which have been renamed as Turufe Kecheme (which is one of the research sites), Wetera Sake and Abyu Elemo. Different ethnic groups live in the three villages. The centre of the kebele is at Turufe.

Farming is the main source of livelihood besides secondary activities of carpentry, masonry, and trade. Young people actively participate in petty trade and farming activities. They involve in daily labour as most of them lack land of their own. Girls largely involve in domestic works, farming activities and petty trade.

There is a primary school teaching grades 1 to 6 and a junior school of Kuyera within two kms. There is a shift system so that some can go in the morning and some in the afternoon. Those parents who can afford to send their children to school have access. Each household pays 20 *birr* per year to Wetera primary school. The school fee for Kuyera Junior School is 20 *birr*. Community members pay school fees and land tax together.

School attendance is relatively good because of short distance and a significant fall of practices of girls' abduction in the community since recent years (Bevan, Pankhurst & Lavers, 2006).

Kolfe

Kolfe is located in the western edge of the Ethiopian Capital, Addis Ababa. It is considered to be one of the semi-peripheral parts of the city recognised for its informal business activities. Following the restructuring process by the city administration in 2003 the research site, *Kebele* 10/11, was formed merging three *Kebeles* of former 04, 06 and 07. According to the records of the sub-city, the total population of the Kolfe-Keranio sub-city was estimated at 150,000 in 2003 about 45,000 living in the community of *Kebele* 10/11 (Feleke, Yisak & Lavers, 2006).
People with different religion, occupation and ethnic background live in the area. Weavers from the Gamo community, traders and vegetable growers from the Gurage as well as other ethnic groups live side by side.

Men in Kolfe area are engaged in either one or more of the following activities: work in government offices, renting houses, trade, brokerage, domestic servants, selling used clothes, private work (as a carpenter, mason, loading on donkeys), other manual labour (e.g. mud plastering, carrying things), embroidery and spinning, guarding, growing and selling vegetables, farming, selling cow milk, begging, washing clothes. Women, on the other hand, are engaged in: work in government offices, renting houses, trade, selling used clothes, street vending, working as housemaid, spinning, selling vegetables, selling cow milk, begging, commercial sex, washing clothes and parquet selling.

There are four kindergarten schools, 3 elementary and 1 high schools in the community. Those who need any technical training, college or university education should go outside the area.

There are several informal neighbourhood kindergartens in which children whose parents could not afford to send to formal kindergarten are taught. They charge three *birr* per month for every child. They are run by individuals or youth associations who provide education of basic alphabets and numbers.

Shashemene

Shashemene is located in East Shewa Zone of the Oromia National Regional State, approximately 250 km south of Addis Ababa. According to the official Central Statistical Survey, the total population of Shashemene was estimated to reach over 73,560 in 2001. The Shashemene town has been restructured into ten Kebele

administrative units, which are managed by the Municipality. Shashemene is a town comprising different ethnic groups. These include the Gurage, Oromo, Amhara, and Wollayta. The research site, Kebele 08 and Kebele 09, commonly called Arada, is located at the centre of Shashemene town. It was the first area of settlement (Feleke, Yisak & Lavers, 2006).

Male inhabitants within the two *Kebeles* are engaged mostly in the informal sector of the economy as petty traders, daily labourers, blacksmith, potters, brokers, tailors, cart drivers and the likes. Only a small proportion of the inhabitants are government employees. In addition to household chores, women are engaged in *Tella* and *Arake* selling, petty trading, waitress, house servants, daily labourers, cleaners, firewood and charcoal selling, selling of roasted barley, selling fruits, and sex workers.

Shashemene has one technical school, one preparatory school, two high schools and seven primary schools. There are also five private colleges in the town. Kebele 08/09 has got one primary school called *Melkka Issa* constructed during the *Derg* period.

4. Intergenerational Contracts: Cultural Norms and Practices

The 'Intergenerational Contract' is the set of norms, rules, convictions and practices, which govern the relationship between different generations at the level of families and at the level of society. The essence of the intergenerational contract is that parents look after their children when they are young and anticipate to be looked after by them in their old age (Malhotra & Kabeer, 2002). Intergenerational relations are governed by claims and obligations, which are in return woven into the social fabrics.
Intergenerational obligations and expectations: norms on work and education

Parents have their own views over the parents-children relationships, expectations and obligations. Their perceptions are based on their respective religions, traditions and personal experiences. Parents rely more on religious values and other norms inherited from their parents or fore-parents to construct the relationships, obligations towards and claims from their children.

The following table is a summary of responses of 48 parents and 48 children about their perceptions on parents-children reciprocal obligations and expectations in the four communities.

Table 2: Parents-children obligations and expectations[1]

Obligations/expectations	Parents' response	Children's response
1. Parents obligations towards children		
1.1 Provide basic needs (health care, food, clothing)	17 (35.1%)	3 (6.3%)
1.2 Basic needs and education	15 (31.3%)	24 (50%)
1.3 Basic needs, education and help start independent life	16 (33.3%)	19 (39.8%)
2. Children's obligations towards parents		
2.1Family work	8 (16.6%)	8 (16.6%)
2.2 Family work, generate income	11 (22.9%)	6 (12.5%)
2.3Care in old age (resources and visits)	29 (60.4%)	31 (64.6%)

Source: Field interviews

Parents put their obligations towards their children to be provision of basic needs (food, health care, and clothing), education, and help to be self-reliant (see Table 2). More than a third of adult parent respondents revealed that their obligation towards their children was the provision of basic needs of food, clothing and health care. Others considered that provision of basic needs and education are parental obligations. A significant number of them feel that they should do more than offering of basic needs and education and to help their children begin independent life. This may entail provision of material resources such as land, livestock, money, housing, arrangement of marriages and other necessary supports.

In return, parents have their expectations from their children. The majority of the respondents expect to get help from their children when they get old. They repeatedly asserted that they invested on their children to get the return when they are too weak to work. Such supports include material resources, caring, protections and frequent visits. For some, obligations of children should be realized beginning from early childhood. Some parents expect their children to be engaged in family work. They required them to perform household chores (usually for girls), taking care of younger

[1]As the respondents are not randomly selected, their views may not systematically represent people in the community. Hence, the in-depth interview of the individuals in the communities may only help to have some clues.

siblings, agricultural activities, carrying things, fetching firewood and water, taking care of messages and other activities available in the households. Still a considerable number of them felt that children have obligation of not only family works, but also should be engaged in income generating activities to contribute to the wellbeing of the family. Such parents anticipate their children to bring income through petty trade, daily labour, working as a maid or servant, or other similar activities.

Children feel obliged to support their parents. As parents do, however, children have difference as to how much they need from their parents and what they should do in return. Among the 48 young respondents, the majority of them recognize that they have obligation of supporting their parents in their old age. A considerable number of them accept engaging in family work is a requirement of a child. But only some believed that they should help parents not only in household activities but should involve in outside income generating activities when required.

On the other hand, children have their own expectations from their own parents. They claim that parents have the obligation to bring up their children properly. Some of them need support from their parents to survive, but others to prosper too. Half of the respondents presumed that they should be provided with basic needs and educational supports from their respective parents. More than a third of them look forward to get assistance until they become independent and self-subsistent. To them parents should not only bring them up properly and educate them but also give them hand to set up independent life. This requires necessary material, social and moral support. Very few consider provision of only basic needs would meet parental obligation.

The data clearly show where parents and children dis/agree on obligations and expectations of each other. Their perceptions on children's obligation to help parents when the latter get older are almost the same. This implies there is a bigger community value rooted and accepted by both generations. Both agree, though on a smaller scale, on children's engagement in family work. When parents expect them to give help, children accept it as their obligation.

But they largely differ in children's education and children's work for family income. While nearly 90% of child respondents consider their education as obligation of their parents, less than 65% of parents accept it. This means some parents think that providing children with basic needs would be considered as fulfilling their parenthood,

while more children feel they should be educated as well. On the other hand, whereas nearly a quarter of responding parents expect their children to be engaged in income generating activities to help the family, less than 13% of the child respondents acknowledge it as their obligation.

This may suggest that the interplay between parents' and children's desire towards the latter's education and engagement in work looks incompatible.

Expectations and obligations between generations have never been legally established nor sanctioned. They have their roots in social and cultural lives of the people. When both adult and young respondents were asked why they accepted such obligations and how they set the norms, they provided almost similar responses. They mentioned the following who they learned from or taught by:

- Told by parents and grand parents
- It is God's wish
- It is our culture
- Teachings of religious leaders
- It is blood tie
- Taught in schools (ethics)

Respondents asserted that the obligation to help parents and children is deeply rooted in their cultures. Religious leaders preach that helping parents as a blessing and God loves those who do so. Elders tell young people to obey their older parents. A respondent said: 'parents have the obligation to do everything to the wellbeing of their children as far as they brought them into this world. And children should do everything for their parents in return, who have nobody other than their parents. This is our culture.' Besides, some claimed that parents expect support from their children because they have invested on them. Priests, sheiks, elders and other notable people continuously advise children to respect community norms; one of which is helping parents.

Especially parents try to cement their relationships by frequently notifying that helping parents is a cultural norm that they have inherited from parents and should pass on to their children. All interviewed children reported that their parents repeatedly tell them to help their parents. Therefore, parents not only transfer poverty/ wealth but also the norms that could be considered as one of their important resources that their children should inherit.

The trade-off between education and work: practices

Perceptions of parents and children towards their reciprocal obligations are rooted in their cultural contexts and both feel responsible to each other. Though there are significant differences of perception towards intergenerational obligations and expectation, it looks even wider at practical level. This limited data signifies that in reality, obligations are not respected. Actual fieldwork data indicated that children are more obliged to work than to develop their human capital through education. In the trade-off between family work and child education, many parents tend to look for immediate support from their children in labour. When there is no option, young people themselves terminate schooling and leap into income generating activities.

But there are variations that are more influenced by the prevailing social, cultural, economic contexts and personal decisions of parents and children. Variations related to sex, birth order, relationships, wealth, household structures and personal interests of parents greatly matter.

Most parents want their children to learn, but fail to push forward until they succeed. For instance, among the 48 young people interviewed, all except two females, have been to school, but only 10 (7 male) were helped to finish high school and two (urban non-poor) joined college/university (see Table 3). Only two male respondents from the poor households were able to finish high school. They were 3rd and 5th child in their families and they reported that more workload was on other siblings. The rest have been obliged to drop out at different stages of their education for different reasons, basically to earn a living for their parents and/or themselves.

Table 3: Educational status of young people in four communities

Parents' wealth status	Drop at Elementary		Drop at Secodary		Finished Secondary		college/ university		In school		Never to school		total	
	F	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**
Poor	5	4	5	5	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	**11**	**11**
Non-poor	1	1	4	5	3	5	1	2	2	0	2	0	**13**	**13**
Total	**6**	**5**	**9**	**10**	**3**	**7**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**24**	**24**

Source: Field interviews

Poor families decided to limit the number of children going to school and those who work for the family. Older daughters were highly affected by the fact that parents forced them to help in household work and sometimes engage in income generating activities to raise younger children. All of the six older daughters[1] included in the interview dropped out of school and gave the same reason: they had to discontinue their education to carry out household chores or generate income for the family.

Older sons from female-headed households and farming families look overloaded and find it difficult to properly follow their education. They have to perform what their fathers used to do for the survival of their family. For instance, in the two rural communities, there are agricultural activities (e.g. tilling, threshing, etc) that could not be done by female members and necessarily require male labour. Children of the rural rich family usually drop out of school because of too much work or marriage. In urban areas engaging in income generating works was the major reason.

Other factors, faced by some respondents, that resulted in the dropping out of children include parents' educational level, resource management, having more than one wife, family conflict etc. For instance, the parents of those who never attended school are all illiterate. On the other hand, children claimed that fathers spent much of their resources on other things than on education of their children. Children have to work to survive or help mothers when fathers marry other wives and abandon their family.

When parents were unable to educate their children but instead forced them to work, children looked vulnerable. The intergenerational power relation looks favourable to adults. And there is no or at least many children did not know, any legal sanction that would help the children have the 'right' for education. Any child who violates parents' order and stand for his/her 'right' may end up losing. The following case reveals this fact in which a girl who refused to be overloaded by family work was forced to drop out of school.

[1] Other girls drop out of school either because parents have compelled them to marry off or were sexually abused (forcefully abducted, raped, impregnated) before marriage.

Case 1: A daughter denied of education because of her refusal of workload

> The norm is that parents should teach and take care of their children. Children also should help in work. When my father wanted me to be overloaded in family work all the time, I refused. He then prohibited me from going to school. I dropped out at grade 2. Now he wants me to marry a man he knows, but I do not agree. I wan to marry a man I like (TK, 18, Korodegaga).

In this case, the norms are there but are not subject for intergenerational negotiations. Children, especially girls, are more likely to lack the negotiation power and are not culturally expected to try so. When the practical obligations of parent are not compatible with the culturally constructed norms of intergenerational obligations, the final action solely belongs to parents, usually to fathers. Therefore, one can argue that norms are not only there to be practiced but also to be altered by those who have more power in the family in a way they believe contribute to the wellbeing of the household members or themselves.

5. The Intergenerational Poverty/Wealth Transfer: Contexts and Variations

Intergenerational transmission of poverty is the process by which poor parents transmit poverty and disadvantage to their children**.** There are various factors that determine such transmissions. It is usually among those children who are forced to work to contribute for sustaining livelihoods, most times at the cost of formal education. Child work is perpetuated by social norms and structures that also see them out of school (Bhargava, 2003).

Though education would help in breaking the cycle of poverty, some parents prefer to engage children in family works that might help for survival, but not largely contribute to longer-term wellbeing of their children.

And in communities where intergenerational relationships are cemented by cultural norms, parent's wealth/poverty is likely to be easily transferred into the next generation. The trade-off between engaging children in work and investing on their

education largely depends on the bigger context and personal decisions of parents. Let us consider these at the levels of the communities, parents' wealth statuses, education; and children's gender and order of birth.

The community context: rural vs. urban

In the rural areas agricultural activities require much labour and parents badly need the help of their children. Boys should soon learn what parents do in farming, and girls do in the household chores. Both parents and children interviewed from the rural communities of Korodegaga and Turufe Kecheme reported that every child has the obligation to work before, after school and sometimes interrupting his/her classes. Specially, in Korodegaga where there is a growing practice of irrigation children are obliged to be overloaded in school seasons and even leading to their eventual dropout.

Moreover, access to schools significantly matter. In Korodegaga, children have to go to far areas to attend school beyond grade four. Long distance implies waste of time that would have been useful for out of school work, and more school expenses (travel, house rent, materials…). As a result in the rural communities, relatively few children go to school. In urban areas, there is less work for children and availability of school is generally better. On the other hand, in both urban areas there are schools in the nearby areas and children have relatively little workloads. Of course, children in urban areas may lack the resources for school expenses, which are relatively higher than that of rural.

Therefore at community level, children from urban areas are likely to have relatively favourable conditions in this respect and parents have potentially better opportunity to invest on the education of their children. Children in the rural areas learn more their parents' skill and eventually turn into parental livelihoods easily. All of the young respondents from the two rural communities ended up in retuning into their parents' occupation by discontinuing their education at certain levels. As a consequence, the limited data indicates that children from the rural communities more likely inherit the poverty/wealth of their parents easily.

Wealth statuses

Wealth statuses of parents also determine the education, work and transfer of poverty/wealth to children. When a household becomes deprived, children might be obliged to be pulled out of school and engage in income generating activities. Children from the poor families do not go to school or terminate before finishing school to help their parents in income generating activities. Usually labour that earns money is not compatible with education because they coincide with education in terms of time. Either they have to work or go to school. The rich on the other hand let their children work in the household activities that can be done out of school times. All dropout respondents from the poor families work to generate income for the family. This was worse among the urban ones whose family do not have any family work other than household chores. Urban poor tried to employ their children in daily labour.

The non-poor (rich and middle wealth) usually engage their children in family works. In rural areas young people reported that they were overloaded in agricultural activities. There was no report from the interviews who did not work for family irrespective of wealth statuses.

The important thing in the wealth variation in the transfer of wealth/poverty is that among the poor, the parents have nothing to transfer if they fail to invest on their education. Among the non-poor, children get other chances of getting resources. If they fail in education due to over load or other reasons, parents resorted to other options. In the two rural communities, all the non-poor parents have provided their children with resources (land, livestock, cash, other material) when they fail in education. Sometimes parents and children consider the trade-off between wellbeing through education and agricultural works to opt for the best. When they felt their children were not progressing well in education, they let them drop out and start farming by providing the necessary resources. Non–poor parents were likely to continue to support their children until they become independent.

In urban areas three options were mentioned by respondents: paying fees for children to join private college when failed to join university; giving money to start business; and providing resources to start a living to become self-reliant. They have resources to realize their parental obligations of transferring wealth to their children. The

following case indicates how a mother invested on her daughter until she achieves her ambitions.

Case 2: How parents use different means to ensure the wealth of their children

> My mother invested much on my education and training well. When I failed to join preparatory school for university due to family workload, she sent me for sewing training at a private school for two years covering all expenses. She bought me a sewing machine. I also run my mother's large farm (TG, 20, Turufe Kecheme).

Generally, most non-poor parents tend to fulfil the norms they set and believe in by looking for other options. In situations where education or finishing schools do not guarantee employment, most rich parents tried to make sure their children achieve wellbeing. Hence, failing at school may not end their life though could not compensate their education.

On the contrary, the poor in urban areas largely engaged their children in income generating activities at a time when they should have developed their future in education. Unlike the rich who work for the wellbeing of the family and future development, the income generated from the poor was for immediate consumption. Poor parents not only failed to realize their parental obligation but also remained a burden on their children. They did not have any resources to transfer when their children fail. Poverty is therefore not only a result of scarcity of resources but also lack of options to develop children. Most respondents from the poor family revealed that they were over-consumed by their parents, and one said 'my future is eaten up by parents.'

The other dimension in wealth/poverty transfer is that there are poor people who are determined and work hard themselves to keep their children spend their time in developing their future. A typical example from the parent respondents is that a father in Kolfe community brought up his 8 children without involving them in his weaving activity despite the need. He sent all to school and they were successful. All have jobs and two went abroad. Since the last four years he stopped weaving after 50 years and has become one of the rich people in the community. He gets large remittances from abroad and his children are self-reliant.

On the contrary, some parents waste their resources themselves and spare little to the development and wellbeing of their children. Some young respondents mentioned that their parents were initially rich but their resources were depleted because of fathers 'being extravagant, drunk, having more than one wife, or negligent to children'.

Gender and birth of order

Cultural and societal norms determine what a girl or a boy should or should not do at various ages, and, for both, these norms affect their demand for schooling (Siobhan 2002).There are culturally constructed gender based activities. When parents decide their children should help they know what the boys and girls should do. In some contexts the labour of one sex might be more useful than the other. In the two rural areas where there is too much agricultural activity boys were obliged to work hard. Older daughter were also highly affected in household chores. This means that when there was scarce labour for work or resources to educate children parents make decisions whom to assign to work and send to school.

Respondents reported that older children were highly involved in labour and it was worse even when there were no more similar sex siblings in the family who could share the burden. One father whose daughter was involved in household chores with her mother to bring up 8 children said that, 'I sacrificed my older daughter to save others. She is the only dropout and poor in the family. That was the only decision I had to make.'

Wealth is not equally transferred among all children. Some parents tend to invest more on boys than girls. The following case indicates how a rich father decided to invest on education and provide material resources to his son, while denying or giving little to his daughter. The siblings witness themselves as follows:

Case 3: Transferring wealth to son, poverty to daughter

> I was sent to school. I dropped out at grade 5 because I do not see any use from it. Then my parents gave me1 hectare of land, and many cattle during my marriage. Thus, they greatly contributed to the present status of my life. I am rich as my parents are. (NK, 25, brother of AK, Korodegaga)**.**

> My parents never sent me to school; rather I was overloaded in family work. When my older sister was abducted, my father forced me to marry her former fiancée who was their servant for years. When I married him, they gave me a cow, two goats, one kerti (1/4 hector) of land as bride wealth**.** We live nearby to my parents. But we face land shortage because my husband doesn't have parents who can give him land or other property. But this is not sufficient to lead a decent life **(**AK, 24, sister of NK, Korodegaga).

In this case, parents tried to educate their son and not their daughter. When he failed in education they provided him with good resources and he became rich as his parents are. Their wealth is transferred. On the contrary, they did not send their daughter to school, but forcefully married her to a man who has no land. Her husband was their servant and continues to serve them by settling him next to their home. Relatively, girls tend to get less opportunity to develop and get resources to start a living.

When children are obliged to drop out of school, they resort to different work occupations. In urban areas respondents reported that they were engaged in daily labour, petty trade, baking and selling injera, preparing arake and selling, shop keeping, brokerage, spinning, embroidery, house maids/servants, carrying things and other lowly activities. Their works were either temporary or did not have good return. Hence, their economic situations were by far lower than their parents were at their age. In rural areas, though many children have something to do in the family household chores or farms, their economic situation were greatly lower than their parents'. Children can get land only from parents; and when a family has many children their land share will be too small. There are less livestock to distribute to children. Specially, for girls not only the size of wealth of the parents matter, but also the norms of resource transfers. They are rarely given land from parents and the other resources are relatively smaller than that of their brothers.

In general children who were deprived of education and given little resources to start a living are left with poor future, which is an indicator of intergenerational poverty transfer. And this is deeply rooted in the cultural norms that govern parent-children relationships and of course individual parent's power and choices to invest on their children.

6. Conclusion

In this paper an attempt has been made to establish the cultural norms that govern parent-child obligation and expectations as well as the trade-off between work and education in the transfer of poverty/wealth between generations. Transfer of wealth requires following many alternatives until the child really gets independence and achieves wellbeing. Poverty transmission is largely the inability to invest on the future of the child by poor people. But as it also involves parents' decisions and preference of child labour to education, non-poor people also can fail to transfer their wealth to their children. Poor parents are more likely to engage their children more in income generating activities to maintain the household, whereas non-poor parents need their children to work for the family.

Socio-economic environment, localised norms of entitlement including gender, age and birth order, besides other factors, strongly affect parental investment on education of children. Though parents and children have significant difference in their perception of parents' obligation towards developing children's future, cultural norms appear to favour the parents and there is no legal sanction which enforces children's expectations. While more parents tend to expect their children to work for family or engage in income generating activities, very few children accept it.

Norms, not only govern transfers of wealth/poverty, but also they themselves are simultaneously transmitted from parents to children. Strong family ties and interdependence between family members guarantee the transmission of poverty and values, attitudes and customs inherited from the older to the younger.

The gender and power relation within the household also are no less important. Powerful parents can alter the norms to the dis/advantage of their children. Hence, when investigating socio-culturally constructed norms, one should not underestimate the role of power relations in poverty/wealth transmission.

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