

**Cultural Constructions of 'Wellbeing' in Rural Ethiopia:  
Competing Local Models under Pressure**

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## 1. Introduction <sup>1</sup>

In the WeD proposal the purpose of the research was described as the development of a conceptual and methodological framework for understanding the social and cultural construction of wellbeing in specific societies. In pursuit of this purpose in the Ethiopia context, where we used a ‘core cases’ approach (McGregor, 2007: 344) we found it useful in the first instance to develop separate frameworks to design research instruments and interpret and analyse data relating to (1) cultural constructions of ‘wellbeing’, or normative evaluations about how people *ought to live*, and (2) social constructions of ‘life quality’, or the structures, actions and dynamics which underpin the unequal patterns of how they *actually do live*. The interaction of these two power-related dimensions of social life in community settings is key to the trajectories of local regimes in terms of reproduction and/or change. Three empirical questions are important for the paper. In what ways are normative evaluations about how people ought to live related to how they actually do live? How are local wellbeing repertoires contributing to reproduction or change in socially constructed unequal patterns of life quality? How and why are structures, agents and interactions involved in the re/production and dissemination of cultural repertoires establishing how people ought to live? Finally, what conclusions can be drawn for an international development agenda which has improvements in ‘wellbeing’ as a goal?

In this paper I make a start at addressing these questions<sup>2</sup>. First I describe the analytic framework and the database (Section 2) and provide some information about activities and patterns of household life quality in the four research sites (Section 3). Section 4 describes two internal ideal-type local repertoires of ideas available to community members in the research sites: a local conservative repertoire and a local modernising repertoire. Section 5 describes four ideological repertoires which have been brought to the communities by ‘cultural entrepreneurs’ with the intent of changing the ‘preferences’<sup>3</sup> of community members: new religious doctrines, repertoires of belonging, government repertoires, and donor/NGO repertoires. In this section I describe what each of the repertoires has to say about how structures should be organised and different kinds of people should act in relation to livelihoods, human re/production, community governance, and the dissemination of ideas. I then go on to compare the repertoires in terms of the logical in/compatibilities in assumptions about personal and collective wellbeing which are implicit in them (Section 6). I then describe the forms which local socio-cultural struggles over ideas of wellbeing are taking in each of the four communities (Section 7). In the conclusion I consider how this analysis contributes to the development of answers to the four questions posed above.

## 2. Analytic framework and database

The theoretical approach underpinning the study of the communities in Ethiopia comes from the perspective known as ‘critical realism’ (e.g. Archer *et al*: 1998), particularly the understandings of structure, culture, and agency, and the analytic relationships between them developed by Margaret Archer in a series of linked books (1995, 1996, 2000, 2003, 2004). Figure 1, which makes use of Archer’s insight that the analytic link between structure, culture and agency is ‘time’, posits that, in any community, at a point in time, it is possible to identify a power structure, involving material resource use, relationships and institutions, a culture involving a set of ideas which may be more or less compatible, and a set of social actors of different genders and ages with embodied features. Structures involve material positions which are always unequally distributed, different roles, institutions or the rules and norms which are operative in allowing and constraining interaction<sup>4</sup>, and social relationships between positions and roles.

Cultures as systems of meaning entail histories and as such are characterised by path dependence. They are dynamic social products, with internal processes of contestation and reproduction and external processes of adaptation to other cultures and systems of values. Societies and their cultures are constantly in flux; meanings are contested; and people in all societies frequently

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<sup>1</sup> This paper could not have been written without the co-operative efforts of the WeD team generally ([www.welldev.org.uk](http://www.welldev.org.uk)) and the WeD Ethiopia team in particular ([www.wed-ethiopia.org](http://www.wed-ethiopia.org)). The various contributions of Alula Pankhurst have been particularly important, especially the incorporation in this paper of ideas developed in a recently written joint paper (2007). The support of the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is gratefully acknowledged. The work was part of the programme of the ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries.

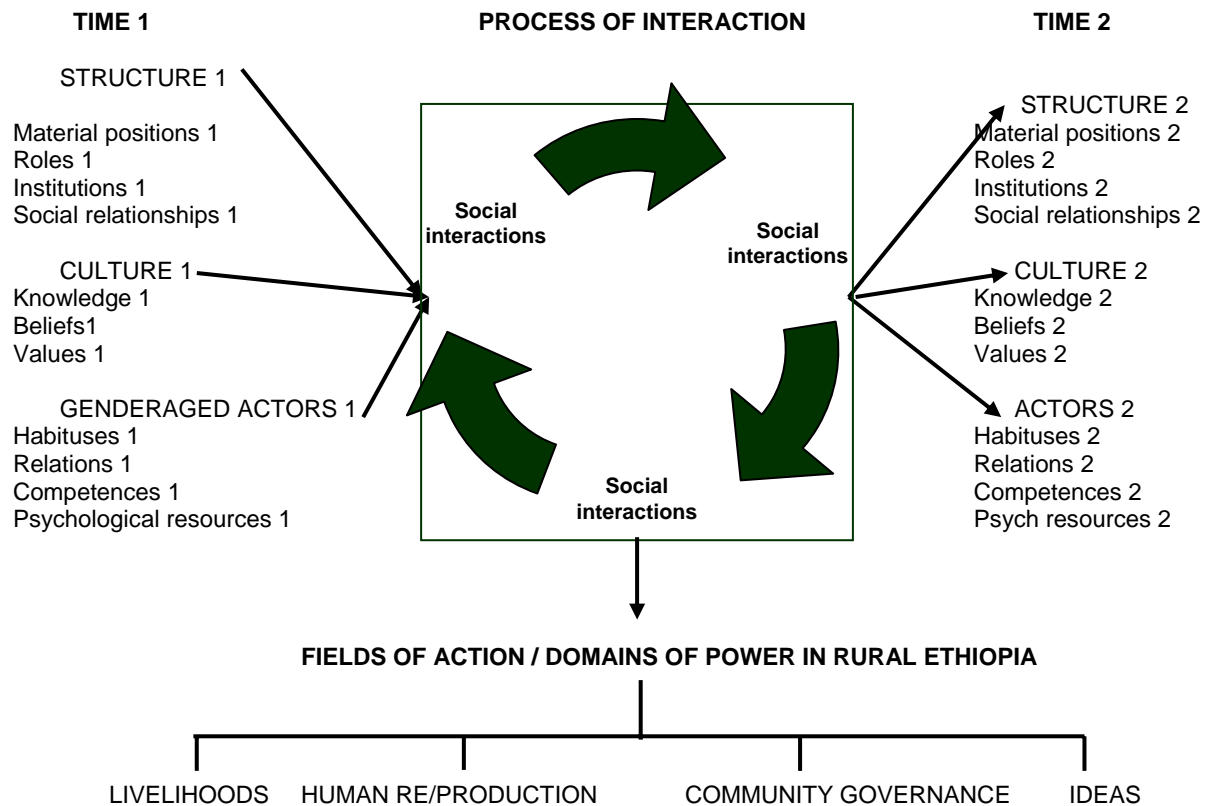
<sup>2</sup> They will be pursued further using data that has not yet been looked at.

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Stern, ex-Chief Economist of the World Bank, has recently argued that development involves the changing of preferences (Stern *et al*, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Rules and norms are related to beliefs about what people should do and how they should do it; I am considering them as ‘parts’ of structures rather than culture because they are related to practices of enforcement.

engage in the renegotiation of meaning in their efforts to address new challenges.’ ( McGregor, 2007: 328)

**FIGURE 1: STRUCTURE-CULTURE-AGENCY FRAMEWORK**



While ideas are features of the cultural system they are also embodied in people as part of their ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, e.g. 1977, López and Scott, 2000), which potentially have moral, cognitive and emotional dimensions and arise from the human *need for meaning*. Damaging events and relational failures during childhood can lead to habitus damaged in one or more of these dimensions. The same is true for the other three human needs identified here in relation to which people may embody resources or liabilities: internalised relational commitments, or their absence, associated with the *need for relation*, in/competences such as ill/health and levels of strength or skill related to the *need for competence*, and psychological resources/liabilities related to the *need for autonomy* and ‘critical autonomy’ (Doyal and Gough: 1991) but also to ‘hope, vitality and confidence’ (Ryan and Sapp, 2007: 73) or their opposites. These embodiments of human resources or liabilities are the outcome of past interactions. Social actors, differently located in the power structures, influenced by the ideas they hold, and using their current embodied resources/liabilities engage in processes of interaction with other social actors which have consequences in terms of reproduction or change for the structure, the culture and the ‘embodiments’ of all the actors involved. In ‘joined-up’ time iterative interactions between power structures and social actors are ongoing, and, depending on the content of the interaction, involve shorter or longer structured ‘episodes’ which confirm or change current outcomes.

Figure 1 also posits that, in rural Ethiopia, the important processes of interaction take place in four fields of action, or domains of power: the livelihood field of action; the field of action where human beings are produced and socialised and reproduced on a daily basis; the community governance field of action; and the field of action where ideas are generated and disseminated. People of different genders, ages, wealths and social origins face different opportunities and constraints in each of the fields of action, and bring to them different embodied human resource/liability profiles developed through their life experiences thus far. In the paper the focus is on the field of ideas where models of wellbeing implicit in wider cultural repertoires are promoted and negotiated. In this field of action we have identified two kinds of cultural repertoire to which all community members have access and which some community members actively promote: local repertoires and ideological repertoires (Bevan and Pankhurst, 2007). Using an ‘ideal type’ approach to the data we identified two types of local repertoire, conservative and modernising, and identified variants of four ideal-type ideological repertoires for

each of the diverse communities, associated with religious doctrines, discourses of belonging based on 'ethnic', regional or historic national identities, government practices, and donor/NGO discourses. Notions of wellbeing are also potentially influenced by 'global repertoires' of ideas from other parts of the world accessible through international media and/or diasporic links.

Archer argues that two independent processes are involved in the 'Cultural System' and what happens in each is important for the 'elaboration' (reproduction or change) of the system. There may be logical contradictions among the ideas which constitute the system; once exposed, which they may not be, these have the potential to produce interactions leading to cultural change. Independently there may be socio-cultural struggles over ideas and their control. The logical compatibility of ideas related to wellbeing in the seven cultural repertoires is considered in Section 7, and the socio-cultural struggles taking place in each research site in Section 8.

The interpretation and analysis for this paper has made use of data made using the following components of the WeD suite of research instruments: the resources and needs survey, the exploratory quality of life module, the community profiles, the structures module, and a number of protocols from the process research. In general we have adopted a case-based approach to the making and interpretation of the integrated qualitative and quantitative data (Bevan 2008, Byrne and Ragin, 2008, Byrne 2004) linking the multi-level nested cases of people, in households, in communities and in country in global context.

### **3. The four 'exemplar' informal security regimes**

#### **The communities**

Patterns of objective, relative and subjective individual life quality and collective life quality at different levels of organisation can be conceptualised as 'wellbeing outcomes' within a welfare or wellbeing regime framework (Gough, Wood *et al*, 2004; Newton, 2006). Ethiopia's country welfare regime is best characterised as informal-insecure, although it has very small pockets of 'liberal' market services and formal sector fringe benefit provision, and the state, with donor support, is increasingly active in providing economic development services, productivist human development services, and social protection against famine. Insecure local regimes<sup>5</sup> driven by violence are found in the pastoral peripheries in the Afar and Somali Regions and the south of the Oromo and Southern Regions. There is also sporadic violence in the small regions to the west which border on Sudan: Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz.

The majority of Ethiopians live in 'informal security regimes' in the highlands and on the escarpments to the Rift Valley with more or less government productivist and/or social protection contribution depending on circumstances including remoteness and need. The main causes of insecurity and illbeing in these regimes are scarce collective resources, risky environments, life processes, local competition for scarce resources, and unequal hierarchical structures supported by cultural values and beliefs. The main solutions are kin-based social exchanges, 'opportunity-hoarding' on the basis of claims to superior social identity, community organisation of various kinds, and government services whose provision is patchy, although the 'welfare mix' involves a potentially larger set of players and institutions some of which are international. Such regimes can be found in communities across the rural and small-town areas of the four 'established' regions in Ethiopia: Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and SNNP, in parts of the four 'emergent' regions of Afar, Somali, Gambella and Beneshangul Gumuz, and in the informal sectors of larger towns. These local communities vary in ethnic and religious composition and the extent to which they are connected to government. They are organised through hierarchies based on gender, age, household wealth, and locally salient status.

The four case study sites are Yetmen and Dinki in Amhara Region and Turufe Kecheme and Korodegaga in Oromia Region. All have livelihoods based on own-account farming. Yetmen and Turufe Kecheme are surplus-producing sites, close to major roads and relatively<sup>6</sup> well connected to markets and government services. Yetmen is situated in the highlands of Gojjam and contains a very small town, while Turufe Kecheme is on the southern edge of the Rift Valley close to the rapidly growing town of Shashemene. Yetmen is the wealthier site.

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<sup>5</sup> Insecurity in insecure regimes results from political contention where violent conflict produces and reproduces insecurity, suffering and death, as political and military leaders mobilise followers to fight for control of land, natural resources including oil, diamonds and other mineral resources and/or the state, often on the basis of socially-constructed 'primordial' identities of ethnicity, clan and/or religion. In such contexts many ordinary people do not survive; those that do seek security by participating in the fighting, seeking patrons among the warring factions, or by migrating, sometimes to refugee camps supported by international humanitarian aid.

<sup>6</sup> Compared with many developing countries our 'integrated' communities are quite remote; on the other hand our remote communities are relatively integrated compared with many Ethiopian communities.

In both these sites there are some opportunities for off-farm own-account work and employment, predominantly as coping strategies. 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, although farmers in both sites have recently entered local vegetable markets using irrigation, and weaving and spinning (Dinki) and firewood selling (Korodegaga) are regular off-farm coping strategies.

**Table 1: The Case Study Communities**

	Amhara Region	Oromia Region
Food-surplus and relatively integrated	Yetmen <i>homogenous</i>	Turufe Kecheme <i>ethnic mix</i>
Remote drought-prone and food-deficit	Dinki <i>ethnic mix</i>	Korodegaga <i>homogenous</i>

The sites can be considered as ‘exemplars’ of different types of rural Amhara and Oromia communities as shown in Table 1. One of the sites in each region exemplifies cash-crop surplus-producing market-integrated livelihood systems which are targets of the government’s ADL<sup>7</sup>I strategy; the Amhara site is almost completely ethnically and religiously homogenous (Amhara, Orthodox Christian) while the Oromia site contains a mix of eight ethnic groups and four religions. The other sites in each region are poorer and more remote and peripheral; both are close to pastoralist communities. They exemplify drought-prone, deficit-producing, food-aid dependent livelihood systems with irrigation potential which has been patchily utilised over the years since the 1960s. The Oromia site is almost completely ethnically and religiously homogenous (Arssi Oromo, Muslim), while the Amhara site contains two ethnic groups: Amhara who are mostly Orthodox Christians and Argobba who are all Muslims.

Rural communities in Ethiopia are organised through hierarchies based on gender, age, household wealth, and locally salient status related to ‘primordial’ social origin. Education and personal abilities also play roles. These hierarchies are associated with different embodied agency profiles and differently structured opportunities and constraints in the four fields of action for people of differing social statuses. In all sites somewhat over half the population is under twenty. Children are usually expected to start working for the household from the age of about six. Apart from those who are ‘too young to work’, ‘too old to work’ or chronically ill or disabled, household members are active in one or more of the four fields of action: livelihood production, human re/production, community governance, and the dissemination of ideas. Heads of tax-paying and land-holding households are expected to ‘participate’ in ‘government community governance’<sup>8</sup> by attending meetings and providing household labour for community work. A few, predominantly men, hold office in the *kebele* and its *encadrement* sub-structures. Some men and a few women are active as leaders in ‘local community governance’. Both men and women may participate in local organisations such as burial associations, in the richer sites ROSCAs, and among the Amhara monthly religious feasting groups. Men and women also invest time, energy and resources in maintaining social networks based on kinship, neighbourhood and/or friendship. Some men and women in particular cultural roles devote time to practising and disseminating cultural repertoires in which they believe. These may be rooted in conservative or radical approaches to the Christian or Islamic religions, customary spiritual practices, political ideologies of various kinds, or modern ideas related to education and science.

### Household wealth

In a recent paper using the data (Bevan and Pankhurst, 2007) we identified household wealth, salient social origin and ‘genderage’, as key variables underpinning patterns of household and individual life quality. Most

<sup>7</sup> Agricultural Development Led Industrialisation.

<sup>8</sup> We have identified two community governance structures, one rooted in the community, and one brought into it by top-down government activity (Bevan and Pankhurst, 2007).

females are only competent in the domestic field and in the livelihood field those farming activities and coping strategy activities assigned to females and have restricted opportunities beyond these fields. Given problematic shortages of land, livelihood opportunities for young men are restricted. Ethnic, clan and occupational hierarchies are also related to differential opportunities. However, the most important cause of poor household and individual life quality is household poverty, which cross-cuts gender, age and social origin; 'the poor' are a diverse set of people. While from an 'objective' internationally comparative perspective most residents of the four research communities would be considered as 'poor', really poor and destitute people live miserable lives while the style of life of the wealthy may be relatively comfortable. Table 2 shows that there are marked internal inequalities in access to material productive resources. To construct these figures we used various sources of information from respondents to identify key mixes of productive resources in each of the sites which led to different degrees of wealth/poverty (Bevan and Pankhurst, 2007). These figures reflect *relative poverty* within each site and should not be used to compare households across sites (settable 3). They show that in the three sites there is a small group of very rich households and that across the sites 15-20% of households are rich in local productive assets. Between 41% and 47% fall into a middle category of households doing 'fairly well' or 'getting by' (40-47%), while the category of 'the poor' amounts to 33-40%.

	<b>Dinki</b>		<b>Korodegaga</b>		<b>Turufe Kecheme</b>		<b>Yetmen</b>	
<i>Wealth</i>	%	<i>Cum %</i>	%	<i>Cum %</i>	%	<i>Cum %</i>	%	<i>Cum %</i>
Very rich	7.1	100	2.4	100	8.8	100	tba	
Rich	12.4	92.9	12.9	97.6	9.2	91.2		
Upper Middle	26.0	80.5	9.8	84.7	19.2	82.0		
Lower Middle	20.7	54.5	31.0	74.9	21.6	62.8		
Poor	11.8	33.8	30.6	43.9	24.0	41.2		
Very poor	14.8	22.0	3.9	13.3	10.8	17.2		
Destitute	7.1	7.1	9.4	9.4	6.4	6.4		

Source: RANS

In addition to this structural poverty found in all sites a major cause of transitory poverty in the remote sites is regular harvest failure which in very bad years affects everyone making it hard to accumulate assets. Table 3 shows that people in the integrated sites, particularly Yetmen, are richer in household reproductive assets than those in the remote sites with Korodegaga residents being particularly poor.

	<b>Amhara</b>	<b>Oromia</b>
Integrated	Yetmen 4.59	Turufe Kecheme 3.11
Remote	Dinki 2.57	Korodegaga 1.61

Households use a mix of material, social, cultural, and political resources in pursuit of livelihoods and 'wealth' and 'poverty' in each of these areas tend to go together. The productive wealth of a household not only determines life style and the life quality of members in the reproductive field, it is also a status marker contributing to the quality of the collective agency of the household in other fields of community action, community management and cultural struggle. In the next section we concentrate on cultural resources and liabilities.

### **Salient social origin**

These include ethnicity, religion, clan, lineage, occupational 'caste', former slaves, and 'natives' and 'immigrants'. Ethnicity and religion are important features of social identity, and as shown below, have their own ideological repertoires of ideas related to wellbeing. Our sites are in two regions: Amhara and Oromia. Two of the sites are relatively homogenous in ethnic terms and 'representative' of their respective regions which in theory are ethnically based: Yetmen is overwhelmingly Amhara and Korodegaga overwhelmingly Oromo. The two other sites are more diverse: Dinki has both Argobba (60 percent) and Amhara (40 percent), and Turufe has a majority of Oromo (57 percent), and migrant minorities from the South (Wolayta 10%, Kambata 6%, Hadiya

4%, Gurage 5%) representing about a quarter of the population and northern migrants (Amhara-Tigraway) about 17 percent.

	Remote				Integrated				All sites	
	Korodegaga		Dinki		Turufe Kecheme		Yetmen			
	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No
<b>Oromo</b>	99.6%	244			57.1%	140	0.4%	1	43.3%	385
<b>Amara</b>	0.4%	1	36.4%	60	7.8%	19	99.6%	233	35.2%	313
<b>Argobba</b>			63.6%	105					11.8%	105
<b>Gurage</b>					5.7%	14			1.6%	14
<b>Hadiya</b>					2.9%	7			0.8%	7
<b>Kembata</b>					5.3%	13			1.5%	13
<b>Sidama</b>					0.4%	1			0.1%	1
<b>Silte</b>					0.4%	1			0.1%	1
<b>Tigrayan</b>					9.8%	24			2.7%	24
<b>Wolayta</b>					10.2%	25			2.8%	25
<b>Sodo</b>					0.4%	1			0.1%	1
	100%	245	100%	165	100%	245	100%	234	100%	889
	<b>Homogenous</b>		<b>Ethnic mix</b>		<b>Ethnic mix</b>		<b>Homogenous</b>			

In terms of power relations ethnicity has been important mainly in the two heterogeneous sites. In Dinki the Amhara landlords who came from the highlands in the imperial times obtained land and the Argobba tended to be looked down on. During the Derg period the Argobba as well as Amhara tenants gained access to land. During the EPRDF period the Argobba were 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 have slightly lower averages than the Amhara.

In Turufe Kecheme the migrant groups particularly those from the North and especially those from Tigray gained economic power in the imperial period through exploiting larger land-holdings and involvement in trade. The migrants' superiority continued during the Derg period with the Kembata, who had a strong political position, becoming particularly active in the Derg regime. In 1991 at the time of the change of government the Oromo gained the ascendancy and most of 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 (1998-2000), and very few have remained. Several of the few traders are Tigrayan or Amhara. However, positions in the *Kebele* Administration are fully controlled by the Oromo. Some migrant labourers have faced discrimination or employers not honouring payments, and there were attempts to restrict or ban migrant labourers. The migrant groups have been uneasy about their status, and the northerners in particular feared expulsions if the EPRDF lost power in the 2005 elections. Although expulsions have not taken place they express feelings of insecurity, and some have adopted a strategy of sending their offspring to live, study and work in local towns and in Addis Ababa.

In Korodegaga in 1994 the only ethnic group living in the site were Oromo. In 2005 there were about 30 migrant labourers, mostly young men, who worked in groups of four or more on the land rented and irrigated by the investors. Most of them were Amharas from Wello (Northern Ethiopia) and some from Eastern Shewa, and there were also some Wolayta. They came into the community alone without any family members and lived in temporary tent-like houses which they built around the irrigated farms of the investors who rented the land from the locals. Some of these labourers also rented land from local farmers and produced vegetable cash crops. There were also a few share-cropper migrant labourers. The investors said they preferred to employ migrant labourers because they believe them to be hard-workers and well-experienced in irrigation work. There was no strong social interaction between the migrants and locals, but there were some conflicts. Local people accused them of raping their daughters and introducing bad habits like drinking.

Historic conflicts with neighbouring ethnic groups were reported from Korodegaga and Dinki, although the regular Korodegaga conflicts with Jille pastoralists are said to be a thing of the past. In Dinki both Amhara and Argobba consider the Afar to be traditional enemies involving regular armed conflicts in market places such as Dulecha, Zuti and Senbete and some theft of cattle and camels.

There is a correlation between ethnicity and religion but it is not perfect. 19% of Amhara are not Orthodox

Christians and 24% of Oromo are not Muslims. The Argobba are all Muslims while all four religious are covered by the ethnic groups from SNNP in Turufe Kecheme.

TABLE 5: RELIGIOUS MIX					
	Remote		Integrated		All sites
	Korodegaga	Dinki	Turufe Kecheme	Yetmen	
	%	%	%	%	%
Islam	98.9	65.8	44.2		52.5
Orthodox Christian	1.1	34.2	34.4	99.5	41.5
Protestant sect			18.5	0.5	5.3
Catholic			2.9		0.8
	Homogenous	Ethnic mix	Ethnic mix	Homogenous	

Many people of Korodegaga say that they are Arssi and, at the same time, Oromo because they are Muslims. They consider the non-Muslim population of the Oromo as 'Amhara' which to them means Christianised Oromo.

As one female informant puts it, 'the Amhara [to mean the Christian Oromo of Eastern Shewa] like their stomach; on market days both men and women enter hotels to eat food and to drink beers and Katikala; women are not afraid to enjoy the company of men. However, the Arssi do not give much attention to their stomach; they prefer to sell their farm outputs and livestock to the Amhara to consume at home; and women are culturally forbidden to enjoy themselves with men in hotels.' Thus, we can understand from the above description that people call themselves Arssi in order to differentiate themselves from the rest of the Oromo population. During the *Derg* regime the local governments said that, 'all Arssi Muslims and Shewa Oromo must be called by the name of 'Oromo'. Arssi is the name of the region.' So some Muslims have accepted this concept but others still believe 'we are Arssi'. Research Officer, Korodegaga

Clanship is very important for the Oromo Arssi in Korodegaga and Turufe Kecheme, with certain clans claiming superior status, respect or precedence, numerical predominance, prior land rights or precedence in the *gada* age grading institution in the area. The significance of clanship has declined but it is still important in murder cases, with group responsibility for blood compensation payments, and also to some extent for bridewealth payments

#### BOX 1: ARSSI OROMO CLANS

##### From Turufe Kecheme:

The Oromo groups in Turufe Kecheme are members of the *Weyrera*, *Se'emana*, and *Gomora* clans which are patrilineal. The land [is said to] belong to the *Weyrera* group. Members of the *Se'emana* and *Gomora* groups live in the *kebele* mixed with the *Weyrera* without having [prior] territorial claims...In order to wield power in the PA one has to be liked and respected within the clan lineage. Being a member of a respected lineage, for example *Amannu* which is the dominant lineage within the *Weyrera* clan is an important factor for gaining power in the PA. With the support of a strong lineage one can accomplish any objective in the PA. During elections people tend to elect their clan members and people from their lineage; the clan or lineage whose members are a majority have the possibility of dominating the PA.

**From Korodegaga:** There are thirteen clans (*gosa*) in the community... The *Sebro* is the largest in terms of population and dominant in terms of economic power and social and kin networks. ... *Ogodu* is the most discriminated clan because people say that members of this clan are extravagant and harsh in time of conflict. They call them *laffee gogogdu* ('dried bones') which shows the extent of the people's hatred towards them. *Gulele* is also not liked by many people. Members of this clan migrated to the area from Eastern Shewa in the past few decades. Thus, they do not belong to the Arssi Oromo. Moreover they are Christian in religion while all the rest are Arssi and Muslim.

Though belonging to descent groups is no longer the relevant social distinction it used to be in imperial times in Amhara societies, in Yetmen individuals can sometimes gain access to land through close maternal as well as paternal relatives and disputes, particularly murder cases, can involve family feuds.

In all sites there are also small minorities involved in non-farming occupations including smiths, potters,



in some cases tanners and weavers.

'Throughout Ethiopia there are minority groups of craftworkers and hunters that are excluded from mainstream society. The marginalisation of these groups is not a new or localised phenomenon. It occurs in the north and the south, in towns and in the countryside, in the past and in the present. ...it is so widespread that it has been described as a 'pan-Ethiopian cultural trait' (Levine 1974: 56). (Pankhurst, A. 2001: 1)

Apart from the weavers they tend to be despised,<sup>9</sup> and interaction with them is constrained and intermarriage unheard of. In Dinki all five full-time weavers and ten out of 11 part-time weavers are Argobba and this is considered a respectable occupation. The only part-time leatherworker is also Argobba, but the two part-time smiths are Amhara. In Turufe the only full-time leatherworker is from the Wolayta minority. However, insofar as craftworkers are able to farm as well as obtain income from craftwork they may become relatively wealthy as in Yetmen, and their status can improve. Other skilled occupations such as those of carpenters, masons, and tailors in all sites may be means to becoming relatively wealthy involving occasional or seasonal work in urban areas. In Yetmen former slaves descended from Southerners brought to the Amhara Region to work during the Imperial regime have been despised and looked down upon by the *chewa* of "noble birth" and even by the craftworkers. Former tenants and herdsmen may also be considered somewhat inferior. Distinctions are drawn for some purposes between natives (*balager*) and immigrants (*mete*). In response to a RANS question about whether the head of household identified him/herself as an immigrant or native 167 out of 925 responded all from Yetmen.

#### Household cultural resources

The ethnicity, clan, gender and (male) age of the household head are cultural resources with some relationships to household wealth. Ethnicity is a feature of social status in Turufe Kecheme and Dinki. In Dinki there were some differences in productive wealth holding between Amhara and Argobba: 13.5% of the latter were landless compared with 1.7% of the former, and 20% had access to irrigation compared with 35% of Amhara. 54% had no oxen compared with 34% and 15% no livestock compared with 7%. In Turufe Kecheme largest mean landholdings attached to the Tigrayans and Amhara with Oromo in third place. The ethnic groups from SNNP had the smallest average holdings. There were no landless Tigrayans compared with 6% of Oromo, 16% of Amhara and 79% of Gurage (who are famous throughout Ethiopia for their entrepreneurial activities).

TABLE 6: ETHNICITY BY WEALTH - DINKI AND TURUFE KEcheme								
	Ethnicity of hh head %	Mean landholding Hectares	Landless %	Mean irrigated land – estimate Hectares	Access to irrigated land %	No oxen %	No livestock %	Asset index score
<b>DINKI</b>								
Argoba	64%	1.16	13.5%	0.08	20	54	15	2.54
Amhara	36%	1.21	1.7%	0.12	35	34	7	2.66
<b>TURUFE KEcheme</b>								
Oromo	57	0.87	6	NA	NA	50	16	3.04
Tigrayan	10	1.29	0	NA	NA	21	4	3.46
Wolayitta	10	0.61	24	NA	NA	72	16	3.13
Amhara	8	0.96	16	NA	NA	50	37	3.67
Kembata	5	0.49	8	NA	NA	58	15	2.60
Hadiya	3	0.53	29	NA	NA	50	14	3.25
Gurage	6	0.42	71	NA	NA	100	64	2.00
Sidama	0.4							
Silte	0.4							
Sodo	0.4							

We had insufficient data to explore the relation between Oromo clan membership and wealth in Turufe Kecheme. In Korodegaga the dominant clan the Sebiro were slightly better off than non-Sebiro in terms of less landlessness and ownership of oxen and other livestock.

In each site 22-23% of households were headed by women. The differences in productive wealth in the Oromo sites between male- and female-headed households was notably less than in the Amhara sites. In Korodegaga

<sup>9</sup> See Freeman and Pankhurst 2003.

there was negligible difference in mean land size and proportion with no livestock, and small differences in proportions with no land, with access to irrigated land and having no oxen. Differences in land size were small in Turufe Kecheme, though livestock ownership differences were larger. In Dinki the mean land size of male heads was more than double that of female heads and in Yetmen it was almost double. In Dinki 40% of female-headed households were landless compared with 24% in Turufe Kecheme, 3% in Korodegaga and none in Yetmen.

TABLE 7: SEX OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD BY WEALTH								
	Sex of hh head %	Mean landholding Hectares	Landless %	Mean irrigated land – estimate hectares	Access to irrigated land %	No oxen %	No livestock %	Asset index score
<b>KORODEGAGA</b>								
Male	76	2.4	1.5	0.38	52	44	9	1.64
Female	23	2.2	3	0.30	46	39	8	1.51
<b>DINKI</b>								
Male	78	1.33	None	0.12	31	39	8	2.56
Female	22	0.62	40	0.03	11	82	29	2.74
<b>TURUFE KEcheme</b>								
Male	78	0.88	0.5	NA	NA	44	8	3.12
Female	22	0.73	24	NA	NA	60	22	3.05
<b>YETMEN</b>								
Male	77	1.77	3	NA	NA	28	13	4.64
Female	23	0.95	None	NA	NA	94	57	4.43

Taking all assets into account female-headed households tended to be worse off on average than male-headed households in all sites, most notably in Dinki where 53% of female-headed households were in the bottom asset quintile compared with 16% of male-headed households.

TABLE 8: RURAL ASSET QUINTILES BY SEX OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD: 2004								
	%age of households							
	Turufe K		Yetmen		Koro		Dinki	
	MH	FH	MH	FH	MH	FH	MH	FH
Top quintile	9	5	69	53				
Quintile 2	31	36	26	36	3	3	16	13.2
Quintile 3	31	31	5	10	10	8	38	47.4
Quintile 4	21	16			35	25	30	34.2
Bottom quintile	8	12			52	64	16	5.3

The age of male household heads also relates to household wealth. In the Oromo sites men in their 60s and older have the highest average size of landholdings; mean size decreases as household heads get younger. This is not the case in the Amhara sites where largest mean land sizes are held by men in their 40s and 50s and smallest by those in their 20s. In the sites with irrigated land there is not much difference in access by age in Dinki; in Korodegaga the highest proportion with irrigation (over two-thirds) are in their 40s and 50s and the lowest in their 20s (over one-third). The integrated sites have a higher proportion of male-headed household without livestock and oxen than the remote sites. Again the age effect is clearly seen in the Oromia sites particularly with regard to ownership of oxen. Young male-headed households in Yetmen have greater access to oxen than elsewhere. This can be associated with differences in ideologies: in Amhara on marriage there are endowments from both sets of parents, while among the Oromo bridewealth is passed to the parents of the groom.

TABLE 9: ASSETS BY AGE OF MALE HOUSEHOLD HEAD								
	Age of hh head %	Mean landholding Hectares	Landless %	Mean irrigated land – estimate hectares	Access to irrigated land %	No oxen %	No livestock %	Asset index score
<b>KORODEGAGA</b>								
20s	25	1.40	None	0.15	35	46	4	1.63
30s	28	2.06	1.9	0.34	50	46	9	1.78
4/50s	31	2.97	1.7	0.56	68	31	9	1.58
60s+	17	3.17	3.1	0.46	53	28	6	1.56
<b>DINKI</b>								
20s	15	1.02	None	0.12	32	53	5.	2.79
30s	34	1.07	None	0.09	25	39	9	2.66
4/50s	24	1.71	None	0.14	36	26	7	2.52
60s+	28	1.48	None	0.15	33	43	5	2.35
<b>TURUFE KEHEME</b>								
20s	21	0.68	5.0	NA	NA	63	25	3.13
30s	28	0.84	9.4	NA	NA	50	11	3.28
4/50s	31	0.98	13.8	NA	NA	48	12	2.98
60s+	20	1.00	8.6	NA	NA	23	14	3.05
<b>YETMEN</b>								
20s	15	1.23	10.7	NA	NA	29	14	4.50
30s	28	1.68	3.7	NA	NA	40	15	4.69
4/50s	35	2.15	None	NA	NA	15	9	4.73
60s+	22	1.66	None	NA	NA	34	14	4.53

Due to lack of access to land it was reported that young men were unable to set up new households at the appropriate age.

#### BOX 2: CONSEQUENCES OF LAND SHORTAGE FOR YOUNG MEN

**From Dinki:**

There is a lag in the household development cycle because many boys have not yet married due to the problems of land.

**From Korodegaga:**

Land is owned by the state with peasant households being give use rights. Land has not been redistributed in Korodegaga since the first allocation in 1975 creating a class of landless young men dependent on their parents (*jirata*).

The age for marriage starts from 15 to the female and 18 to the male. In recent times, due to the scarcity of resource it exceeds to 20-25 for many in the community.

There are many landless young men in the kebele. Though they are members of the Korodegaga community, they are not considered to be members of the Korodegaga *kebele* administration. This is because they have no land, and do not pay land tax to the government. To be a member of the *kebele* administration requires a person to have land. Thus, most of these members of the community aspire to the redistribution of farmlands. They believe that getting farmland may help them not only to ensure *kebele* membership but also to play significant roles in the developmental activities of the people

Having established some patterns of inequality in household and individual life quality the next step is to explore the locally available cultural repertoires which support or challenge them.

#### 4. Local cultural repertoires 2003-5

Local cultural repertoires are sets of logically-related ideas available within the community which are the result of historical interactions among internal and external actors in the field of ideas during which repertoires are reproduced or changed. Repertoires in all four communities are rooted in daily and calendric interactions among community members but they also contain traces of external values and beliefs promulgated during the Imperial era which ended in 1974, the military socialist regime of the *Derg* in power from 1974 to 1991, and the current EPRDF regime which came to power in 1991. From the community profile, exploratory quality of life module and the WeD-QoL data we have identified two competing local repertoires of ideas about how the four

fields of action should be structured, and what should be the roles and responsibilities of different kinds of actor in each the fields, one based on values and practices which are more 'traditional' or conservative and the other on values and practices which are modernising, although there are some commonalities between them.

### **Local conservative cultural repertoires: an ideal type**

Own-account farming should be the basis of the livelihood system. Men should farm producing traditional crops and rearing livestock which are highly valued. Economic relationships should be based on social exchanges and local contracts. Labour should be provided by household members according to their genderage, supplemented by work groups for some farming tasks, and in some cases regular co-operative activities by two farmers working their pieces of land alternately. Servants may be employed for a season or longer. Local contractual arrangements should govern land/oxen/input/labour exchanges. Sons should become farmers and daughters farmers' wives. Sons should live near to parents and assist them with work when necessary. Credit should be sought from kin and rich men. Apart from formal government employment off-farm work is undesirable: a coping strategy for poor households or undertaken by excluded occupational 'castes'. *Kebele* leaders should help their families and kin to improve their livelihoods.

Customary forms of marriage are good: child marriage in Yetmen, arranged marriages everywhere, and among the Arssi Oromo abduction, polygyny, marriage with a dead wife's sister and marriage to a dead husband's brother. Divorce is acceptable among the Amhara but not among the Arssi Oromo. Men should lead the household and control the behaviour of members using persuasion, incentives and sanctions including violence. Wives should obey husbands; sisters should serve brothers; youngers of both sexes should obey elders. A couple should have as many children as possible to provide household labour and because it is God's will. Boys should be raised to be aggressive and girls to be submissive; each should be taught gendered role activities. Girls should not be sent to school. Among the Amhara boys and girls should be circumcised as babies or children while young Arssi Oromo women should be circumcised just before marriage. Domestic activities including fetching wood and water should only be done by females.

Male elders should lead the community and make the important community decisions. Social order should be maintained with reference to traditional and religious values. Communities must protect themselves against neighbouring enemies. Disputes should be resolved by elders and other traditional institutions such as *gada*<sup>10</sup> (Arssi Oromo) and spirit possession (Amhara) wherever possible. The aim is the restoration of harmony among people who have to live in regular face-to-face interactions. Community relations should be organised through social networks and local 'formal'<sup>11</sup> organisations, such as burial associations and savings clubs, and regular community and neighbourhood festivals. Customary ceremonies are important, especially those related to death. All community members should contribute work for ceremonies and other co-operative community work. People or groups should assist poor and destitute old, sick and young people with resources and care.

Household and personal security should be sought and provided through self-help, intra-household sharing, family obligations, particularly of children to parents, long-term social exchanges with families and wider kin, neighbours and friends, and seeking patrons. It is not surprising that *kebele* officials are prone to favour their relatives since, as members of kin networks, they have long-term moral obligations. Land should not be marketable as it provides security for those who can no longer work. People should seek traditional health treatment appropriate to their illness: self-treatment, from traditional health practitioners of various expertises, and/or visiting holy water sites. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with corporal punishment; it is necessary to maintain discipline within the household and the community.

Wise and experienced elders should guide the community as to the values they should follow, the knowledge that they need, and the beliefs which are correct in all of the fields of action.

### **Local modernising cultural repertoires: an ideal type**

Farmers should use modern inputs since fertilisers, pesticides, improved seeds and credit increase local grain and potato yields and are worth the investment for cash-crops. Irrigation using motor pumps to pump water from rivers, channels in hilly areas, or piped water, should be used to grow vegetables and fruit for sale, and grain for

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<sup>10</sup> Age grades

<sup>11</sup> In that they have rules.

home consumption in drought-prone sites. Using land and rivers to grow irrigated vegetables is preferable to using them for livestock. Daily labour should be used for weeding and harvesting. Women should be involved in cash-producing activities, for example through rearing chickens, and should control the income they make. Credit should be sought from NGOs, government, and collective savings groups as well as traditional sources.

Farm work and life is hard and off-farm activities in urban settings are desirable. For children education should take priority over farm and domestic work. Young women should put education and work before marriage. Educated young men and women should migrate to urban areas or even internationally for work and should not be expected to live near their parents, although they should support them with remittances. Young men and women should take every opportunity to earn money, for example acting as brokers between farmers and larger-scale traders. One way to become rich is to become a large-scale trader. The goal of education is government employment or international migration. Leadership of the *kebele* gives access to resources which can be used to help family and wider kin. Among Muslims it is a goal to send daughters to the Middle East as domestic servants in return for remittances sent by the brokers.

Child marriage should be abolished. Couples should have some choice as to who they marry. Too many children lead to household poverty and couples should limit the number by using contraception. Both boys and girls should be sent to school. Domestic activities should be done by females.

Those who are successful in business and people with education, and model farmers who apply modern inputs are the ones who should lead the community. Local groups of men and women should organise to pursue development assistance from government and NGOs. People should use modern institutions for saving and borrowing. Household and personal security should be sought through local formal<sup>12</sup> organisations such as *iddir*, NGOs, and government food aid, although long-term development aid would be preferable. People should use cosmopolitan health services. Government gender policies should be implemented. People should not sell their oxen and go into debt to finance customary celebrations such as child marriages and expensive and repeated ceremonies associated with deaths.

The ideas of modern elites should be listened to and acted on. People should be open to new ideas from outside the community and even outside the country.

## **5. Ideological repertoires 2003-5**

Ideological repertoires are developed externally and inserted into the community directly by 'ideological entrepreneurs' who come to the community, via inhabitants who have been converted on journeys outside the community, or, increasingly, by radio, and in Yetmen town, television.

### **New religious doctrines**

Both Orthodox Christian and Muslim religions have rules prohibiting people from working at certain times which are related to religious fasting and feasting institutions. Farm outputs are in the hands of God and he will punish individuals and communities who do not obey his will, for example observing Orthodox Christian saints' days or Islamic prayer rules. Religious leaders know what God's will is and people should follow their instructions. Leaders will also intercede with God and have an important role in praying for rain. Orthodox Christians should contribute cash and/or grain to support local churches and priests.

Church marriages forbidding divorce are desirable. A Muslim may have up to four wives. Women should be modest and restrict their public activities. The number of children a woman has is in the hands of God and in some religious repertoires contraception is forbidden. Islamic education is important for both boys and girls. There are religious rules governing the slaughter of animals for meat.

The values, knowledge, advice and instructions of religious leaders whose role is validated nationally and/or internationally should be strictly followed. Traditional festivals should be abolished. Religious followers should practice the rules of charity endorsed by the religion they follow.

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<sup>12</sup> In the sense of having rules, procedures and records.

### **Repertoires of belonging: 'imagined communities'**

Social identities are nested. For example, a man may be an Oromo, an Arssi Oromo, a member of the Weyrera clan and a member of a respected lineage such as the Ammanu in Turufe Kecheme. Korodegaga has thirteen clans, each with its own reputation at least in the eyes of other clans. For example

'Ogodu is the most discriminated clan because people say that members of this clan are extravagant and harsh in time of conflict. They call them *laffee gogogdu* ('dried bones') which shows the extent of the people's hatred towards them. Gulele is also not liked by many people. Members of this clan migrated to the area from Eastern Shewa in the past few decades. Thus, they do not belong to the Arssi Oromo. Moreover they are Christian in religion while all the rest are Arssi and Muslim.' Research Officer, Korodegaga.

Marriages within clans are forbidden. Clan members have some obligations to contribute when an individual has to pay compensation for murder, bridewealth and repay debt. These obligations are related to membership of the corporate group. In Yetmen there are two lineages one of which is regarded as 'native' since long ago it settled first on the land that is now Yetmen. Outside the community, depending on where, a man is from Yetmen, Gojjam, or is an Amhara.

These repertoires of belonging involve historic memories often associated with enemies. For example, both Argobba and Amhara in Dinki regard the neighbouring pastoralist Afar as long-standing enemies who threaten their lives and livestock, and they also have 'memories' of 'ethnic cleansing' by the Oromo during the Italian occupation in the late 1930s. The date of this event is used as a time marker. In Korodegaga there were claims that peace was made with the historic pastoralist enemy the Jille in the 1970s but during the research a group of young Korodegaga men provoked in a conflict with a group of Jille.

### **Government repertoires**

Farmers in cashcrop sites should use modern inputs as part of the Agricultural Development Led Industrialisation agenda. Those in food-deficit sites need new technologies, especially irrigation. *Wereda* level agricultural services and *kebele* level Development Assistants should introduce new technologies motivated by targets set from above. Women should be encouraged and assisted to develop their own farming activities. Government should assist people in drought-prone sites by introducing water technologies by any means possible. For example officials have promoted irrigation in Korodegaga in four ways: through a co-operative organised by an NGO which provided a pump and credit; by urging farmers to form groups to buy shared motor-pumps; by selling non-motorised pumps related to a water harvesting project which failed due to the soil; and by providing two large pumps to irrigate a government scheme.

Left to themselves people will not pursue the activities that are necessary for development. Government must take the lead and force changes through persuasion, instruction and sanctions, including fines and imprisonment. People should be mobilised for community work to improve infrastructure and rehabilitate the environment through 'campaigns' which should take priority over the other activities of community members. Labour markets are not necessarily to be encouraged since they are not under government control. A full land market is not currently an option. Land certification is a compromise that can promote tenure security and investment. Output markets provide an opportunity for taxation but do not need government regulation.

Customary forms of marriage are not good. Government rules ban marriage under 18, abduction and forced marriages. Couples should choose their marriage partners. Couples should limit the number of children they have through contraception. Female circumcision should not take place. All children should be vaccinated and sent to primary school.

*Kebele* officials should disseminate and implement government directives, policies and other information. They should gather taxes and mobilise community members for group development work. The best way to mobilise peasants is through long meetings where they are lectured and local government *encadrement* structures with cells of 10 households or less for which one household head has responsibility. Lack of participation should be punished with fines. Officials are theoretically held accountable through the system of *gimgema*; meetings during which community members raise criticisms and request removal of the official though in practice it is more likely to be used to get rid of officials not towing the party line. Social order should be maintained through

instructions coming from the Region and *wereda* to the *kebele* administration; local security should be maintained by the armed local *kebele* militia.

Government should provide economic and human development services, and food aid to drought-affected communities, although this should be used as payment for community development work. Local communities should contribute cash and labour on demand to improve local services, such as education, health services sanitation, piped water, roads, and should pay a small fee for the use of these services. Customary gender and family policies should be replaced with modern policies. Local grass-root organisations should be at the service of government. In elections local people should support the government party which is mobilising them for development. Government has regarded free access to information as a threat to its political control and taken various measures to prevent it.

### **Donor/NGO repertoires**

The only site with recent evidence of donor and NGO livelihood repertoires is Korodegaga. The NGO stayed in the site for five years (2001-2006) organised an irrigation co-operative, provided a pump, received a contribution from each of the 130 farmers and provided credit for inputs. Those who did not repay were not allowed to use the land and eventually taken to the Social Court; a number had their land taken away.

The NGO also set up a savings and credit scheme for women and provided hybrid hens and training in keeping them. Reforms to the long-standing donor-funded Food Aid programmes led to the introduction of the Safety Net scheme in Korodegaga towards the end of 2006. This scheme is intended to provide long-term security to farmers in drought-prone areas so that they do not have to sell assets to survive.

Recent donor policy, practice and discourses in Ethiopia has been focused at macro level as a result of international moves to improve aid co-ordination and replace projects and programmes with direct budget support. Such aid is associated with the MDGs, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, technical assistance and donor-government dialogue on issues raised by donors. In the discourse there is an assumption that economic development in the form of economic growth is being held back by the absence of markets, the informality of activities, and 'customary practices'. Solutions are held to lie in the promotion of free enterprise, improved agricultural productivity, improved health and education services, and the development of infrastructure. Main focuses in the area of human production which have reached these communities are family planning, vaccination for children, and primary education. Towards the end of our research period there were donor-sponsored activities in Korodegaga to reduce and cope with malaria.

There is an important repertoire related to community governance. Local government officials should be accountable to community members through participatory state structures rather than to higher government levels, to ensure a voice for 'the poor' in development activities and to reduce corruption. Local officials should be regularly elected in secret ballots. Opposition parties should be allowed to freely contest regional and national elections. Customary institutions should be increasingly replaced by formal ones: market, state and civil society. The dissemination of 'information' has the potential to increase market and political efficiency.

### **Global repertoires**

While Government, donors, NGOs and religious leaders act intentionally to affect the preferences of community inhabitants people also have access to a more diffuse set of influences, including networks of relations and interactions beyond the community in other rural areas and towns, local political parties, diasporas and the media, particularly radio. Some of these are involved in the dissemination of identity repertoires but others give (male) community members access to global cultural media such as European football and Rambo-style films. Radios are an increasingly important feature of rural life; for example in 2005 election-related broadcasts in local languages from Deutsch Velle and the Voice of America provided people with information and discussions which were not available in local radio broadcasts.

## **6. Cultural contradictions**

Table 2 contrasts assumptions about personal and collective wellbeing across the two local and four ideological repertoires and introduces conceptions of wellbeing derived from wider global cultures.

**TABLE 2: Wellbeing Assumptions in Local and Ideological Cultural Repertoires**

Repertoire	Personal wellbeing	Collective wellbeing
<b>Local conservative</b>	<p>People are intrinsically different in a variety of ways which affects their needs. There is a hierarchy of local identities based on family, lineage, clan, residence status, occupational caste and wealth. Those higher up 'despise' and 'undermine' those lower down. People have informal obligations and rights within kin networks which depend on genderage.</p> <p>Males are strong and females weak. Male competence includes farming skills and the ability to defend the family against enemies. Females must be competent in all domestic activities. Within genders older have authority over younger. Children have obligations to parents. Autonomy is for successful adult males; others must accept their decisions. Personal meaning is derived from farming achievements, family, social and collective relationships and religion.</p>	<p>Household survival and flourishing partly depends on the leadership of a strong head and the collective action of household members who often must subordinate personal interests to the collective household interest. This is achieved through hierarchical organisation. A second vital ingredient is daily mutual support with wider kin, neighbours, and friends involving reciprocity and where necessary charity.</p> <p>Community survival depends on leadership by elite elders who have acquired experience and wisdom. hierarchical organisation and following the customary practices which have ensured collective survival in the past.</p> <p>The wellbeing of the collective is more important than that of individuals. Individualism is a threat.</p>
<b>Local modernising</b>	<p>There are intrinsic differences between people and hierarchies are important but inequalities related to them should be reduced. Education for both males and females produces competences which can lead to improvements in personal, household and community wellbeing. Young males and females should be more autonomous. Personal meaning is derived from achievements in the wider world and family.</p>	<p>There is scope for a better balance between household wellbeing and the life qualities of different members related to a reduction in authoritarian control by the male head. While adult children owe obligations to their parents and kin these can be met through remittances rather than daily interactions.</p> <p>Community development, rather than survival, depends on leadership by educated and successful wealthy elites</p>
<b>Religious doctrines</b>	<p>People have duties to God; if they behave well he will reward them, if not he will punish them before and after death. Males and females are intrinsically different: women should be modest. Competence for Islamic children includes knowledge of the Koran. Personal meaning is derived from a spiritual relationship with God and religious stories express truths about the wider cosmos.</p>	<p>Collective wellbeing depends on conformity to religious practices. Priests/imams are go-betweens between people and God. If people do not conform to religious practices and instructions the whole community may be punished by, for example, bad weather. Fasting, feasting and praying rules must be followed. There are also religious rules relating to marriage, divorce, contraception and the slaughter of animals. People should not eat meat prepared by people of other religions or use utensils which have touched this meat.</p> <p>Islamic communities should practise <i>sharia</i> law.</p>
<b>Discourses of belonging</b>	<p>There are intrinsic differences between people of different social origins such as ethnic group, clan, lineage, occupational caste, nation, and race. The characteristics of my group are best. Personal meaning is derived from membership of an 'imagined community'.</p>	<p>The collective wellbeing of 'my group' depends on controlling or defeating the group's historic enemies and reviving traditional group institutions and ceremonies.</p>
<b>Government ideology</b>	<p>People are subjects with state-related duties and rights. Customary status distinctions should be abolished. Agricultural competences should be modernised and children educated.</p>	<p>Collective wellbeing will be achieved through the abolition of 'harmful traditional practices'. community mobilisation by the EPRDF (socialist) party vanguard, and government control of the economy.</p>
<b>Donor/NGO ideology</b>	<p>Men and women are 'citizens' with equal rights. Violence against women should be abolished. Education will lead to modern competences. Personal meaning is derived from freedom to pursue personal economic goals, choose political representatives, and organise with others independently of the government.</p>	<p>Collective wellbeing will be achieved through the establishment of formal markets, a modern state, and a modern civil society.</p>
<b>Global repertoires</b>	<p>(1) Personal wellbeing can be derived from accessing international football, films and videos, and other windows on to Western life styles. Conspicuous consumption can increase personal status.</p> <p>(2) Personal wellbeing is related to the ability to choose political leaders and programmes.</p>	



### Personal wellbeing

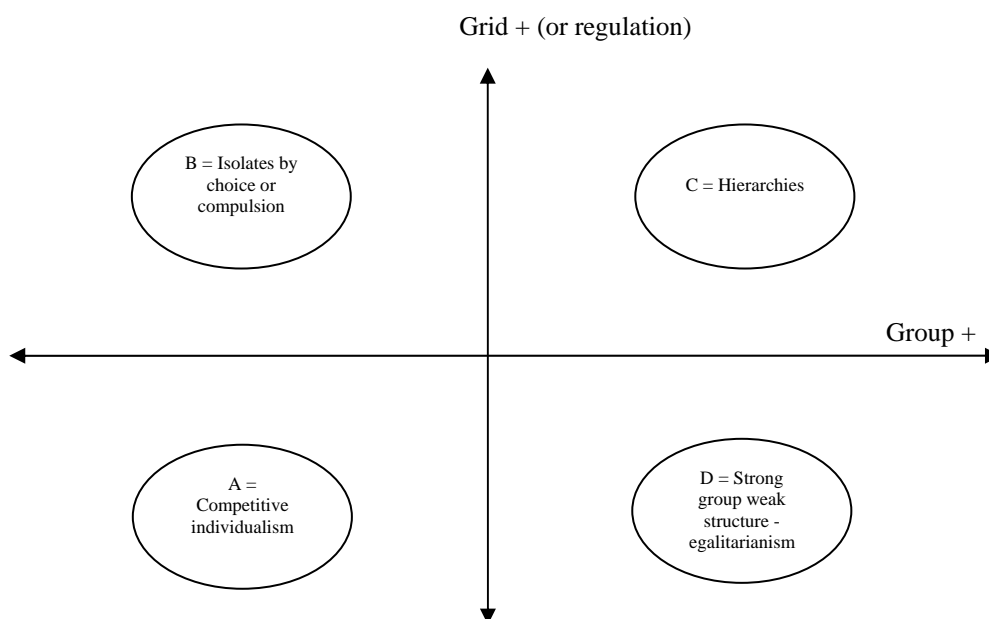
There are a number of contradictions in relation to personal wellbeing, the most striking of which are:

- Different views of the habitus, including goals, competence, and degree of autonomy, which should be available to females and how un/equal gender relations should be. At one extreme are the local conservative and discourse of belonging repertoires. Local modernising gender-related repertoires are linked with government repertoires. Donor/NGO repertoires are most extreme in calling for gender equality, although not very loudly at the moment.
- Different views on child wellbeing: Both local repertoires acknowledge the importance of child work for the collective wellbeing of households and communities. The conservative repertoire sees no value in education while the modernising repertoire allows for a combination of work and education. Neither government nor donors dominant repertoires acknowledge the importance of child work for household wellbeing.
- Different views on inter-generational relations: in the conservative repertoire sons should settle near their fathers and interact regularly particularly in relation to farming. In the modern repertoire sons and daughters should pursue education and an off-farm career which may take them away from the parental home; they are still expected to help their families.
- Different views on the importance of religion for personal and collective wellbeing.
- Different views on how people relate to the nation/state: as people with different regional, ethnic or religious identities, as subjects, as citizens.

### Collective wellbeing

It is helpful to use the grid-group theory of Douglas (1978; Douglas and Ney, ; Wildavsky *et al*, 1990) to consider the different kinds of relationship that may exist between people and collectivities on the basis of differences in the principles underlying relationships and institutions.

**FIGURE 2: A CULTURAL MAP**



The typology reveals four ways in which an individual's involvement in social life can be organised. 'Grid' refers to the degree to which an individual's life is circumscribed by externally imposed prescriptions which may be formal rules or informal norms. 'The more binding and extensive the scope of the prescriptions, the less of life that is open to individual negotiations' (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 5). Group refers to the extent to which an individual is incorporated into bounded units. The greater the incorporation the more individual choice is subject to group determination. Individualists are weak on both axes being motivated by self-interest and a sense of themselves as 'sovereign authors of their own fate' (Fitzpatrick, 2005: 191). Hierarchists are strong on both, identifying with a particular group while viewing social groups as ordered in 'vertical levels of authority and subservience, superiority and inferiority' (*ibid*). Isolates are strong on grid but weak on group and 'a sense of

constraint combines with low affiliation minimising the desire for collective identification and action' (*op cit.* 192). Egalitarians are weak on grid but strong on group 'in that they resent external constraint and believe it can be resisted through solidarity with others' (*ibid*). Douglas and Ney argue that each culture is good for different organisational purposes:

When a complex coordination has advantages, it makes sense to develop the top right pattern and to cultivate the values and attitudes that justify it. When individual initiative is needed, it makes sense to develop the bottom left pattern and the values that go with it. When concerted protest is needed, it makes sense to sink individual differences and go for the egalitarian group. (103)

With regard to collective wellbeing the most striking difference is to be found between the principles of organisation recommended in donor and NGO discourses and those supported in Ethiopian discourses. In both government ideology and local repertoires hierarchy is the key organising principle, although the local modernising repertoire is somewhat supportive of individualism. In their discourse donors favour principles related to competitive individualism while international NGO discourses are influenced by egalitarianism. The two 'social identity' repertoires differ, with religious repertoires reflecting hierarchical relations, God-priest/imam/believer, while the structures behind discourses of belonging tend to be more egalitarian. Global Euro-American repertoires challenge hierarchical commitments. Poor and socially excluded people tend to be 'isolates by compulsion' (101), and we also came across some 'isolates by choice' with no desire to be involved in political manoeuvring.

THERE HAS NOT BEEN TIME TO COMPLETE THE REST OF THE PAPER

## 7. Socio-cultural struggles

For each – similarities across the sites – and differences among them.

Gender struggles

Inter-generational struggles

Social identity struggles

In one homogenous site religious ideas about livelihoods and religious ceremonies preached by Orthodox priests conform with local traditional ideas and are in direct conflict with government policies and directives which are accepted in local modern repertoires and resonate with donor and NGO repertoires. In the other homogenous site religious Islamic ideas about livelihoods and religious ceremonies are modern in that they contradict local traditional repertoires. However, some of the ideas run counter to government repertoires and donor/NGO repertoires, for different reasons. In both sites religious repertoires are currently the most symbolically powerful. In the heterogeneous sites people live with models of other ways of thinking, particularly in religious terms. There are contradictions at a number of levels in the ideas and narratives of the different religions: Orthodox Christianity, Islam, various versions of Protestantism, and Catholicism. The increasing influence of religious fundamentalists in all religions is making these logical contradictions more visible leading to a decline in religious tolerance. Religious differences are associated with ethnic differences and consequently affect and are affected by inter-ethnic competition for scarce material resources and local political influence. People in the integrated sites have more frequent interactions with urban dwellers and greater access to the media which contributes a consumer dimension to local modern repertoires.

Government-people struggles

## 8. Conclusions

These will return to the questions set out in the Introduction.

In what ways are normative evaluations about how people ought to live related to how they actually do live? How are local wellbeing repertoires contributing to reproduction or change in socially constructed unequal patterns of life quality?

Rural Ethiopians are living 'in interesting times'; since the end of the Imperial regime long-established ideas about how people ought to live have been under threat, first from socialist ideas and in recent years from a number of other directions. The interaction between ideas and practices is complicated; for example socialist ideas about women's equality have been around for almost thirty years but it is only recently, when accompanied by government moves to implement legislation through decentralised structures that practices are changing.

How and why are unequal structures, and agents and their interactions, involved in the re/production and dissemination of cultural repertoires establishing how people ought to live?

Government and donors are both actively promoting their particular visions of wellbeing, as are Islamic 'missionaries' from the Saudi Arabian *wehabi* sect. ..

What are the implications for an international development agenda which has improvements in 'wellbeing' as a goal?

We have identified an important contradiction in approaches to wellbeing between Ethiopian and Euro-American ideologies. Ethiopians tend to be hierarchists or isolates while Euro-Americans are promoting<sup>13</sup> individualism or egalitarianism. Douglas and Ney summarise the 'distinctive definitions' of well-being in each of these cultures as follows:

- Individualists are not trying to create a community but aim to free themselves from the fetters of social restriction. 'Wellbeing for them means the freedom to pursue self-interested end .. The strong policy angle is that .. rational persons, though not equal, are best situated to judge what is good for themselves'
- 'Hierarchists seek to make a community that is an orderly system; their moral framework is one of differentiated obligations according to place in complex organisational schemes.' The conception of wellbeing is broader, longer-term and stratified. 'The happiness of others enters into individual well-being'. According to status and position in the hierarchy, well-being may be different for lower-echelon members than for the elite.' It is not impossible to judge others' needs, and it may be properly legitimate for high-status members of the hierarchy to decide and act in the best interests of their charges.
- Sectarian minority groups strive to create a community that is free of control. Morally they appeal to subjectivity and individual conscience, rejecting formal discriminations and championing communal self-organisation. They perceive well-being 'on a global scale'. 'Everyone is equal, and well-being is a world free of domination and inequality.'
- Isolates are cut off by definition from political manoeuvring and influence. 'They do not have a coherent idea of well-being and do not expect coherence from policymakers. If you are lucky, you will do well; if not, then not.' (123)

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<sup>13</sup> Donor bureaucracies operate using hierarchical principles.

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