

LONG TERM PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS IN RURAL ETHIOPIA: STAGE 1

**POLICY RELEVANT RESEARCH
(FUNDED BY J-GAM)**

CONCEPT NOTE

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Mokoro Limited
87 London Road
Headington
Oxford, OX3 9AA
UK

Lead Researchers' Contacts:
Philippa Bevan pbevan@mokoro.co.uk
Catherine Dom cdom@mokoro.co.uk
Alula Pankhurst alulap@gmail.com

Abbreviations and Acronyms

DEEP	in-Depth Exploration of Ethiopian Poverty
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ELCD	Ethiopia Longitudinal Community Database
ERHS	Ethiopia Rural Household Survey
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ODA	Overseas Development Administration (DFID before 1997)
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to Eradicate Poverty
PBS	Protection of Basic Services
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Plan
WeD	Wellbeing in Developing Countries (research programme)
WIDE	Wellbeing and Illbeing Dynamics in Ethiopia

Overview

1. Over the past six years significant changes in Ethiopia include high economic growth rates, expansion in services and political and governance reforms – as well as high inflation in the latter part of the period. The impact of these changes is assessed in increasingly comprehensive ways. However, the assessment systems in place provide relatively aggregate values and trends, and impacts at the level of **rural communities** are less well understood¹. One challenge is that baseline information on rural communities is often limited so that it is difficult to understand the cumulative community level effects of the numerous decentralised government programmes instituted in the last six years. Also, the extent to which there are variations in impacts, by region, geographical area and community and by sector or issue, remains unclear.

2. In this research we address this gap. The main objective is to improve knowledge and understanding of (i) what actually happened when government policies designed at macro level and related programmes were introduced into different types of rural communities between 2003 and 2009², and (ii) why sustainable development processes have begun to take roots in some of them, but less so in others. One of the major strengths of our research is that we will study these questions in **twenty rural communities** for which extensive quantitative and qualitative databases have been produced over the past fifteen years³. In other words, we have **strong baselines** against which we can document **change since 2003** and investigate the **reasons** for change.

3. This research aims to be **policy relevant**. Our objective is to understand **longer term trends**, many of which will no doubt be positive in many respects. However, the community level differences between success cases and ones that are less so should be instructive: it should assist government (and its development partners) to identify the reasons for successes and improve policy design and implementation processes, and monitoring and evaluation systems. This research will **cut across** all policies and interventions designed at the macro level between 2003 and 2009 and relevant to rural communities, in order to take into account their mutual interactions in the way they ‘entered’ the communities. Our aim is to make the research as relevant as possible including through seeking feedback on what are seen as critical policy and implementation issues by policymakers in Ethiopia, from the outset of the research.

4. Communities are dynamic open complex social systems reproducing themselves over time and with which development interventions interact. This research will assess the extent to which **differences** in communities and their relationships with their broader environment⁴ are associated with differences in the substance and governance style of intervention implementation and in the development outcomes which can be related to the development interventions.

5. This is a **two-stage research programme**. In Stage 1 we focus on the six communities which have been researched in greatest depth and for which we have the most robust baselines, in

¹ The extent of disaggregation of the information available to policymakers has increased over time. However, most of the existing assessments stop at the *wereda* level (e.g. PSNP qualitative assessments 2006 and 2008, PBS monitoring, *wereda* benchmarking survey). Moreover, such assessments are fairly recent so that it is not possible to establish long term trends at that detailed level. This research focuses on “communities”. These were selected as Peasant Associations/kebeles in 1995. Since then, due to several restructuring some of them have been integrated into larger kebeles – but they have remained fairly distinct entities.

² This corresponds to the period of implementation of the Government SDPRP and three years into the PASDEP implementation, a period which saw an acceleration of the macro level trends mentioned above (growth etc.).

³ See Annex 1. Fifteen of the twenty communities have been studied since 1994/5 through the Ethiopian Rural Household Survey (ERHS) project with which the University of Addis Ababa has been associated. Five more communities have been added at a later stage with a view to expanding the types of livelihoods represented.

⁴ E.g. differences in livelihood system, community wealth and internal social inequality, local cultural ideas, ethnic mix, kin structures, urban-rural and other external linkages, and the quality of government-community relations.

order to optimise the validity and reliability of the analytical framework and research instruments that we will develop. Intensive fieldwork, carried out in the early part of 2010, will allow us to trace and describe in some detail the consequences of all development interventions that entered each community in the period studied (2003-09), and to identify the interacting causal mechanisms and local conditions that underpin each community's trajectory in terms of development. A report will be produced that outlines the main findings and policy implications by mid 2010 thus providing rapid feedback from the research. In this report we will also propose an initial outline of how development processes in rural communities in Ethiopia may be understood in relation to community level characteristics and processes.

6. As part of Stage 1 we will produce a **typology** of the twenty communities (based on the 2003 data)⁵, and we will refine the Stage 1 research instruments for use in communities about which less is known. In Stage 2 we will then apply the research instruments in the remaining fourteen sites. Based on this additional data we will refine and expand the conclusions drawn from Stage 1. In particular, we should be able to consolidate the proposed typology and the associated typological explanation of development processes in rural communities in Ethiopia. This will be a strong basis for the implications from the research to be taken up more widely across Ethiopian rural communities.

7. In Stage 2 we will also further develop the research instruments focused at the community level, so that they could be applied to communities about which there is no or very limited baseline. Using these instruments for a larger number of communities would enable the government to cumulate (1) spatially patterned empirical findings on development in rural communities and (2) policy relevant conclusions applicable more broadly.

Focusing on the community level through a comparative integrated case-based approach

8. In agricultural societies the policy interface between government development interventions in various areas and the society is the **community**. Policies, programmes and projects will only produce development if they lead to changes in local ideas, practices, community institutions and structures. This suggests the need to develop systems that would provide rigorous, regular, and cumulative community level information for identifying development outcomes, assessing the relevance of intervention designs and understanding how the ways in which policies and programmes are actually implemented in different community contexts affect outcomes at this level. The proposed research aims to contribute to developing such systems.

9. A key element in our thinking is that communities operate as **dynamic open complex social systems** which are spatially and historically located and which co-evolve in interaction with their neighbouring and long-range environments. They are energised by the social inter-actions of the community members. As time passes communities evolve along context-specific **trajectories**, much defined by the community's past history and current internal dynamics, but which may be disrupted or re-directed by planned or unplanned changes in their environments. Communities are organised into inter-penetrating fields of action in which community actors 'perform' and which are also domains of power (in which different types of social actor are more or less powerful). These are: the livelihoods domain, the human reproduction domain, the social reproduction domain, the community management domain and the domain of ideas.

10. We suggest that this community level reality must be taken into account for sustainable development to be put in place. Our approach is based on an understanding that development

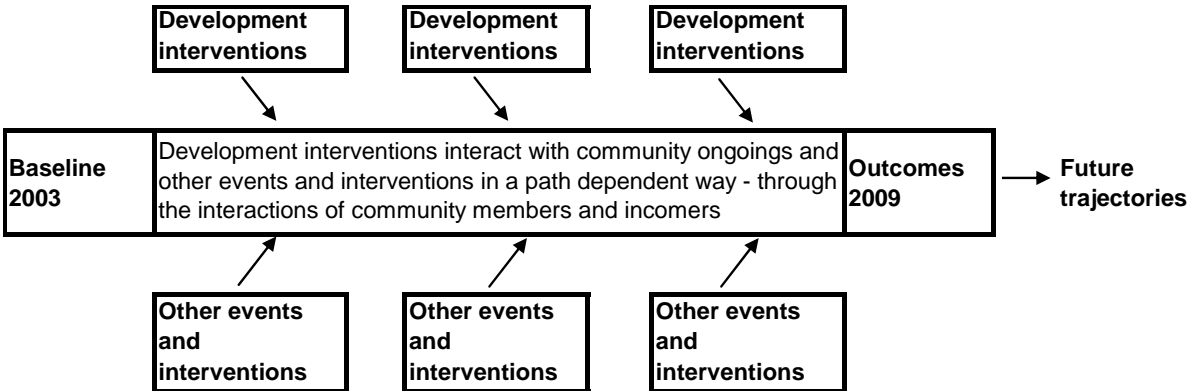
⁵ See paragraphs 16 and 17 and Annex 3 for further detail on the potential of typologies in relation to explaining particular development trajectories and outcomes for specific types of communities. For instance in our sample of twenty communities we have five broad livelihoods types, four types in relation to 'integration' etc.

interventions are designed to introduce changes in one of the community fields of action; but will affect and be affected by social inter-actions involving all the community action fields. Moreover, development interventions interact with each other. And, planned development interventions are not the only ‘things’ entering the community. Other events (e.g. drought) and interventions (some planned, others not - e.g. religious influences) matter too.

11. For this reason, we advocate research which cuts across sectors, programmes, and action fields; and which explores all interventions found within a community and the connections between them – in an integrated manner. Thus, and unlike what is being done in the context of, for instance, monitoring the effects of the Protecting Basic Service programme (in terms of social service outcomes and governance outcomes) or of the Productive Safety Net and Other Food Security programmes (in terms of enhanced food security/ households’ graduation), in this research we do not start from a programmatic/sectoral point of view. There is no pre-determined expectation about the actual outcomes found in communities, or about the mechanisms that have led to these outcomes. The research does not focus on one single sector, programme logic, development dimension, or community field of action – but on all and how they interact.

12. Our approach is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: How Development Interventions Enter Community Contexts



13. The key research questions are as follows:
- What have been the **impacts on rural communities** and their **members** of the various development interventions implemented since 2003?
 - What explains the **similarities and differences** of these impacts among communities and people of different types?
 - What were the **key processes** involved?
 - How do they fit with **government and donor theories** of how development happens?
 - What **trajectory** does each community appear to be on?

14. The fieldwork will focus on what actually happened in different types of rural community as development interventions were introduced in the different fields. The community baselines will be produced using both sample survey data and qualitative protocol-based data generated by previous research projects focusing on the communities (see Annex 1). In this research we will build on the baseline using a rigorous **protocol-based approach**, producing data which can be coded, interpreted

and analysed using qualitative software packages helping to identify patterned information⁶. Using a methodologically robust **case-based comparative approach**⁷ we will assess to what extent and in what similar and different ways changes have played out together in different types of communities⁸.

Policy relevance

15. On the basis outlined above we will identify the lessons for policy design in the different fields, and for policy implementation and practice. Past experience has shown that such a cross-cutting approach is well suited to raise policy issues not identified otherwise, as illustrated in outputs from our previous research (see Annex 2). Such insights can then be tested and validated more widely within programmes and be used to inform policy and programme design. This research will likewise provide key insights on ‘what matters for development’ at a practical level (focusing on real people and real communities) and in an integrated and context-sensitive manner. It can **complement existing instruments** used in government/donor monitoring and evaluation frameworks by providing additional data and information to **explain** trends and reasons for constraints and identify gaps or strengths of particular interventions in the particular contexts of the twenty communities.

16. The development of a **typology of communities** can then allow these **explanations to be used more broadly**. Indeed, one of the key strengths of our approach is the ability to draw on twenty ‘exemplar’ communities and, through typology development, to propose explanations (in terms of causal mechanisms underpinning particular development outcomes) that may apply beyond those. That is, explanation proposed for the communities studied, belonging to one particular type, may apply to other communities belonging to the same type that is, sharing a number of well-identified characteristics with the exemplar ones for this type. This approach relies, among others and as explained above, on the use of case comparisons (of development outcomes and causal mechanisms) to iteratively derive the proposed typology of communities and the associated typological explanations of development processes.

17. We believe that this development of a typology of communities and associated explanations should be of particular interest in Ethiopia, considering the wide diversity of communities and the necessity for policy interventions to be context-specific and adapted to different agro-ecological, socio-economic and political environments. Annex 3 provides an illustration of both (i) the diversity among the communities that we propose to research and (ii) the potential of typology development.

18. **Outputs** of the Stage One of the research will include:

- Short paper on **methodology** and research plan
- Twenty **community baseline profiles** based on earlier data as mapped out in Annex 1
- A **typology of communities** to assess likely differential effects of interventions
- Background **paper on development-related policies** introduced in the period 2003-9
- **A report** on the main findings with policy implications of the research
- **A set of research instruments** for use in communities about which little is known.

⁶ A protocol produces narrative data about the case in question; protocols can be applied in any number of cases; narrative data can be coded and quantified; types of respondent appropriate to the question are selected e.g. teacher/student/parent for questions related to education, rich/ poor for questions related to livelihoods etc.; asking the same questions of a number of people allows comparative analysis within and across communities.

⁷ Increasing interest in case-based research has led to recommended procedures for different types of cross-case comparison to produce typologies and associated explanations of change. These procedures allow to rigorously investigate similarities and differences across cases, multiple routes to the same outcome and multiple outcomes from the same intervention, studying most-likely, least-likely and crucial cases etc. We will draw on these in the analysis of the community information.

⁸ Different regions; different agriculture-based livelihood systems; different community wealth-levels and wealth trajectories; different family and kin systems; different ethnic mixes; different access to urban centres; different kinds of relationship between communities and local *wereda* officials etc.

Annex 1: The communities and the baseline database

This research will be the next phase in a panel study of rural communities which began in 1994 and which has recently been named the Ethiopia Longitudinal Community Database (ELCD). The combined databases include:

- Seven rounds of the Ethiopian Rural Household Survey 1994 – 2009 (15 communities) - conducted by the Economics Department at the University of Addis Ababa in collaboration with IFPRI and the University of Oxford
- First round of community level qualitative research 1995 – WIDE1⁹ funded by ODA/DFID (the same 15 communities)
- Second round of community level qualitative research 2003 – WIDE2 (the same 15 communities plus 5 more) as part of a multi-country research project, involving, for the Ethiopian research, the Sociology and Sociological Anthropology Department and Economics Department at the University of Addis Ababa
- In-depth integrated quantitative/qualitative research in four sites selected from the 15 and two new urban sites (June 2004 – October 2005) – DEEP, under the same research project
- In-depth qualitative research on local governance in two DEEP sites and 1 WIDE1 site (2007), supported by the Sociology and Sociological Anthropology Department at the University of Addis Ababa

Some of the data has been used in a range of policy-related papers.

The twenty sites covered as just explained are listed in Table 1 below. They are found on the attached map. The Stage 1 of the research will focus on the six highlighted sites, that is:

- Yetmen and Dinki in Amhara
- Turufe Kecheme and Korodegaga in Oromia
- Geblen in Tigray
- Imdibir in SNNP

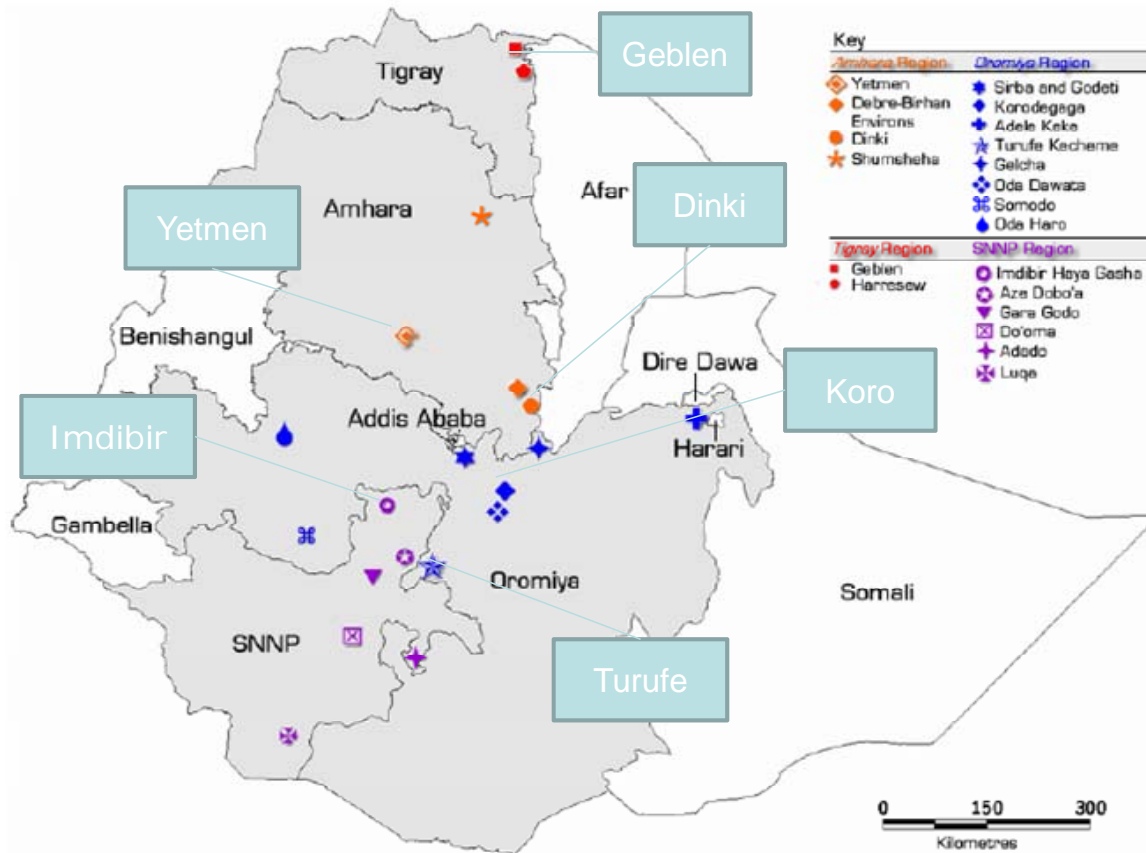
Table 1: WIDE3 Sites by *Woreda*, Zone and Region

	Site	Wereda	Zone	Region
1	Adado	Bule	Gedeo	SNNP
2	Adele Keke	Kersa	East Harerghe	Oromia
3	Odadawata	Tiyo	Arssi	Oromia
4	Aze Debo'a	Kedida Gamela	Kembata, Alaba and Timbaro	SNNP
5	Oda Haro	Bako Tibe	West Shewa	Oromia
6	Debre Berhan	Debre Berhan Zuria	North Shewa	Amhara
7	Dinki	Ankober	North Shewa	Amhara
8	Do'omaa	Dera Malo	North Omo (Gamo)	SNNP
9	Gara Godo	Bolosso	North Omo (Wolayitta)	SNNP
10	Geblen	Saesie Tsaeda Emba	Eastern Zone Tigray	Tigray
11	Harresaw	Atsbi	Eastern Zone, Tigray	Tigray
12	Imdibir Haya Gasha	Cheha	Gurage	SNNP
13	Gelcha	Fentale	East Shewa	Oromia
14	Korodegaga	Dodota	Arssi	Oromia
15	Shumsheha	Bugna	North Wollo	Amhara
16	Sirbana Godeti	Ada'a	Shewa	Oromia
17	Somodo	Mana	Jimma	Oromia
18	Luqa	Hamer	South Omo	SNNP
19	Turufe Kecheme	Shashemene	Eastern Shewa	Oromia
20	Yetmen	Enemay	East Gojjam	Amhara

⁹ WIDE is the acronym we use for Wellbeing and Illbeing Dynamics in Ethiopia.

Map 1: WIDE3 sites in their administrative Regions

The research communities



Annex 2: Key Insights from Previous ELCD Research

Below are a number of ‘stylised’ insights from the previous research done on the twenty communities, similarly following the community-focused cross-cutting (non-programmatic and non-sectoral) and integrated (qualitative and quantitative) approach that we propose to use in this research. Many of the issues raised here will be included in those on which WIDE 3 will focus:

- **Livelihood systems affect growth patterns:** sites with main livelihoods based on international cash crops and those relying on *enset* seem to have fared less well between 1994 and 2004 than sites that were drought-prone and those producing cereals for local markets.¹⁰
- **Power matters:** Local power relations act as filters and affect how interventions are interpreted and implemented and who benefits most and least.¹¹
- **Governance matters.** How policies are implemented and how people at a local level understand and respond to them and to the way they are implemented varies and affects outcomes¹².
- **Rural-urban linkages affect growth.** Sites with greater linkages to urban areas are able to exploit opportunities for growth.¹³
- **Genderage and status affect outcomes:** Personal and collective agency and ability to benefit from interventions is affected by gender, age, wealth, ethnicity, religion and other locally salient statuses.¹⁴
- **Household cycles and types are correlated with extreme poverty.** Households that do not get onto or fall off the culturally-defined ideal cycle due to infertility, divorce, death, etc are more likely to be among the extreme poor¹⁵.
- Variations in the economic, political and cultural dimensions of community contexts dramatically affect the starting points, journeys, and life quality outcomes of **adolescents in transition to adulthood**. For example, young adults (25-30) in urban and peri-urban communities are much less likely to have achieved the adult milestones of marriage, independent household, and one or more children than those in rural communities¹⁶.

¹⁰ See Bevan and Pankhurst 2008. A Sociological Perspective on the Causes of Economic Poverty and Inequality in Ethiopia. www.wed-ethiopia.org.

¹¹ See WeD Briefings ‘Power Structures, Agency and Community Dynamics in Rural Ethiopia: A Research-based Policy Brief: September 2007. www.wed-ethiopia.org.

¹² See Catherine Dom ‘Hunger, food aid and local governance in three rural communities in Ethiopia: an exploration of the relationship between governance, state building and poverty reduction’, September 2007. www.wed-ethiopia.org.

¹³ See WeD Briefings on Migration and Rural Urban Linkages in Ethiopia: Briefing 1: Research, November 2006, Briefing 2: Policy, February 2007. www.wed-ethiopia.org.

¹⁴ See Philippa Bevan and Alula Pankhurst ‘Power Structures and Personal Agency in Rural Ethiopia: Lessons for the Empowerment Agenda from Four Community Case Studies’. World Bank Poverty Reduction Group.

¹⁵ See Pankhurst and Bevan 2007. ‘Unequal structures, unbuffered shocks, and undesirable strategies: quantitatively – informed qualitative investigations into the causes of extreme poverty in rural Ethiopia in 2004’ www.wed-ethiopia.org.

¹⁶ See Bevan, 2009 ‘Towards more effective policies for African Youth: a political-cultural-economy analysis of youth transitions in Ethiopia’ Powerpoint Presentation at the Young Lives International Conference, *Breaking the Cycle of Poverty*, March 2009 (available from author).

- **Government and donor policy papers contain a long list of mostly implicit and untheorised causal explanations of Ethiopia’s poverty to back up particular policy proposals**¹⁷. A policy is more likely to lead to the desired change if it is based on an explicit theory of the causal processes expected to link the intervention to the desired outcome.
- The combination of safety nets and food security may **not lead to graduation** for vulnerable types of households.¹⁸
- **Social shocks** related to divorce, death, and health can prevent vulnerable households from repaying loans and result in distress asset sales and **impoverishment cycles**¹⁹.

¹⁷ Bevan and Pankhurst 2008 op cit.

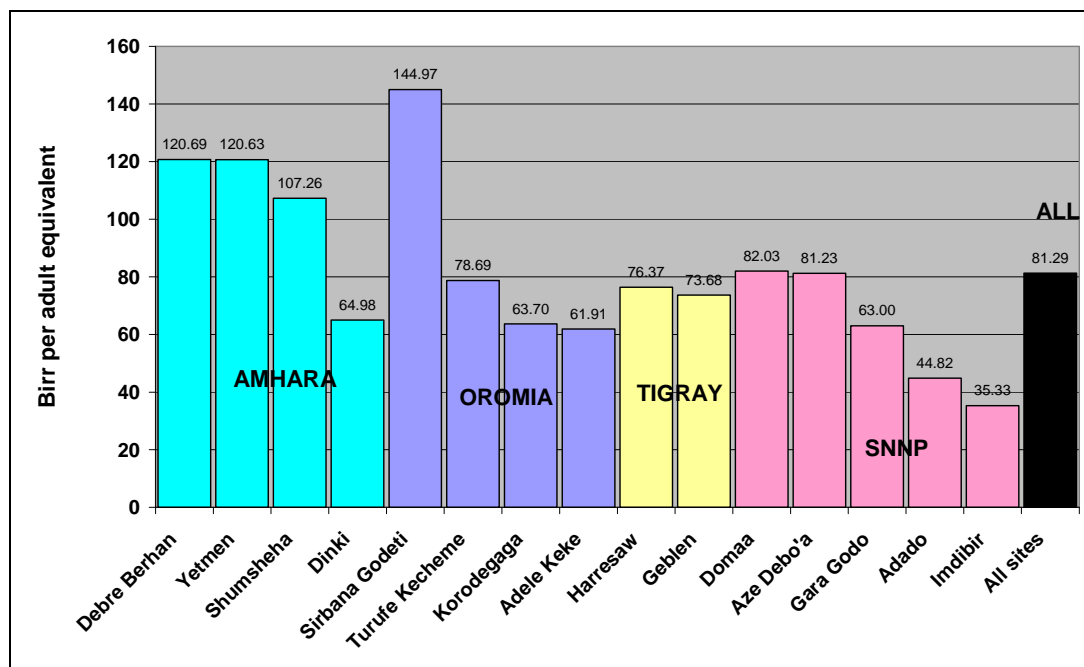
¹⁸ See Alula Pankhurst ‘Rethinking Safetynets and Household Vulnerability in Ethiopia: Implications of Household Cycles, Types and Shocks’. World Conference of Humanitarian Studies, Groningen, February 2009.

¹⁹ See Alula Pankhurst ‘Tigray Region Poverty Monitoring Complementary Approach: Revised Summary Report on Field Results from the protocol on human and livestock deaths, chronic illness and implications for credit repayment’, June 2009.

Annex 3: The potential of a community typology²⁰

Figure 2 shows – as one development outcome – the different levels of wealth found in the communities (wealth is measured by the community-level average per adult-equivalent consumption in *birr*).

Figure 2: Average community consumption wealth 2004



These communities represent a mix with similarities and differences along a number of variables which we expect to underpin causal mechanisms leading to specific development outcomes. These include (and in brackets are the numbers of communities, among the twenty, belonging to each type in the typology):

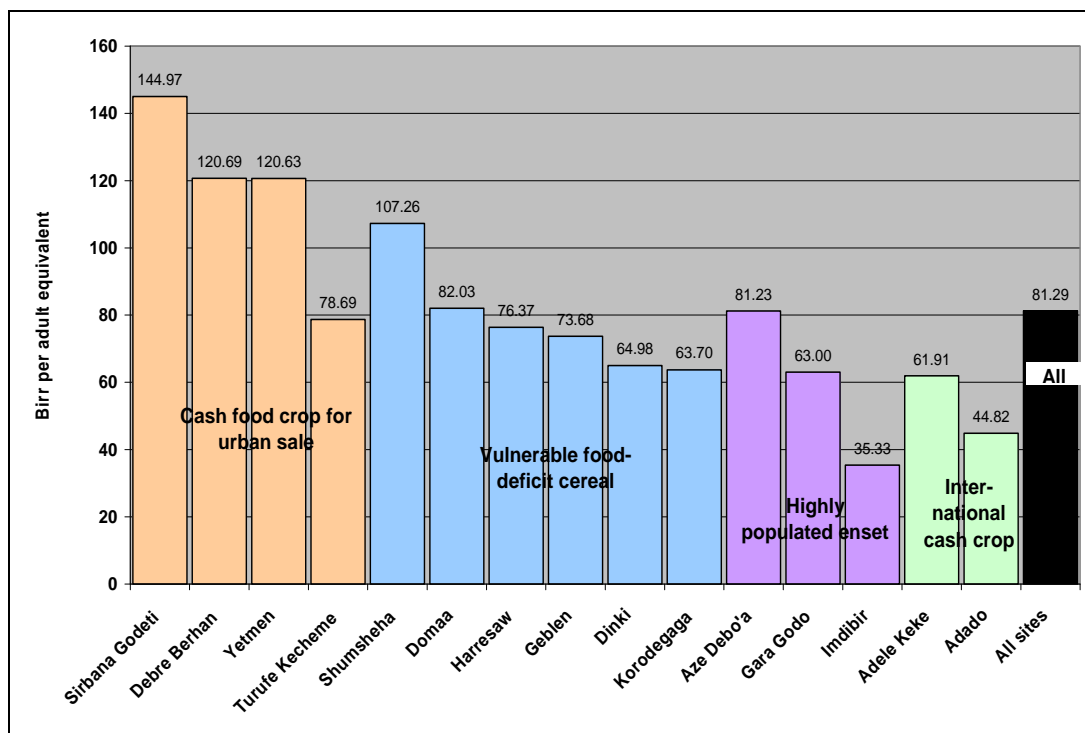
- Regional variations in policy and implementation: SNNP (6), Oromia (8), Amhara (4), Tigray (2)
- Variations in livelihood systems: Vulnerable cereal (6), Vulnerable enset (3), Food cash crop exported from community (7), International cash crop (2), Pastoralist in transition (2)
- Urban linkages – markets, services, information: Very remote (2), Remote (8), Relatively integrated (6); Peri-urban (4)
- In PSNP weredas: 10 in, 10 out
- Variations in community cultures: Ethnic and religious homogeneity (14), Two ethnic/religious groups (3), Heterogeneous (3)

As an illustration, Figure 3 shows how the type of livelihood (main productive activities, access to market) correlates with greater or lower average community wealth: the communities producing cash food crop for sale in urban areas were generally better-off, whereas the communities relying on international cash crop were less wealthy than the vulnerable food-deficit cereals²¹.

²⁰ Figure 2 and Figure 3 draw on the Ethiopian Rural Household Survey (ERHS) 2004 Round, covering fifteen of the twenty communities. See Annex 1 for a detailed explanation of the data coverage for each community.

²¹ We would investigate this further in this research, but the trend for the vulnerable cereal sites may reflect the effects of the government Productive Safety Net Programme and Other Food Security Programme.

Figure 3: Community consumption wealth for different livelihood systems (2004)



Source: Figures from Porter and Dercon 2007, based on ERHS 2004

Although the full potential of the typological approach will only arise on completion of the two stages of the research, thus having covered the twenty sites, the six communities selected for Stage 1 already represent an interesting mix along the variables identified above, which should enable us to test and refine the initial typology proposed above. This is illustrated in Table 2 below which highlights selected characteristics of the Stage 1 six communities.

Table 2: Selected Characteristics of the Six Stage 1 Sites

Name	Region	Accessibility	Livelihoods system	PSNP status	Ethnic/religious mix
Dinki	Amhara	Very remote	Vulnerable cereal	No	Two groups
Yetmen	Amhara	Relatively integrated	Food cash crop	No	Homogeneous
Korodegaga	Oromia	Remote	Vulnerable cereal	Yes	Homogeneous
Turufe K	Oromia	Peri-urban	Food cash crop	No	Heterogeneous
Geblen	Tigray	Very remote	Vulnerable cereal	Yes	Two groups
Imdibir	SNNP	Relatively integrated	Vulnerable enset	No	Homogeneous