

Inequalities and differentiation in rural communities (2010-13) WIDE Discussion Brief No. 3 of 10ⁱ

Key messages from the WIDE evidence

- Alongside growth and transformation there has been increasing **differentiation** with wealthiest households forming **elites**, improvements among **middle wealth** households but **poorer** households benefitting less and **destitutes** barely surviving from charity and food aid.
- **Sources of differentiation** include increased agricultural and livestock production, irrigation and new technologies, trade, better roads and transport and involvement in non-farm activities and remittances.
- There have been **greater changes** and **more differentiation**, especially in the sites with more agricultural potential, cash crops, irrigation, diversified economies, and proximity to towns, leading to greater **gaps between the rich and poor**.
- **Inequalities** in WIDE communities can be considered at **community, household and individual levels** and are based mainly on **combinations of gender, age, wealth and status**. In this brief we focus largely on the poor, female-headed households, youth and vulnerable groups, since other companion papers address successful individuals and women.
- **Poorer households** rely on various **coping strategies** that often involve selling their **labour**, non and **off farm activities** and **petty trade**. They are also **more vulnerable to shocks**, especially drought, crop and livestock losses as well as illnesses **often leading to impoverishment**. They depend heavily on **assistance from neighbours and relatives** and support from **customary institutions** notably *iddir* funeral associations.
- **Relations between the rich and the poor** involve a wide range including **employment, share-cropping, share-rearing, credit, loans and charity**, often with mutual benefit but greater advantages for the rich. There is evidence in some communities of **declining cooperation**, due to **drought and inflation** and the richer households focusing on their own production and increasing internal divisions within a few communities.
 - Social protection for destitute and vulnerable categories should bring together various stakeholders at local level, involving the rich and building on customary institutions.
- Many poor households face difficulties covering **costs of inputs** notably fertilizer leading to **indebtedness**, and are therefore often less willing to engage with extension packages.
 - The livelihoods of the poor could be improved by policies and programmes that promote **non-agricultural activities, extension, credit service and grants** that are tailored to their needs and abilities
- **Insurance schemes** including for livestock losses and health care could be further promoted including **subsidies for the poor**. There have been some **positive changes in gender relations** over **women's land rights, girls' education**, women and child centered **health**, and

reducing harmful traditional practices.

- Despite some **positive changes in gender roles**, girls and women still carry the **bulk of the burden** of domestic activities as well as being involved in production and trade.
- **Female-headed households** are not a uniform category but often face constraints in agricultural labour; many are involved in trade, crafts and food processing.
 - Promotion of women's **income-generating activities** could stimulate growth and improvement in gender roles
 - Better **access to relevant extension services** and **credit** could enhance the opportunities for women to improve their livelihoods.
- Decreasing **land access** and **un(der)employment** have led to some inter-generation tensions, and limited success of **cooperatives** have led to **disillusionment of some youth**, with education leading to changing and often **unfulfilled aspirations** sometimes stimulating migration.
- However, many of the youth are involved in a wide range of **entrepreneurial activities**, particularly in **non-agricultural** work especially in the sites with more diversified economies and greater market integration, although access to **start-up capital** and **credit** is a constraint for **poorer young men and women**.
 - Greater emphasis on **job-creation programmes** for rural youth, including young women, and easier **access to credit** and **training** could improve youth livelihoods.
 - Learning from **successful cooperatives** particularly in non-agricultural activities and **enhancing youth enterprise** could provide alternatives to aspirations to migrate.
- **Vulnerable groups** are largely supported by communities, apart from some interventions for **orphans** and to a lesser extent the elderly.
- Some categories with disabilities such as **HIV/AIDs** and **mental illness** are stigmatized.
- Some groups such as **labourers, craftworkers** and in certain communities **in-migrants** are sometimes subject to discrimination.
 - **Social protection** of vulnerable groups including **orphans** and **elderly**, the **disabled, destitute, stigmatized** and **excluded** categories should involve a **cadre of social workers** deployed at the community level.
- **Social protection** should involve greater **collaboration between stakeholders** including local government, the private sector, civil society groups, NGOs, community leaders and local customary institutions.

Introduction

This brief uses data from the Ethiopia WIDE research to describe inequalities and differentiation in twenty rural communities. Inequalities can be considered at **community, household and individual** levels and are based on **gender, age, wealth and status**. The paper focuses primarily on those potentially 'left behind' in a context of growth and transformation, including poor and female-headed households, the youth and vulnerable categories, whereas other complementary briefs focus on successful individuals, entrepreneurs, urbanisation and growth (*DB02:(r)urbanisation; DB09:success; DB10:change*).

Inequalities and differentiation between and within communities

The WIDE sites experienced **increasing inequalities and differentiation**. Wealthier households were better able to take advantage of new opportunities for increased agricultural and livestock production, irrigation and new technologies, trade, better roads and transport, and involvement in non-farm activities. There was **greater differentiation** in sites with more agricultural and cash crop potential, closer proximity and linkages to urban areas and diversified economies resulting in larger **gaps between the better off and the poor**.ⁱⁱ However, there were significant processes of differentiation even in the food insecure and agro-pastoralist sites.

Agriculture including irrigation, cash crops, livestock and dairy production were major drivers of changes. **Irrigation** enabled cash-crop production of vegetables, fruit, sugar cane, pulses, and in some sites coffee, *chat* or Eucalyptus. Irrigation was even more important in the drought prone sites given risks of rain failure. **Cash-crop** production using rainfed agriculture was also important mainly in the higher potential cereal growing sites. **Hybrid cereals** and **fertiliser** strengthened market linkages. Higher-yielding or drought-resistant varieties were promoted in sites close to **agricultural research centres**.

In the two **agro-pastoralist sites** some involvement in agriculture was emerging with irrigation in Gelcha and drainage canals in Luqa, though the economies relied heavily on livestock. In many sites **livestock trade** was crucial and some traders became wealthy. **Livestock fattening** and **dairy production** were important sources of differentiation in several sites with good linkages to proximate towns.

Trade in cash crops was a major driver of differentiation particularly in sites with good agricultural potential, market linkages and road networks. Some successful traders **diversified out of agriculture**, a few in wealthier sites purchasing **means of transport** such as trucks and minibuses, setting up **grinding mills** and shops, groceries, bars and hotels.

The building of **new roads** or upgrading of existing ones had a profound influence on the rural economies even in remote areas, and expansion of **means of transport** such as *bajaj* and motorbikes improved connectivity and offered possibilities for employment and entrepreneurs to invest in the transport sector.

The **expansion of towns** provided a significant stimulus for the growth of the rural economies, providing markets for agricultural and livestock produce, as well as jobs in services, construction and factories, leading to some differentiation in many sites (*DB02:(r)urbanisation*). Moreover, wealthier households in rural areas invested in **building houses in local towns** even in fairly remote and food insecure communities.

Finally **remittances** were a major source of improvements for households living in many rural communities. In some cases remittances were invested in productive activities leading to some

households becoming significantly wealthier than most, sometimes even investing in housing or businesses in nearby towns. (See *DB08:mobility*).

Implications of weather and production shocks

In the drought prone sites a range of climatic shocks resulted in setbacks for most households, but **poorer households were particularly affected**. This happened mainly in years of drought, sometimes leading to considerable losses in livestock. **Production losses** also occurred in some sites from unseasonal rains, flooding, hail storms and frost. **Crop losses** due to pests and weeds were also serious constraints in some years affecting a wide range of crops. **Animal diseases** also affected cattle, sheep and goats and camels. **Epidemics of malaria** often linked to rainfall conditions were also serious problems in lowland sites and Acute Watery Diarrhoea was reported in a few.

Climatic and production shocks were no doubt **more common and severe** in the **drought prone** and especially the **lowland** sites. However, there were **also problems** reported in **all the surplus and cash-crop producing sites**. The particular shocks and timing depended on site conditions but included unpredictability, reduction or late arrival or rains, increasing temperature, declining soil fertility, erosion and deforestation, crop losses due to hail and crop and livestock diseases.

While wealthier households were generally in a better position to withstand weather shocks, survive hunger seasons, rebuild their herds of livestock and livelihoods, **poorer households were less resilient** and more prone to suffer during ensuing hunger seasons, and often had to borrow and became indebted, leading to further impoverishment. Weather and production shocks sometimes also interacted with and compounded health and social shocks further accentuating differentiation within communities.

Household level differences

Households in the sites can be classified on the basis of their resources into broad categories of rich, poor and destitute, with gradations among the rich and poor, and site differences in the relative proportions of wealth categories. There were a range of **sources of differentiation** between households. These included **access to resources**, notably **land** (especially irrigated land), **livestock** holdings, with implications for agriculture due to the need for plough oxen, and for trade including livestock fattening. **Labour** was also important especially in contexts where wealthier households were able to employ labourers on a daily basis or farm workers on a seasonal or annual basis. There were even cases where richer farmers sent farm labourers to work on their behalf in labour-pooling arrangements (Kormargefia, Oda Dawata).

The use of **inputs** notably fertiliser, improved seeds and breeds were important sources of differentiation, and in some sites **new technologies** (such as the broad-bed maker in Yetmen or manual threshers in Turufe) also made a difference. Income from **cash crops** was another major area of differentiation, especially where there was irrigation potential, although the sources of cash crops differed depending on the site potential and markets.

Within Kebeles **proximity to roads and/or to Kebele centres** was also important as some households were able to open shops or other services by roadsides or in market or administrative areas of kebele centres (*DB02:(r)urbanisation*).

Characteristics of rich households

Richer households were generally characterised by more access to **land** and greater **livestock** holdings, especially oxen for cultivation and fattening, and the use of **modern inputs** notably fertiliser and improved seeds and breeds. In sites with **irrigation** potential they were better able to

profit from selling irrigated produce. Richer households often were able to increase their access to **labour** by employing wage labourers, and/or organising festive work parties (*debo*) rather than participating in reciprocal ones (*wenfel*). They were also more linked to markets selling **cash crops**.

Many richer households were able to **diversify** their source of income from agriculture as well as **non-agricultural sources** and some move out of agriculture into **business** including trade, transport and service sectors (*see DB09:success*). Many were also able to take large **loans** and even became money lenders. They were often engaged in bigger *iqqub* and were members of more than one *iddir*.

Richer household had **better housing** with corrugated roofs, fenced compounds, more rooms, separate enclosures or rooms for livestock, separate kitchens and sometimes bathrooms. Increasingly, a few richer households built houses in local towns. Richer households had more nutritious **diets** including animal products more often and spent more on celebrations. Some made use of **private health care** in towns and sent children to **private education** including pre-school and college education.

The formation of elites

Elites became differentiated through better productive resources, quality and some luxury consumer goods, and improved use of private health and education services. Two types of elites can be distinguished: “traditional” and “modern”. **Traditional elites** gained power mainly based on control of land and labour and had greater livestock holdings. **Modern elites** emerged more recently and were more powerful; they gained their position more through wealth and control of trade, external links and political power. **Greater wealth** enabled elites not just to purchase **productive assets**, such as pumps and vehicles in the richer sites, but also to **mobilize more labour** through festive work groups, employ wage labourers, invest in more livestock in the poorer sites including prestige animals such as horses, mules and camels, improve their housing, notably with tin roofs, build urban houses and purchase better quality household goods such as metal beds and mattresses, electronics such as radios, TVs and even Satellite TVs, vehicles including bicycles, motorcycles and even trucks in a few cash-crop sites. Elites were also be able to access **better services** in towns, and to send their children for education in towns. Eliteness involves not just greater wealth but also **influence**, notably through local informal and formal organisational positions.

Relations between rich and poor

There was a **wide range of types of relations** between rich and poor including employment, share-cropping and share-rearing, credit and loans and charity. In better off sites many rich households employed poorer individuals labourers. Richer households also often **sharecropped** land from poor households without oxen or labour, often due to illness or old age. Some land-short poor farmers who had enough labour also sharecropped extra land which could be a means out of impoverishment although this depended on the agreements which often favoured the landowner. **Share-rearing** of livestock, especially cows was not uncommon when rich households had excess livestock but not enough labour to herd them or land to graze them, and when poorer ones needed milk for their children. Some rich households provided poorer households with a **loan** of an ox, or even cash although this was often at **high interest rates**. A few rich households provided land for a poor household to build a house in exchange for assistance with farming activities.

Many arrangements between rich and poor households involved some **mutual benefit**. However, there was often a greater advantage for richer households that obtained land or labour at cheap rates, and the institutions can therefore also been seen as **exploitative**. However, there were also cases of rich households being **charitable** and assisting poorer ones when facing problems notably with **food shortage**. For instance a poor household in Somodo received gifts of *enset* from a richer

household to overcome the hunger season. A poor woman in Oda Dawata received assistance with funeral expenses from a successful businessman.

Decline in inter-household cooperation?

In a few sites it was suggested that **cooperation was declining** with richer households focusing on their own production and hiring labourers, due to recurrent drought conditions (Harresaw), or increases in livestock and milk prices leading to less willingness to share-rear cows, exchange oxen for labour and even pair oxen (Kormargefia). Housebuilding for which households living within the same area cooperated was in some sites changing with better off households having their houses being built by skilled professionals (Girar). In two sites cooperation was said to have declined due to **religious differences** becoming more pronounced between Muslims and Christians leading to the formation of separate *iddirs* (Somodo) or also between Muslims sects (Oda Dawata). In three sites **exclusion from cooperation** notably in labour sharing institutions affected in two case **migrants** (Gelcha, Korodegaga) and in the third **returnees from resettlement** (Shumsheha). In some sites poor households mentioned being involved in the new 1-5 networks organised by the *Kebele*, with the suggestion that there was emerging competition between traditional and new forms of cooperation. There were also cases of **widows** facing limited cooperation after the death of their husbands (Adele Keke).

Poor, very poor and destitute households: livelihoods, poverty and shocks

Poor households were generally characterised by having **less land** and **livestock** and other **assets**, constraining their involvement in agriculture as they had to rely on disadvantageous **sharecropping** institutions to gain access to land and/or livestock on unfavourable terms. This meant that some **sharecropped** others' land or worked as **daily labourers** for better-off households or for investors, or migrated for work (*DB08:mobility*).

Lack of livestock often forced poorer households to sharecrop out land or borrow oxen to plough in unfavourable arrangements. Women in these households were often involved in petty trade, selling fuelwood, or producing alcoholic drinks. Some children **dropped out of school** to work for the household, assisting with agriculture, petty trade, or became involved in wage labour or migration (*DB05:education*).

The very poor were often landless, with few or no livestock, and had to sell their labour. Some worked in rich peoples' houses. The **destitute** relied on help from neighbours, relatives, community and religious charity, and ultimately in extreme cases begging or migration. There was a strong overlap between poverty and gender-age in agriculture with youth facing serious landlessness and un(der)employment (*DB04:youth*).

There is a clear relationship between **shocks and poverty**. Firstly, poor households were sometimes formed as a result of such shocks, notably female-headed households through widowhood or divorce, and some young households after the death, severe illness or disability of the household head. Second, the impoverished status of some households that were previously better-off was often a result of shocks leading to downward spirals into poverty. Third, poor households were more vulnerable and at risk from consequences of shocks, leading to further impoverishment and sometimes destitution.

There were four major differences between livelihoods of the poor in food secure and insecure sites. First, in food insecure sites poor households relied heavily on **PSNP** and in some migration for survival. While this often did not lead directly to livelihood improvements, it ensured survival without excessive asset depletion. Second, in food secure and especially cash crop sites, there was

more **crop diversity**, leading to better nutrition and more options for selling a range of produce. Third, in some food secure sites there were transformations towards **cash crop** or **dairy** production even among the poor. Fourth, in the food secure sites there was often more reliance on a **range of off farm activities** and **migration**. We may conclude that **poorer households** in the **food secure and cash crop producing sites** had a **greater range of opportunities** not just for survival but also for improving their livelihoods.

Survival of the poor: food, credit, cooperation and assistance

Poorer households generally had a **less nutritious diet** consuming less meat, milk and eggs. Some also reduced on purchased foods such as oil and vegetables. Among the poorest, especially seasonally during the hunger period and when facing shocks, households often **reduced the amount and/or frequency of consumption**. Some poor households also changed the type of food they consumed for instance from cereals to *enset* (Adado). In times of crisis some households even consumed food bought for petty trade (Adele Keke).

Poor households often **borrowed from MFIs** and/or **informal sources** from relatives, neighbours or money lenders. **Credit from MFIs** was often used for livestock purchases but was diverted in crises to prioritise paying for medication, children's education, or to sponsor migration. Some credit was linked to the PSNP; sometimes households assumed these loans were grants refusing to repay. Some poor households faced difficulties obtaining formal credit due to access rules and relied on **money lenders** charging higher interest rates. While there were some cases of poor households able to repay loans and borrow more, in other cases poor households found it very difficult to repay loans or needed to borrow from relatives to repay formal credit (Geblen). Poor households were therefore often wary of risks of **indebtedness** and often did not want to take credit.

Poor households often relied heavily on **reciprocal labour sharing arrangements** (*wenfel*) with neighbours and relatives particularly for harvesting, and some also participated in work groups (*debo*) sponsored by richer households in exchange for food; others were involved in agricultural daily labour. Some borrowed oxen from relatives or from neighbours in exchange for ploughing their land.

Almost all poor households were members of **iddirs**, although sometimes funeral expenses were much higher than what was provided. In some cases *iddirs* provided payments for loss of livestock or oxen *iddir* were set up, and in a few sites *iddirs* provided loans to members. Some poor households depended heavily on remittances from children living abroad or within Ethiopia, who sent money or brought gifts.

Poor households relied heavily on **relatives and neighbours** in cases of food shortage. Some borrowed grain from neighbours to be repaid after the harvest, or an ox or cow they looked after. Assistance from relatives and neighbours was also crucial in times of illness. In a few sites churches also helped. In the food insecure sites the **PSNP** provided an important buffer for poor households enabling them to overcome food shortage. However, it was sometimes suggested that people were therefore less willing to engage in unremunerated community work. In some sites assistance from **NGOs** for poor households included **loans in cash or livestock** and provision of **stationery** for children. Some poor households were **exempted from community contributions** and taxes or were allowed **free access to clean water** (Gelcha).

Agricultural extension services for the poor

Some poor households benefitted from **extension services**, although others complained that **DAs favoured richer households**. Although some obtained **inputs**, particularly fertiliser and improved

seeds, many complained they could no longer afford the **price of fertiliser** and **improved seeds**. Others said they could afford fertiliser but not improved seeds and pesticides. In some sites fertiliser was provided **through service cooperatives** but some households preferred to buy it from the market. In a few sites **fertiliser** provision was **linked to the PSNP** and households were obliged to take it. In some sites a few poor households benefited from **breed livestock**, although there were concerns that this was risky as they were **not drought- and disease-resistant**.

Female-headed households

Women heading households were **not a uniform category** and were definitely not all poor or destitute, although they usually **shared certain characteristics** and **constraints**. Generally female-headed households lacked male labour unless they had adult sons or until their sons became old enough, or had a daughter who attracted a son-in-law. Given the agricultural division of labour they often **sharecropped-out land**, **borrowed oxen** or **hired labourers** if they could afford it.

Female-headed households were formed through **widowhood** or **divorce**. The death of the husband or divorce often led to a **decline in the household's wealth**. Many widows complained that the illness and eventual death of their husband drained household resources for medication and funeral costs leading to impoverishment.

Some successful female-headed households inherited land or obtained it after divorce, used agricultural extension advice, inputs, hired labourers, and obtained credit. Others sold drink or fattened cattle. A few owned town houses or invested remittances (*DB07:women; DB09:success*).

Poor women heading households

Poor female-household heads faced **problems with land, labour and/or oxen**. They had a **range of survival strategies**. Some sharecropped-out their land, others were landless and relied on daily labour, or assistance from a son or a son-in-law; others borrowed oxen from relatives or hired a labourer. Many relied on a range of coping strategies, including **petty trade**, produced **food or alcoholic drinks**, spun **cotton for sale**, washed **clothes**, transported **water**, or collected **wood, grass** or **dung** for sale. A few relied on **remittances** from daughters in Saudi Arabia or Sudan. In the **food insecure sites** most relied on support from the **PSNP or food aid** which was crucial to overcome the food gap.

A few obtained **advice from DAs** and **used inputs**, sometimes buying **fertiliser** on the market but not **improved seeds**. However, many **did not receive extension support** and **could not afford inputs**. A few **got credit**, whereas others were **not considered credit-worthy** or did not want to take inputs once the credit was repaid. Several were **impoverished by production shocks** such as loosing crops to hail or cattle to diseases. A few were **clearly very poor**, with inadequate housing and insufficient food, and children not at school.

Many poor women heading households had **reduced consumption** in quantity and quality and some regularly **suffered from hunger**. In a few sites there were cases of poor households that did not even own the house they lived in and could **hardly afford to pay the rent**. Some had **children who dropped out of school** to help with work. Many relied heavily on **iddirs**, some even belonging to both 'household *iddir*' and 'female' *iddir*, although a few could not afford to be members. Some received **assistance from NGOs** including credit. Others relied on **charity** and assistance from neighbours with food, and labour. **Elderly women** heading households sometimes got help from a granddaughter with fetching water and cooking. In a few sites some very poor women were **exempted from work in the PSNP** (Gebelen) or from mandatory **community contributions and taxes** (Adele Keke, Girar) and some were given free access to water points (Gelcha).

Individual level differences

Opportunities and constraints for **young men** and **young women** differed considerably in all the sites with greater options in the market-integrated sites closer to towns (*DB04:youth*)

Young men

Young men faced increasing problems gaining **access to land** in all sites, and **youth un(der)employment** and dependency on the older generation was a common concern. Those from **wealthier households** got **plots from parents** but **poorer households** often **lacked enough land** to share. Some young men **sharecropped-in** land or entered **land contracts**.

However, some young men having benefited from some education no longer wanted to farm or had the required skills and **sought jobs**. Young men **failing to pass the Grade 10** exams often remained at home helping their parents and some were **discontented**. Formal employment generally required migration and **job opportunities were scarce** even for those who had completed secondary school, though a few found jobs for instance as DAs or teachers. Many became involved in **trade in livestock**, agricultural produce or **petty trade** although particularly those from poorer households faced problems with **lack of start-up capital** and **access to credit**. However, there were increasing opportunities for young men to find **employment in agricultural wage labour**, coffee harvesting, loading and unloading, guarding produce, working as brokers or in towns in construction and factories. In some cases **wage labour opportunities had improved** so that young men did not have to migrate so far (Harresaw). There were also occasional **jobs in the transport sector** with carts and motorbikes and in **shops and businesses** such as Satellite TV rental. Job opportunities through **international migration** were often more available in Arab countries for women (*DB08:mobility*).

There were attempts to organise young men into **youth cooperatives**. Most agricultural cooperatives were not very successful for a range of reasons, although some youth involved in irrigation groups and forest conservation fared better, and **sand and stone cooperatives worked best** (*DB04:youth*). In some sites youth **got credit** or were assisted with **income-generating activities from NGOs**.

Young women

Young women generally were **not able to gain access to land** directly since, following gender norms, parents favoured young men. However, **women's rights to land** on divorce were decreed in principle through land certification. In practice **constraints on women gaining and using land** on divorce included prejudice of elders and sometimes *kebele* leadership about women's rights and abilities, the fact that they generally lived in their husband's community and lacked male labour and oxen to plough. However, some women obtained a fair land share upon divorce and were able to sharecrop-out or hire labourers (*DB04:youth; DB07:women*).

Young women were **not culturally able to form households** on their own and opportunities for them outside marriage were fairly limited. **Most of their work** was in the **domestic** sphere. There has been **increasing girls' enrolment** and some continuing to secondary education and even beyond (*DB05:education*). However, opportunities to obtain **formal employment were often almost non-existent**. However, a few became Health Extension Workers, DAs, vets, teachers and in one site MFI agents and were important role models (*DB07:women*). In several sites young women were able to find **wage labour** in flower farms, coffee processing, factories, or research centres.

However, most young women worked in **income-generating activities**, including **petty trade** of commodities such as sugar, salt and oil, selling livestock products, especially butter, milk and eggs, and engaging in livestock fattening, sale of livestock fodder, producing and selling food and alcoholic

drinks, selling **cash crops** such as coffee or *chat*, or setting up or working in tea houses or restaurants. Young women in some sites suggested that **lack of access to credit** was a constraint on their ability to **expand their trading** and other income-generating activities (*DB07:women*)

Migration to town to work largely in the service sector and especially abroad to Arab countries as **domestic workers** was a major strategy for young women in many sites. **Successful migrants** mainly those who went abroad, sent **remittances** and **returned with capital** to invest **improving their livelihood** options and status. Despite the risks and policies discouraging migration many continue to aspire to migrate abroad (*DB08:mobility*).

Generation and gender relations

Over time with decreasing land availability and smaller holdings **tensions escalated between the older generation and the youth** wishing to get married, set up their own household and establish independent livelihoods. There was a growing distinction between the **older generation controlling land** and other resources and the **land-less youth** leading to the **formation of a class of older landed mainly male-headed households**. The end of land re-distribution, certification, and the legalisation of extended periods for renting and leasing may have become a step towards the **consolidation of a peasant elite**. Though this process happened in all sites, in the wealthier more integrated sites the elites were better placed to intensify and diversify production and obtain income from a range of sources.

As land holdings became increasingly concentrated in households of the older generation **youth** sometimes expressed **frustration** at working for their parents. In some cases these tensions spilled over into relations between households and with the *Kebele* administration.

In **gender relations** there were some positive changes (*DB07:women*). **Women's land rights** on divorce improved although actual division of property sometimes depended on political relations and the role of elders mediating against women. Moreover, where land was redistributed women were often not included as the *Kebele* argued that women were '*not strong enough to plough*' (*Kormargefia*). In all sites there was a **decrease in gender inequalities** largely associated with interventions. These included measures relating to **women's land rights**, promotion of **girls education**, women and **child-centered health** packages and interventions, measures to counter **violence against women** and harmful traditional practices, although these provoked some **resistance from men**.

However, there had also been **tensions between young women and their parents** notably over decision-making **surrounding marriage**, choice of partner and when to get married. Parents often sought to arrange the marriages of their daughters early to secure their future and in some sites in the south to obtain bridewealth, whereas young women wanted to choose their own marriage partner often resisting early marriage decided by their parents. There were signs that **with education, media campaigns**, and the role of **church groups** in many sites **young women** were more **able to make their own choices** (*DB04:youth*).

Opportunities for **wage labour** and gaining an income from **international migration** had **improved women's bargaining power**. In some sites young women were increasingly becoming engaged in **activities previously considered as 'men's work'**, including daily and contract labour and trade. However, sometimes changes in the economy led to men taking over areas that were women's domains such as the sale of dairy products (*DB07:women*). There were also some **minor changes** in the **role of men in the domestic sphere**, some fetching water and fuelwood, or even cleaning and cooking.

Vulnerable categories and support

Apart from the **PSNP in food insecure sites**, most **vulnerable categories** of individuals depended largely on **support from neighbours, relatives and friends**. For mourning and illness the **iddirs** were the main support, though this often did not cover the costs or enable the household to recover.

In all sites there were a few people with **physical disabilities** and illnesses (blindness, deafness, epilepsy were most frequently mentioned). **HIV/AIDS and mental illness** were less noted and in some sites were not openly discussed. In a few sites people living with disabilities faced **discrimination**, including in the case of PLWHAs refusal in three sites to rent out houses to them. Religious institutions provided support in a few sites.

Problems of **orphans** and the **elderly** were more commonly discussed although **institutional support** was only available in some sites **for orphans**. There were suggestions that orphan girls were made to marry early by their guardians, and cases of abuse were reported (Shumsheha, Do'oma). **Support** included stationary, income-generating activities and institutionalised or community based **adoption**. In contrast the **elderly** relied largely on **immediate relatives and neighbours** although in a few sites **NGOs and faith-based organisations** also provided them with **occasional support**.

Domestic labourers were another disadvantaged category **employed by richer households** to fill labour gaps. Richer households in all the sites hired agricultural and household labourers for a season or continuously. **Male labourers** were involved in **agricultural work** and **females in domestic work**. **Children**, some being children of poorer relatives, were also hired, **boys** involved in **herding** and **girls in housework**. In some cases an **employer became a patron** and sponsored a labourer to establish himself, marry and become independent. However many **labourers were mistreated** and were **unable to escape the status of labourer**, and these **inequalities** were sometime **reproduced** with their **children becoming labourers**. Some **female domestic workers** suffered **sexual abuse**.

Occupational craftworkers (potters, tanners and smiths) were traditionally **despised and ostracised** facing **discrimination** in many sites.ⁱⁱⁱ These **inequalities** were more pronounced in southern Ethiopia and have **reduced** although intermarriage between craftworkers and farmers was still resisted. There were only a few craftworkers in most sites and some cases of **exclusion from institutions** and even abuse were mentioned. In one case they were barred from attending religious ceremonies and they appealed to the government (Shumsheha). However, the **Protestant Church** played a role in **improving the craftworkers' status** in some SNNP sites.

Immigrants were often **disadvantaged and excluded**. However, in some situations immigrant groups **brought innovation and prospered (DB10:change)**. In other contexts immigrant groups faced **discrimination**, including **exploitation and exclusion**. In Turufe the Kambata were expelled at the time of the overthrow of the Derg. Most of the migrant groups who remained were able to consolidate claims to land through registration and certification processes. However, recent migrants formed an exploited underclass. In Korodegaga migrant workers lived in poor conditions, were excluded from services and subject to abuse and victimisation in dispute cases. In Gelcha immigrants were not allowed to obtain PSNP support unlike the rest of the population.

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Development Research Institute and organised by its Economic Policy Analysis Unit. The brief was finalised taking into account the feedback received at the High Level Discussion Forum. It does not represent the views of EDRI, the Government of Ethiopia, or the financing Development Partners, but is intended to stimulate policy discussion. The other Series II Discussion Briefs and other research products are available at <http://ethiopiawide.net/>.

ⁱⁱ This concurs with quantitative findings in the *Ethiopia Poverty Assessment 2014*. World Bank Group. 2015. Washington, DC. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21323> License: CC BY. 3.0 IGO.

ⁱⁱⁱ See *Peripheral People: The Excluded Minorities of Ethiopia*, Dena Freeman and Alula Pankhurst eds (2003), London: Hurst.