

**Wellbeing in Developing Countries Panel  
for Ethiopian Economics Association International Conference**

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**Poverty and Wealth Dynamics:  
case studies from Dinki, Ankober Wereda, Amhara Region**

*Abstract for EEA Conference*

Alula Pankhurst

This paper considers case studies of households that have moved into and out of poverty particularly over the past 10 years and the effects of social shocks on households' status.

The households included for analysis comprise households that showed a marked increase or decrease in terms of livestock assets, consumption and self assessment between 1994 and 2004, selected by economists on the basis of the Ethiopian Rural Household Survey (ERHS) as well rich households that remained rich and poor ones that remained poor including cases selected using an asset index, households that had suffered from social shocks (such as death, accident, dispute, divorce, discrimination) and a rich household that was unhappy and a poor one that was happy selected on the basis of the Wellbeing in Developing Countries Resources and Needs Survey (RANS).

The paper seeks to understand the factors that underlie wealth and poverty, and dynamics that lead to changes in status, by using household standard of living and contentment graphs and timelines, as well as household profiles, histories, shocks, events, relationships and improvements or deteriorations. The paper describes the complexities of processes through analysing selected in-depth case studies to suggest a more subtle understanding of local realities in the selected site.

## **Understanding the Subjective Experiences of Children: a Reflexive Process**

### **Abstract**

Bethlehem Tekola

This paper examines the subjective experiences of children in two urban (Addis Ababa and Shashemene) sites of the Wellbeing in Developing Countries ESRC Research Group's programme (WeD) in Ethiopia. Specifically, it looks at what children *'have', do (with whom), think and feel*. It draws on qualitative research with thirty-two children of varying ages, sexes and socio-economic status in each of the two sites.

The paper begins by reviewing existing literature on children. The review establishes that ever since the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 there is a growing recognition of children (particularly in the west) as economic and social actors in their own right. The convention is followed by the emergence of the 'new' sociology of childhood in the 1990s, which places greater emphasis on 'listening to children voices'. In Ethiopia, however, despite the increasing interest in researching children's lives (especially after the government's ratification of the Convention in 1991) the academic literature related to children has been strikingly characterized by the absence of children's views and experiences.

The paper then presents the different 'voices' of children by analysing the qualitative data gained through individual interviews, focus group discussions and observation. The analysis process involves a two-stage interpretation process i.e. first, the participants attempt to interpret their lives mainly through individual interviews and then the researcher tries to interpret the interpretation of the participants. Here, it is suggested that researchers can discover a variety of children's views and experiences by employing reflexive techniques to ensure that their interpretations are not influenced by their personal and disciplinary prejudice.

The final section draws together the key findings, and explores the implication of the research.

Key words: childhood, children, subjective experience, reflexivity

# **Livelihood and the Dynamics of Migration in Rural Ethiopia**

Feleke Tadele

abstract

This paper attempts to provide a better understanding of the dynamics of rural livelihood and migration in selected rural sites of Ethiopia. The paper explores the determinants of migration, the processes and consequences of migration dynamics and their implications for rural poverty alleviation in the country.

The paper uses the analysis of migration data collected by the Well-being in Developing Countries - Ethiopia Programme based on survey and qualitative research in four rural research sites; namely, Imdiber (a Gurage town in the Southern Nations and Nationalities People Region, SNNPR), Koro Degaga and Turufe Kecheme (two rural villages in Oromia National Regional State, ONRS, Yetmen (a rural village in Amhara National Regional State, ANRS).

**Gender mainstreaming in Ethiopia:  
translation of policy into practice and implications on the ground.**

**Julie Newton,**

**Abstract**

In spite of the growing recognition that ‘gender’ matters amongst development practitioners and institutions which have translated into efforts to ‘mainstream gender’, there has been an overall persistence and sometimes aggravation of gendered inequalities. This paper explores these contradictions in the context of Ethiopia.

It is widely acknowledged that women in Ethiopia are disproportionately disadvantaged on a number of grounds. Drawing on data from the Wellbeing and Developing Countries ESRC Research group, this paper makes the case for a more complex analysis of gender inequalities. It explores how patterns of power at the community, household and individual level are inherently gendered in ways that have particularly negative effects on women. It will also examine how gender inequalities are being contested at different levels. The paper then turns to a discussion of the policies and intervention in place at the national level to address gendered inequalities. It concludes with a discussion of ways in which the divide between policy and practice on the ground can be bridged.

**Power Relations and Struggles and Quality of Life in Rural Ethiopia:  
Insights from Four Community Case Studies**

Philippa Bevan

ESRC Research Programme on Wellbeing in Developing Countries

University of Bath

*Abstract*

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

## **The cultural construction of values and goals in Ethiopia**

Abstract

Tom Lavers

Using the results of a Quality of Life survey conducted in six rural and urban sites as part of the Wellbeing in Developing Countries Research Group, this paper aims to gain insights into the cultural construction of wellbeing in Ethiopia.

In particular, it investigates the links between respondents' goals, their perceived level of goal attainment and their life satisfaction. The paper examines the relationship between universalist and relativist perspectives of wellbeing through a comparison of the importance respondents ascribe to individual and community values, and the universalist tendencies of the discourse on basic human needs and central human capabilities

**Intergenerational wellbeing/poverty transfers:  
Evidence from four communities in Ethiopia**

*Yisak Tafere*

The paper will try to examine how parents transfer wellbeing or poverty to their children. This will be investigated in the light of human, material, social, and cultural resources being transferred and the specific socio-economic contexts affecting them.

The Wellbeing in Developing Countries Ethiopia data collected in 2004 and 2005 will be utilized in producing the paper. Evidences from two urban (Kolfe in Addis Ababa, and Arada in Shashemene) and two rural communities (Korodegaga and Turufe Kecheme in Oromia Region) will be considered. Variations in gender and wealth status of the parents and their children will be explored.