

The Language of Urban Poverty: Institutional Action, Perception,
and Lived Experience within Batu and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study considers urban poverty within Batu and Addis, Ethiopia, as an outcome of relationships. By unpacking the complex interplay between institutional action, perception, and lived experience of urban poverty, I contend that historical and social relationships between the poor and non-poor shape the plight of the urban poor. I further explore how these social and historical constructs are subsequently translated through institutional action and experience.

Ethiopia's historical and social contexts nurture poverty and inform how the poor are perceived. Institutional action, perceptions, and quotidian experiences with the *other* then compound the pre-established constructions and stigmas by re-enforcing classist systems, notions of deservingness, ethnic and social stigmas, and the attribution of blame. While urban poverty and the urban poor are not inherent in policy and State, the individual urban poor occupy an uncomfortable but central position within the minds of the Ethiopian non-poor.

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List of Acronyms

AAA	American Anthropological Association
ACPF	African Children Policy Forum
ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialisation
AOG	Assemblies of God Charity
ASA	Association of Social Anthropologists
CBO	Congressional Budget Office
DFID	Department for International Development
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FSP	Formal Social Protection
GAD	Gender and Development
GO	Governmental Organisation
HCFAS	House Committee on Foreign Affairs Senate
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISP	Informal Social Protection
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice
LFCC	London Family Court Clinic
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NDM	New Directions Mandate
NDPF	National Development Policy Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PRSP	Poor Reduction Strategy Papers
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme
SSA	Social Soundness Analysis
TPLF	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
VAGA	Violence Against Girls in Africa
WID	Women in Development Project

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Figure 1, Page 26: Russell, K. 2014. Feeding Centre Coin. [photograph] (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Katrina Russell's own private dissertation collection)

Introduction

Through the language of urban poverty this paper explores how institutional action, perception, and lived experience intersect, interact, and influence one another. The language¹ of poverty is politically loaded and dependent on an understanding of the historical, cultural, and political context which bore it and on the literary discourse that engulfs it (Green 2006; Woldehanna 2004). As such, this study further considers how historical and social relationships have shaped the plight of the urban poor as it explores the complex interplay between themes of dependency, religion, gender, notions of deservingness, and the politics of social construction.

Building upon discussions of anthropology's long and critical history with development and poverty, this study analyses the systems in which the poor are immersed, challenging individualistic and reductionist theories for poverty analysis. As such, the subjective experiences of those objectively classified as the urban poor are analysed in relation to how the urban poor are discussed and experienced by the non-poor. The topics that emerged are set against key historical markers that I argue have shaped the plight of the urban poor. This study straddled subjective and objective approaches to poverty analysis, and in doing so it embraced a humanised, experiential and participatory practice during the collection, analysis and writing. Influenced by several past scholars' (Dodson 2012; Pinney and Peterson 2003; Poole 1997) discussions on representation, my analysis takes great care to run parallel with how multiple Ethiopian actors defined *their* poverty².

Following a contextual discussion on the field sites, on the participating organisations, and on my positionality as an emic researcher, my pragmatic and collaborative approach to research and writing up is reflexively explored within the methodology. Chapter three is a literary review discussing anthropology's ever-evolving critical relationship with development and poverty. This chapter discusses the legitimacy and worth of sub-disciplines in relation to the language of poverty and reviews the tradition in development discourse of neglecting the social processes that construct poverty.

¹ The language of poverty, much like the term *poverty* itself, is a problematic and “discursive practice” (Lister. 2004:103) and an “analytical dilemma” (Sheeper-Hughes 1992:533). Once unpacked, poverty is a Pandora's box of philosophical and theoretical paradoxes, binaries and camps (Rao and Vivekananda 1982:1).

² “[the] individuals themselves are the best judge of their own situations” (Ohio-Ehimiaghe 2012).

Chapter four critically unpacks the complex and contested nature of Ethiopia's history in relation to how the urban poor are socially constructed. This chapter also explores how key historical markers have shaped the plight of Ethiopia's urban poor. Chapter five explores the lived reality of beneficiaries in relation to the key historical markers. Chapter six is defined by contradiction and complex interactions. This chapter explores how the urban poor are perceived and experienced. The deceptively complex dichotomy between the urban poor being victims of circumstance or victims of their own fatalistic attitudes is further explored in relation to dependency, blame, and notions of 'our poverty'.

Through studying how institutional action, perception, and lived experience intersect, interact and influence one another, this study comes to three main conclusions. First, the plight of the urban poor is socially and historically shaped. Secondly the social and historical constructs of the urban poor are translated through institutional action. Tertiary, Ethiopia's urban poor occupy a complex and uncomfortable position within collective consciousness.

Chapter 1. Study Locations, Organisations: A Contextualising Discussion on Batu, Addis and Emic Ethnography

Within Ethiopia, the two urban localities with which this study is concerned are Addis Ababa and Batu³. This chapter contextualises this study, introducing Batu and Addis as field work locations, providing a brief overview of the social, religious and ethnic compositions. The organisations who participated within the study are introduced, and their motivations and strategies are reflexively unpacked. While both are urban locations, there are relevant differences between Batu and Addis that this study has acknowledged as embodying valuable discussions around Ethiopia's ethnic tensions, contested history, and religious bearings. Additionally these discussions provide a window into the true face of urban poverty in developing Ethiopia (Jalata 2010; Prunier and Ficquet 2015; Toggia and Zegeye 2013; Tronvoll and Haggmann 2011; Zewde 2001).

This chapter equally contextualises my theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of urban poverty within Batu and Addis. The realities of insider ethnography are critically explored in relation to the parameters of accepted theories and practices. The relevance and impact of my positionality in the field as a half Ethiopia, atheist, female researcher, and my negotiation of associated risks are also reflexively unpacked in relation to familial affiliation, accountability, how informants are sourced, and the extensive use of participant observation within this research.

1.1 Field work sites

Addis Ababa actually translates as 'new flower' which, as Zewde (2001) explores, reflects the fact that Addis has been in a constant state of 'erasure and reinscription' since its establishment in the late 1800s (Duroyaume cited in Prunier and Ficquet 2015:396).

Once described as 'the political and economic nerve centre' of Ethiopia (Garretson 2000:1-2), Addis is now the fourth largest city in Africa and its political centre, home to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference Centre (ECACC). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) website boasts Addis Ababa as 'the capital city of

³ Previously known as Ziway.

Africa' (UNECA). With an estimated population⁴ of 2,973,000, Addis is home to manufacturers, service industries and is a hub for international trade (Britannica 2016) while housing vast numbers of the urban poor. It is truly a place of contrasts. As Zeleke (2016:2), in her work, *Addis Ababa as Modernist Ruin*, critically unpacks, Ethiopia transformed from the 'socialist oriented junta known as the Derg (1974-1991)' to 'a city governed by a post-communist, free market regime'. Addis is a melting pot of Christian denominations, predominantly Orthodox Christianity and followers of Islam. It is also a melting pot of Ethiopia's 77+ ethnicities, which as I later explore, may seem harmonious at face value, but which in fact carries historically forged tensions based on contested histories and power relations.

Batu, founded in 1961, has also been known as Dumbal and Ziway. It is a town younger than Addis, and is one of the reform towns in Ethiopia. Located in East Shoa, an Oromia National Regional State around 160 km from Addis Ababa (MuDHo), Batu stands as a central town in Ethiopia's rift valley, at the heart of Oromo peoples' tradition, and backing onto the infamous Lake Ziway (Legesse 2015). While Batu could be seen as a less developed, industrialised and commercialised, it is a fast growing town housing various businesses such as Sher Flowers, Castel vineyards, a prison with a resident prison farm, and the caustic soda water factory (Briggs 2012:503). Playing host to a weekly *Gebeya tilik'i* [large market] on Saturdays, agropastoralists from the surrounding areas migrate *en masse* to sell and exchange their produce and livestock. Although Islam is the most prominent religion in Oromo communities, Batu, from my observations is still predominantly Orthodox Christian, if only marginally. Dry and dusty, the town of Batu is a hive of activity and a truckers' paradise⁵. Seated on the main road from Addis to Nairobi, Batu is a town in transit and serves as a perfect overnight rest stop for workers, truckers and travellers.

Both locations hold social and familial connections to me. The daughter of an Ethiopian woman from the Tirgayan ethnic group, I call both Addis and Batu home. Our family has a home on the fringes of Addis and an eco-tourism lodge in Batu. I am as such a member of both communities and regularly travel between the UK, Addis and Batu throughout the year. I am fully integrated in both locations.

⁴ Population estimate taken from 2006.

⁵ I recall how every evening the roads would be lined, nose to tail, with the most monstrous trucks carrying parts for the impending blue Nile dam for hydroelectricity, towering shipping containers en route to factories, lodges and hotels.

As with many who partake in insider ethnography, i.e., indigenous ethnography or, as it has become contemporarily known, rooted ethnography (Hill 2001), I enjoyed many notable benefits and many drawbacks as a researcher (Wolcott 2008:144). As Forsythe (2001) argues, ‘competence as an insider does not make one an accurate observer’, and Wolcott (2008:144) touches upon the apparent contradiction emic ethnography produces when the ‘kind of difference on which ethnographic research was founded’ is ‘absent’. As experienced by Mosse (2006), one’s proximity to the subject has traditionally been maintained within the theory and practice of orthodox anthropology. Rooted ethnography presents a potential danger as ethnography and autobiography become ‘entangled’ and ‘enmeshed’ (Forsythe 2001:183)⁶.

However, emic ethnography has been proven to work within the parameters of accepted theories and practices, while opening the door to ‘refreshing and rewarding innovation’ (Messerschmidt 1981:2)⁷. Challenging the beliefs of the time Weaver and White (1972:124) argued widely accepted theoretical and in field practices ‘do not have to perish and be made over anew’. Insider anthropology ‘is an increasingly important form of anthropology’ (Messerschmidt 1981:2). Within this study I have referred to a selection of emic ethnographies written on Ethiopia by Ethiopians, I have viewed their work, at times, to challenge and support the notion that emic ethnography lacks objectivity and is ‘too close’. Although Messerschmidt (1981:3) further contends that, counter to widely held views, ‘the inward focus on indigenous research requires and stimulates one other important ingredient: objectivity’. Based on these observations I support Forsythe’s (2001:149) assertion that ‘ethnography usually works best when conducted by an outsider with considerable insider experience’.

Occupying an interesting position, not being fully immersed in my ‘other culture’, I straddle Forsythe’s (2001) ideal and being a full insider. A similar subject position was experienced by Saudri, who reflects on her attempt to conduct a rooted ethnography within Australia. Saudri found herself uncomfortably positioned between not being Aborigine and not being fully European Australian. As she states, she was ‘neither insider nor outsider’ (cited in Sillitoe 2015:78). As I will later expand upon, this position was predominantly beneficial; I was able to better safeguard myself and my

⁶ Visweswaran (1994:6) explores this concern further in her work, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*.

⁷ Messerschmidt (1981:2) goes further in singing the praises of insider ethnography, stating it ‘reflects a coming of age . . . beginnings of a revitalization of the profession . . . it marks an end to the era of colonial anthropology and the beginning of a new maturity of purpose’.

informants, and to gain an audience with those who participated in the study. Disciplinary-wise, as Hill (2001) argues, rooted ethnography holds ontological, phenomenological and epistemological advantages. While this is a position worthy of envy, it carries with it ‘unique ethical considerations’ (Hill 2001).

1.2 Organisations and sourcing informants

I initially needed to locate beneficiaries who would provide me with a spectrum of informed emic perceptions and experiences of urban poverty within Batu and Addis. In order to achieve this, I relied upon the professional and personal networks I had established and maintained since 2013 in Batu and Addis within a handful of NGOs and GOs.

HOPE’s feeding centres are both situated in the heart of Addis, and are divided into men’s centres and women and children’s centres. A maximum of 1,000 individuals in each of these feeding centres are provided with both breakfast and lunch every day (Zenebe 2013)⁸. HOPE strives to promote holistic development and supports children and their families through their mantra ‘the ladders of HOPE’. The organisation encourages self-sufficiency through primarily providing for basic needs in order to enable the individuals to better receive educational training, advice, and ‘character development’, which involves teaching beneficiaries how to socially integrate themselves, have pride, and develop coping strategies (HOPE 2016). The women and children’s feeding centre was established in 2011 by HOPE’s executive director Zenebe Ayele, although both feeding centres were primarily supported by A Child’s Right (ACR), now known as SPLASH. HOPE is an organisation with far-reaching projects across Ethiopia, including a university and schools for children deemed to be the ‘poorest of the poor’ (Zenebe 2013); it is a religious organisation funded by Woord en Daad from the Netherlands, the Community Presbyterian Church, the Menlo Church, and the Venture Christian Church from the USA, as well as the non-religious organisation Ethiopia Aid in England, Canada, and Australia (HOPE 2016)⁹.

⁸ Established in 2009, the men’s feeding centre was originally started to provide school children with breakfast and lunch (Proving.it 2009), but has since refocused its efforts at this location to support men and boys. The reason behind this shift is unclear.

⁹ While there, I frequently observed evangelistic preachers volunteering within the women’s feeding centres, helping to distribute food while preaching. Upon enquiring about this phenomenon, a member of the staff explained they regularly ‘visit’. This staff member did not welcome or appreciate the preachers’ motivations to be there. I believe this staff member thought the preachers were taking advantage of a captive audience and in essence ‘feeding off of the starving’.

Within Batu, I worked with the Italian-funded Women in Development (WID) project managed by a Spanish woman called Teresa¹⁰. This branch of WID is located in the heart of Batu and is only noticeable from the main road by a sun-bleached mural of children on a galvanised gate and a small roadside sign. Within the walled compound lies a small playing field with goal posts and buildings housing a crèche for the beneficiaries' children, a textiles building, a small shop, and another roofed, open building kitted with traditional fabric weaving machines. Women can be seen there, sitting communally cross-legged on the floor weaving baskets, talking and laughing. WID as an international developmental strategy grew out of Boserup's (1970) work, which acknowledged 'the important economic contribution' women made. Assefa (2008:94) argued that when governments neglect the reality that genders experience poverty differently, it is detrimental to national development efforts¹¹. As Assefa (2008:95) notes, bilateral and multilateral 'organisations created WID units to articulate WID policy' through income-generating activities, a strategy of WIDs that I observed first-hand. WID places a strong emphasis on women's on-going participation¹² in development, at both the communal and individual levels for common goals (Berge and Taddia 2013:382-366). However WID as a strategy is viewed as somewhat archaic and has been heavily critiqued in favour of the more gender equal Gender and Development (GAD) approach (Assefa 2008; Eversole 2003; Steans 2006). Many unpack the differences between WID and GAD, but the central themes rest on the potential for WID to further marginalise women through the formation of female-specific policy and strategy from participating in existing development efforts and achieving gender equality (Assefa 2008; Eversole 2003; Steans 2006). WID equally serves to marginalise men, again proving counter-productive to achieving gender equality¹³.

¹⁰ Considering Italy's historical attempts to invade Ethiopia through a bloody campaign led by Mussolini, I was surprised to see that, while this history has not been forgotten, there was no obvious animosity towards the Italian funded WID project.

¹¹ Boserup demanded more efficient and effective development strategies and policies that targeted and incorporated women specifically '[in]to existing development processes' (Assefa 2008:94).

¹² Nelson and Wright (1995) made a clear distinction between what they deemed 'instrumental' and 'transformational' participation; the former enables the accomplishment of a specific goal, while the latter produces an 'essentially new system or a new role as a citizen' (Berge and Taddia 2013:382).

¹³ The Bangladesh Ministry of Women and Children Affairs publication 'Institutional Review of WID Capacity of the Government of Bangladesh: Appendices to training Capability' (1998) is an example of a work that thoroughly unpacks the central policy, strategy, and experiential differences between WID and GAD.

Assemblies of God (AOG), both as a concept and cause, unsettled me prior to spending time at the organisation in Batu. AOG is a fiercely evangelistic international organisation, and their terminology within publications pivots on notions of ‘crusade[s]’ (wwevangel.org) and ‘missions’ (Ethiopiaag) across Africa. Their core and ministry values include goals such as ‘church planting . . . salvation . . . divine healing’ (Ethiopiaag). The World Wide Evangelism Ziway (Batu) Report speaks of a crusade in Ziway during which a meeting was held on the grounds behind the AOG compound. The report boasts of witnessing miracles in Batu, predominantly of the joints and bones, but also of ‘deliverance from tormenting dreams and fears’ (Evangel 2012:1). The report further boasts of how ‘around 150 people responded to the alter call and surrendered their hearts to Jesus’ (Evangel 2012:1).

Although supported by and embodying the Evangelistic crusade, their approach was far more inclusive and balanced. Health Care Ministries is an Evangelical medical organisation that partnered with AOG in Batu in 2013. They indicated that they treated over 1,400 people for medical, dental and optical needs at their ‘medical Evangelism clinic’ (Stewart et al. 2013) and noted that ‘people experienced physical and spiritual healing as well as renewed hope in God’ (Stewart et al. 2013). Tadessa, the regional manager of AOG in Batu, led a pragmatic and religiously diluted approach to the mission there. Situated on the main road into the town from Addis, AOG is a stark, spacious place of worship and learning. Children and families receive holistic support and advice on health, education, mental health and finances provided by a staff of locally-sourced social workers and an open door policy.

Those I relied upon as gatekeepers worked closely with the target population of the perceived urban poor in these locations, occupying various positions within NGOs and GOs. By the very nature of their work they were reliant on both the objective and subjective¹⁴ categorisation of individuals deemed to be the urban poor. In order for me to achieve the desired subjective data, I was reliant on the objective categorisation of the beneficiaries attending HOPE’s feeding centres, AOG (Assemblies of God) and WID (Women in Development) as being urban poor.

Although this approach to locating and sourcing informants was not ideal, due to time restrictions and a need to secure my informants’ safety (as well as my own), this was the

¹⁴ The local communities were relied upon to draw initial attention to those in need of support and help. This initial location of the urban poor was based on the subjective classifications made by the surrounding community.

most effective approach, as I was able to rely upon structures of trust which had been previously built. I was able to better coordinate interviews with informants and to apply participant observation as a methodological approach without placing myself or my informants at risk. By utilising the organisations' locations as bases from which to conduct informal and formal interviews, I was not only able to ensure that I would be able to re-locate beneficiaries (who are notoriously nomadic) for follow-up interviews, but also able to guarantee that my informants would be able to find me for advice, reassurance and status reports.

My pre-established relationships with WID and HOPE informed my choice for where to locate this study at proposal level. While WID and HOPE (in Batu and Addis, respectively) gave me access to the necessary informants, my data from WID was significantly gendered due to it being an organisation targeting women. Initially I considered whether this limited and weakened my study. However, upon sourcing another organisation within Batu (the AOG), it became apparent that even those organisations targeting both male and female beneficiaries received significantly greater numbers of female beneficiaries. Although I acknowledge this was initially a limitation, the data gathered from other organisations in an attempt to rectify this limitation proved to be valuable, as the new data brought to light trends in the number of men willing to attend charitable organisations in Batu.

1.3 Positionality and associated risks

In the field I maintained an awareness of the impact, danger, and potential limitations within this study as a result of my positionality. Being a female researcher was beneficial when interviewing female informants, I also observed it enabled male informants to more comfortably open up to me during sensitive discussions. Their tone appeared less abrupt in comparison to how I had observed their interactions with male employees in their respective organisations. I also found myself altering my usual behaviour, consciously altering my appearance in relation to who I predicted encountering on that day. I found myself actively dressing down at times, which was contrary to my behaviour in Ethiopia prior to conducting research. Traditionally, women of a certain social standing are expected to 'dress well' and exhibit their wealth. While I did not wish to assert myself as being a part of the middle-to-upper classes within Ethiopia, I equally had to counter unwanted attention from the male beneficiaries

and non-poor informants¹⁵. As explored by Smith and Watson (1998:211), ‘questions of positionality more often than not confront [the] female rather than male field worker, and the female ethnographer is more likely to be faced with a decision over which world she enters’.

Conducting participant observation within Batu and Addis as a lone female at times was uncomfortable due, in part, to a heightened awareness of those around me. I was also studying my own communities, which challenged my sense of belonging. At times I felt more etic than emic. As Hill (2001) notes, rooted ethnography carries a unique set of ethical considerations, and it is a privileged position for an ethnographer. However, Sandri (cited in Sillito 2015:78) discusses ethical considerations span both researcher and the researched. I experienced Sandri’s (cited in Sillito 2015:78) constant state of flux between sense of self and questions of belonging while equally feeling as though I was risking a lot personally and culturally by exposing ‘my culture’ to the view of outsiders through ethnography. Inevitably, I had to confront uncomfortable truths regarding my gender, ethnicity and religious bearing. Through this research, I worried I was exposing the vulnerable underbelly of my country, but in reality, that may not have been the case. I should consider embracing Hill’s (2001) argument that insider researchers need to stop apologising and justifying their positionality and want to study their communities.

Swaddled in mythological claims concerning the Ark of the Covenant and being the cradle of Judaism, Islam and Christianity, Ethiopia is a fiercely religious country. While I appreciate the value and power of religious devotion, I am an atheist. At times, I felt my lack of a religious position posed a potential barrier between myself and the informants. While religious tensions in Ethiopia are almost unheard of (ethnic tensions are the primary cause of conflict), you are expected to have faith in something. On one occasion, I was confronted while attending the HOPE Enterprises school compound for a meeting by a highly concerned young male student wearing an Islamic skullcap and by the resident Orthodox Christian pastor. They stood shoulder to shoulder and pleaded through laughs and smiles for me to ‘take up a religion, any religion’. Their concerns appeared to centre on a genuine worry for my spiritual fulfilment. While I did not feel

¹⁵ However, being a young, lone female researcher resulted in me achieving greater opportunities and somewhat easier access to resources and informants. If I were male, some opportunities and doors may not have been open to me.

my atheism posed a limitation to the study, it did induce greater concern among informants and beneficiaries regarding my wellbeing.

I became increasingly aware that my ethnic background as Tigrayan could potentially pose a problem if informants and/ or beneficiaries became aware of it. As I will expand upon within my discussions of the historical and social contexts that contribute to the construction of the urban poor and poverty, the Tigrayans and Amhara have a historically forged a legacy of maintaining a sense of ‘legitimacy and entitlement’ through a ‘self-idealized identity’. Forrest (2004:195-198) stated that ‘Tigrayan’s’ inherited ‘a perceived right to rule’. While those like Forrest (2004), Hayward and Lewis (2005), and Levine (1974:84) provide more nuanced and objective discussions on Tigrayan and Amhara and their rule over Ethiopia’s other ethnic groups, as well as on the tempestuous relationship between the two areas, discussions by Oromo researchers, historians and ethnographers presents a different narrative in their accounts of events while equally being incredibly candid in their frustrations with the Oromiya. At times, their work verges towards propaganda, and can make for uncomfortable reading by promoting a ‘strict Abyssinian/ Oromo dichotomy’ through extreme and emotive claims (Hayward and Lewis 2005:242)¹⁶.

As my data and observations will illustrate later in this study, this perception of institutionalised persecution cannot be overlooked as rooted in paranoia and conspiracy theories. My non-Ethiopian informants and I both witnessed the blatant sense of superiority felt by Tigrayans over Oromia, and the animosity felt by Oromia towards the Tigrayan. My own mother shared stories of growing up in Addis. My father and I also once sat uncomfortably in our car while making the journey from Addis to Batu as a family friend spouted anti-Oromo propaganda. To the family friend, a man in his late 50s, and in general life an educated, charming, pleasant gentleman, the Oromo are for all intents and purposes a *slave class*.

On a personal level, the more I learned, the more I was disturbed and saddened by this legacy and the current reality within both Addis and Batu. I struggled with accepting this reality and so, while I eagerly shared my Ethiopian roots with informants and beneficiaries, I held back from telling them I was Tigrayan. When they did ask, waves of anxiety would sweep over me. However, in the midst of these highly complex

¹⁶ Jalata (2010) and Jarso Waaqo (transcripts of his spoken poetry can be found in Hayward and Lewis 2005:235-242) provide examples of this anger and sense of betrayal felt by the Oromo towards the Abyssinians (Appendix A).

political and social tensions, I was never met by animosity in Addis nor Batu. Those I met seemed generally pleased to find that I was Ethiopian. My ethnicity did not seem, therefore, to be a cause for concern for my participants. An awareness of this ‘cultural baggage’ further fuelled my need to present a tentative and sensitive study both in the process of the field research and the process of writing it up. I made a concerted effort to keep my familial ethnicity from hindering or influencing my research. These discussions are a reality frequently experienced by rooted ethnographers. My approach to counter the risks to my informants and research is reflected in the heavily reflexive nature of this study. Acknowledging the positionality of both the insider and outsider, Drumwright (2013) noted, in relation to participant observation, how ‘reflexivity balances the insiders and outsiders perspectives’.

1.4 Loyalties, accountability and risks

As a rooted researcher, I felt many levels of accountability, spanning individuals and organisations. Throughout my research and the analysis of my data, I have remained conscious of my accountability and my responsibilities to HOPE Enterprises, the WID Project, AOG, those who work within these organisations, the beneficiaries, the University of Wales Trinity St David, my family, friends, and ultimately, myself. This consciousness led me to negotiate a balance between cultural, social, and professional relativity and responsibility.

As with all research, there were risks to both researcher and researched, and I worked to minimise these as much as I was able, although it is not possible to foresee all potential risks, or the way results may be interpreted by others. Due to the personal and highly-sensitive nature of the perceptions studied these risks were compounded. Moreover, misinterpretation due to cultural differences between myself, research informants or reader and the study could lead to further misinterpretation and the application of my analysis and data in ways I did not intend.

This research benefitted from the fact that I was not funded or sponsored. It relieved me of the complex relationship and potentially conflicting interests often experienced between funders and researchers (ASA 2011:6). Although the participating organisation did not request to share my findings or thesis, there was no guarantee they would not wish to in the future. I therefore went to great efforts to secure anonymity for those who requested it, noting them as ‘Anon’ in my text and field notes and excluding contextual or descriptive discussions when applying their discussions within this text. While I

cannot guarantee that they will not be un-intentionally recognised, I have done all that is within my power to safeguard against it. The application of information from this study within politically-motivated contexts is another concern. This text is vulnerable if the information in question is applied in the absence of context; poverty is a politically sensitive and politically charged area of study¹⁷.

I have made every effort to counter this risk through securing written and verbal consent, alerting the British Embassy within Addis Ababa to my activities, abiding by the rules of cross-national research¹⁸, and presenting the data in an informed, reflexive, and ethically aware context. The likelihood of any of the above coming to fruition lies in my ability to read individual situations and my ability to safeguard raw data and the informants' personal details (when requested). Maintaining a consciousness of these potential risks, while adopting a highly reflexive approach to every aspect of this study, has enabled me to better tailor my approach to data analysis and data storage, thus vastly lowering the likelihood of such risks.

1.5 Conclusion

While both locations are classified as urban, there are compositional differences that, through the participation of for mentioned organisations, provide a broad range of perceptions on, and experiences of urban poverty. Although rooted ethnography carries unique ethical considerations (Wolcott 2008), it is a position in the field that, if the associated risks and ethical considerations are negotiated, provides a unique opportunity to achieve more insightful data from informants and study environments respectively (Forsythe 2001; Hill 2001; Messerschmidt 1981). This is especially true in relation to the application of participant observation, which within this study occupied a primary methodological position. An understanding of the field sites and my positionality shaped and informed the development of pragmatic and collaborative approaches in field in order to better grasp the true face of urban poverty within Batu and Addis.

¹⁷ This, combined with the fact that my initial in-field trip coincided with the death of Ethiopia's much admired Prime Minister, the late Meles Zenawi, led to justified concerns for my safety as a researcher within a country that, at the time, was emotionally charged and in the throes of political instability.

¹⁸ Appendix B

Chapter 2. Methodology

This study adopted a pragmatic and participatory approach, and included formal and informal interviewing techniques, the use of translators, participant observation, and to a lesser extent, photography. The discussed methods, while grounded in theory, have evolved in response to the realities of field work and the participation of informants to produce subjective and objective data that better reveal the inter-relationships between the varying spheres of society I engaged with. This fieldwork was guided by the ethical guidelines of the ASA (Association of Social Anthropologists) (2011), AAA (American Anthropological Association) (2009), the LFCC (London Family Court Clinic) (2003), and is University of Wales Trinity St David-approved. The augmentation of practice was not reserved for the ethical, but was applied in the crafting of methodologies that enabled (primarily the beneficiaries who partook in the study) to ‘tell their stories in a respectful and time-efficient way’ (LFCC 2003:2). Below, I reflexively discuss the development of my methods both in the field and in the process of the write up.

2.1 Safeguarding

Safeguarding informants permeated every stage of the fieldwork and write up. I made concerted efforts to tailor my approach in the field and in the writing of this study to honour that responsibility. My duty to safeguard was not limited to those in field, but extended to other researchers who participated and contributed to this study. I maintained an awareness of my responsibility to leave the field in a state where future research could be conducted in extension to this study, or in isolation of this study. As discussed above, I embarked on this project from a participatory stance; this was (and is) reliant on the construction and maintenance of strong, trusted networks and partnerships. Transparency in relation to my role as researcher, the motivations, and the goals of this research were integral to the achievement of trust and thus the acquisition of data.

2.2 Participant observation and interviews

In the field, I relied upon gatekeepers to enable me to access situations in which I would be able to reach out to those deemed ‘poor’ for interviews. I primarily used participant observation as a ‘member’ of the communities in question. As mentioned earlier, I straddled the position of insider and outsider. While in the country, I was Ethiopian: I lived, socialised, shopped, cooked, and interacted with the community within Addis and Batu. I participated within the community and observed how the non-poor interacted with the urban poor. I also observed how the urban poor, away from the setting of the

organisations, interacted with the communities around them and how they interacted with me. Participant observation in this guise enabled me to achieve a more holistic and contextualised gauge of how the poor perceived their situation and how their communities perceived their reality. This allowed me to build upon my own perceptions and reflect on my ethnocentricities. From the very start of my initial research planning, I knew I needed to utilise a complementary combination of formal and informal interviews alongside participant observation and literary analysis in order to achieve a fuller picture of urban poverty.

While I had gained permissions and written consent from the gatekeepers to conduct my research through their organisations and to interview their beneficiaries, I ensured these beneficiaries provided verbal consent and only partook in the study if they showed a pro-active desire to be involved. I issued informal and indirect requests for participation through being introduced to all beneficiaries attending the organisations during gatherings, meals, and assemblies. Following the introduction of myself and the study, I proceeded to an allocated office within the compound and waited for informants to volunteer to partake in the study¹⁹. My research and I were introduced to the beneficiaries of all the organisations involved²⁰, and my research title and goals were explained and expanded on during these seminar-like interactions by those working for the organisations. I insisted upon a need for full transparency. My interest in how institutional actions, perceptions, and lived experiences of urban poverty intersect and interact was generally well-received. As a result, beneficiaries were aware that, if they chose to partake, I would be interviewing them in order to gain an understanding of the lived reality of their situation.

While this posed a risk of resulting in no beneficiaries volunteering to partake in the study, it was necessary as it removed the risk of the beneficiaries feeling obligated, pressured, or coerced into volunteering by the organisation they were attending. It equally provided a non-confrontational way in which beneficiaries could decline the opportunity to participate.

¹⁹ I initially felt it best to link the location of the interview with the tone of the interview, e.g., a formal interview in an office or an informal interview in a location the informant would feel most at ease. However, regardless of the location of the interview, the tone remained relatively formal with the gatekeepers. This could be due to a lingering air of suspicion around my reasons for being there and a sense of loyalty felt by members of the staff to the charity that superseded the desired feeling of relaxation and trust I hoped I had created and maintained.

²⁰ They were told that I have familial links to Ethiopia, as well as peripheral information about me (i.e., my hobbies, what I do for fun, what I love about Ethiopia).

Prior to the interview commencement, I ensured the informant and I had an ‘off the record’ conversation in which they could ask me anything related or unrelated to the study. I used this opportunity to create a bond with the beneficiaries and to gauge their readiness to be involved in this study. Throughout the interviews, the beneficiaries were repeatedly given the opportunity to suspend or terminate the interview, especially when discussing and reflecting on particularly sensitive or painful memories and experiences. I found loosely structuring the informal interviews with beneficiaries around a set of control questions better enabled my translator and I to not accidentally deploy loaded terms. For example, instead of asking whether they viewed their lives to be impoverished, I asked ‘How would you describe your life? Please describe a day and night in your life. Tell me your story. I’d love to hear your life’s journey’.

During both forms of interviews, I found that a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions reaped the best results due to issues of translation, while equally addressing the need to simplify some questions to avoid misinterpretation. The questions were general and neutral in order to avoid guiding the conversation. Personal experiences, perceptions, and relationships with those around them were my desired subjective and qualitative data. Contrary to the methods used by Ohio-Ehimiaghe (2012), and despite the fact that his application of direct questions and group discussions reaped rich data, such an objective approach would not have suited this research, which focused on the subjective relationships that construct poverty. His methodological approach was fitting for his focus on functional definitions and poverty, not relationships. Other than conversing with me, those who volunteered to participate were in no way required to perform any other tasks that differed from those of the every day.

As a result of the high illiteracy rates amongst the poor of Ethiopia, I chose to only pursue verbal consent from the beneficiaries I assessed in order to continue with the interviews. Discussions around the legal capacity of these informants to provide consent are relevant here. However, due to the relationships between those who worked in the organisations and the beneficiaries I observed during my periods of fieldwork (2013-15), I felt assured no pressure associated with loyalties were felt by the beneficiaries who partook in the study. The relationships I observed between the beneficiaries and employees of the organisations were relational and reciprocal. The information relayed to the individual beneficiaries regarding informed consent not only

included all of the questions of consent present in the consent form created for this project²¹.

2.3 Language use

While this study was partially reliant on the objective categorisation of the urban poor, there was an unavoidable reality to not merely observe those deemed ‘urban poor’, but also communicate and obtain permitted, voluntary perspectives on how they perceived their lives. While I did not want to enforce the process of defining those deemed to be the poor, I agree with Tvedten’s (2011:11) argument that all written poverty includes ‘terms of marginalisation and exclusion’²². The methodological approach I adopted strived to reap data on the relational understanding of poverty, answering Green’s (2006:1124) call for more approaches to poverty that ‘highlight the centrality of the actions and strategies of rich and poor alike in determining poverty outcomes, and the quality of the embodied experience of deprivation’.

The poor are vulnerable in the current anthropological discourse on poverty and within development literature (Green 2006). However, this is more so the case when discussing the urban poor; contrary to the spectrum of labels assigned to the rural poor, they appear to be perceived as an incongruous mass sharing a collective experience of urban poverty. The need to capture the individual experiences is heightened as a result of this and hence my methodological approach was designed to do so in the most appropriate manner.

Within this study, the term ‘beneficiary’ was applied in the field and in the write up when referencing those attending the organisations. ‘The poor’ as a categorisation was applied when speaking of the general situation of the urban poor deduced from discussions with the beneficiaries and when I reflected upon my observations of the urban poor external to the participating organisations. When categorising informants who were not ‘the poor’, I classified them as being ‘the non-poor’ as opposed to ‘gatekeepers’; these informants were academics from the University of Addis Ababa,

²¹ The option of anonymity was offered. The informants whose names are disclosed within this thesis explicitly requested their names be mentioned.

²² Green (2006) equally equates qualitative approaches to the poverty discourse in anthropological research with the risk of generalisation in approaches to practice and in the process of the write up. Green’s (2006) concerns, as could be the case with Tvedten’s (2011) concerns, were associated with research that placed poverty as the ‘locus of analysis’ and not social relationships (Green 2006:37). As Green states, ‘for researchers in anthropology, as with our informants, poverty is a social relation, not an absolute condition’ (2006),

established Ethiopian anthropologists, and members of the local community. These terms alleviated the anxiety and tensions I had of subconsciously ‘looking down’ on those deemed to be the poor²³, the risk of voyeurism, and the risk of distancing myself when engaging with those helped by organisations (Green 2006; Pickering 2012:73). Referring to someone as a beneficiary holds more positive connotations and implications for those receiving support from organisations and charities. When considering the potentially damaging nature of the terms ‘poor’ and ‘impoverished’, it becomes apparent that the impact on those deemed to be the poor can lead to social, personal, and literary issues associated with the dangers of labelling, literary fixing of identities (Walsh 2008)²⁴, and categories. These categories served as clarificatory tools within this study.

While I strived to not differentiate between those deemed to be the poor and my other informants, I could not avoid the fact that I consciously and subconsciously altered my vocabulary during interviews depending on the informant’s social and professional position. When interviewing gatekeepers and the non-poor, I discussed their observations of ‘the poor’ in that locality and their observations of how society engaged with and perceived ‘the poor’ in that community. Contrary to how I approached those deemed to be the poor, I asked questions which were, at times, more direct and more structured, as I wanted to know how they experienced and perceived poverty specifically. In so doing, there is danger I perpetuated the literary, social, and political tradition of generalising ‘the poor’s quotidian experience of urban poverty’ (Green 2006:36-37). While I went to such extents to avoid making the beneficiaries feel like study objects, my methodological aspirations were theoretically achievable, but not always possible in practice.

²³ I feel these are necessary classificatory distinctions within this study. This approach enabled me to strip poverty as an analytical focus of its agency and establish those deemed to be the urban poor with agency.

²⁴ Appendix C



Fig.1: Men's feeding centre (HOPE). A boy proudly shows off the silver token he paid 1 birr for to exchange for a full lunch.

During my time with HOPE, I observed a practice HOPE implemented in their schools and feeding centres whereby the community of beneficiaries who used their services contributed to the organisation in some shape or form; this created a relationship through an *exchange* between the beneficiaries and HOPE. I observed that a similar system and mantra had been implemented within the WID project in Batu. As depicted in Figure 1, HOPE's feeding centres require those who attend the feeding centres to pay 1 birr in return for a silver coin token that can then be exchanged for a meal and drink. The meal costs the charity more than 1 birr to produce, but value is placed on the symbolic exchange²⁵. I found this to be a refreshing and successfully empowering method of engaging with those categorised to be the poorest of the poor. I adapted this exchange approach and applied it to my study by providing beneficiaries with a photograph of themselves, which in Ethiopia can be used within legal documents, the attainment of identification documentation, gifts for family, or simply held for their personal use, in return for their time.

²⁵ The poor are actively encouraged to earn through any means, within reason, in order to engage with the communities in which they live and to counter the identity so often imposed on the poor, that of dependency, charity, and a lack of self-determination.

I decided to incorporate photography within this study as a tool for exchange. It is evident that there are practical and ethical difficulties in acquiring fully-informed consent from informants when reliant on translators in a context where illiteracy is a common problem and where you cannot foresee the full potential use and application of the images you have taken²⁶. While the dynamic created between the beneficiaries, translators, and me as researcher were positive and beneficiaries were informed of the possible applications of their images within this study and verbal consent was requested; the use of photography in the field carries with it a host of ethical discussions around permissions and understandings.

2.4 Translators

While my data somewhat challenges Katz's (1989:3) assertion 'The poor are always there, only periodically do we rediscover or think about them', due to complex, but established interactions between the poor and their immediate community, I support his statement when applied to those who are immersed in, but not suffering from, the condition of poverty, who rarely think about the poor or 'greet the face of poverty'. Based on my observations from the interviews and experiential qualitative data, my ethnocentric approach to the interviews and linguistic expression of all involved revealed a complex expression of the classist and hierarchical societal structures that appear to linger in Ethiopia's collective conscience and how this can also be differentiated from *othering*.

I studied my translators as much as I observed and studied my informants during interviews. As all of my translators were Ethiopian and lived in either Batu or Addis, it was beneficial to observe their perspectives. While some translators were family members or close friends of mine, others were volunteers from the organisations themselves. The proximity of translators to the organisations, beneficiaries, or myself could have undermined the validity of my data as a result of their potential loyalties, and motivations.

²⁶ The visual representations of individuals and communities, as well as the ethical use of photography, has been further explored through the works of Landau and Kaspin (2002) within discussions of visual anthropology and portraits.

I made a concerted effort to frequently ‘mix up’ my translators. On reflection, the relation of the translator to the beneficiary showed little influence on the data itself, but instead made a significant impact on the atmosphere during interviews.

The value of a maintained awareness of language use became very apparent, specifically during four interviews where beneficiaries broke down in tears. While I had made every effort to make sure my translators were well versed in how I needed the interviews to be conducted, at times I worried that they were paraphrasing my questions and the responses given by beneficiaries, causing frustration on both sides.

I also became aware that other than occasionally being questioned for the purposes of validating their impoverished state to organisations in the hope of securing support, the beneficiaries I interviewed had not been asked about their life stories on such a qualitative and personal level before. I noticed this approach equally caught my translators off guard²⁷, and I had to acknowledge that while my reliance on translators was limiting, my reliance on them equally enabled the study and provided another interactional platform from which I could observe relationships between the poor and non-poor. I observed culture shock and the enforcement of hierarchical behaviours that hinged on questions of familiarity and the translators’ physical proximity to the urban poor in everyday life²⁸.

2.5 Studying perception

The process of actually studying perception in itself has been critically justified²⁹, especially in Legerspetz’s (2008:5) philosophical discussion of perception, where he suggests a need for the researcher to have an insider’s understanding in order to fully comprehend and interpret the true meaning behind the described perception. Commonly understood as participant observation, or, as is the case with this study insider ethnography, Legerspetz (2008) argues that not only does one need to participate and observe, but one should have *a posteriori* knowledge of the reality under study. Descartes’s Error notes that ‘all you can know for certain is that they [perceptions] are real to yourself, and that other beings make comparable images’ (cited in Damasio 1996:96-97).

²⁷ This was particularly the case with my translators Alex and Tilahun, who posed two very different but fascinating scenarios (Appendix D).

²⁸ Appendix D

²⁹ Appendix E

Perceptions promote equality within methodological approaches to ethnography. It is not purely a definition of *one* made by the *other*. Perceptions do not strive to be functional; they provide an equally valued understanding of a lived reality. Studying perceptions enables one to better fathom how through practice, the social conceptual ‘constructions of their worlds’ come to be (Green 2006:16). Contrary to the study of functioning definitions and classifications, perceptions, through their very subjective nature, shed light on the true picture of social relations. Although to some extent, the data collected through the study of perception can be challenged as undermining this study’s creation of knowledge and truth claims, as Legerspetz (2008:6) argues when considering the quantitative value of perception in the construction of valid truth claims, all perceptions are true to the individual. It is the consistencies and inconsistencies with others’ perceptions set against a culturally, contextually, and historically informed backdrop that lead to the production of claims and knowledge. The value of the individuals’ perception of their situation and their interactions with those around them enabled this study to give agency to all the informants (regardless of my classifications).

In essence, I worked to alter the dynamics between the poor and non-poor while maintaining the researcher-informant distance from an emic position, I addressed each informant as a valued participant with a historically grounded and temporal story to tell.

2.6 Conclusion

The methodological and theoretical approaches discussed, informed an ethically aware, pragmatic, and collaborative approach to the practical study of urban poverty, institutional action, perception, and lived experience within Batu and Addis.

An awareness of my positionality and the complex nature of studying poverty within Ethiopia demanded a heightened commitment to safeguarding. The poor within development discourse and multimedia become vulnerable to exploitation, misrepresentation, and the potential loss of agency. As such, poverty becomes the locus of study with the social relationships, historical contexts, and individual experiences that construct poverty often being neglected.

Within this context there is a need to discuss the relationship between anthropology and development, as well as the evolution of development anthropology as a sub-discipline. As an anthropologist studying the language of poverty, institutional action, perception and experience within the developing context of Ethiopia; such discussions are central to fully comprehending the ever evolving theories and practices within poverty

discourse. Informing the complex negotiation between objective and subjective, and theory and practice. As such, the following chapters shed light on the concept of poverty within a developmental context, further arguing the value of bridging disciplinary divides in search of collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches to a multivariable subject.

Chapter 3. Development and Anthropology: A Literary Review

The term “development” is taken so much for granted these days that it is hard to remember that when it first became prominent in the early 1960s it raised the hackles of anthropologists, involving images of the telic evolution so despised by persons trained in the Boasian tradition. It challenged the then anthropological notion that each society has reached an adjustment to the world that is best for it and that requires no change . . . [.] Today, the term is unblushingly invoked by anthropologists, who, it seems, have acquired a new understanding of exotic societies, one which does not treat social and cultural change as abhorrent. Still, my estimate is that although anthropologists may have accepted the idea, they have done so on different terms than others, terms which may uniquely contribute to the development process (Schnider 1988:61).

Written at a time when there was a shift in focus within development and emerging discussions across disciplinary divides for anthropologists, Schnider’s (1988) comment embodies the strained and ever evolving relationship within and between development and anthropology between 1960 and 1988, a relationship that has since progressed but maintains these fault lines. Subsequent discussions during the 1970s to the end of the 20th century brought to light alternatives to the current status quo of developmental and anthropological strategies and engagement in current poverty alleviation efforts, while equally shedding light on the nature of the mutually detrimental relationship between anthropologists and developers.

This chapter serves to contextually place my research and methodological approach to urban poverty within a rich interdisciplinary discourse on development and practice, the social processes and individual experiences that construct poverty, anthropologists’ long and critical engagement with development, and discussions surrounding the complex and political nature of language within poverty discourse. As such it provides the theoretical and scholarly foundations upon which my analysis is based.

These discussions enable one to comprehend the ever evolving nature of poverty discourse within theory and practice, highlighting the value in discussions across the disciplinary divide in enabling the study of poverty as an aggregate. I argue that, contrary to notions of development standing as ‘a ruin on the academic landscape’ (Gardener and Lewis 1996) through sub-disciplines, a cross fertilisation between anthropology and development has opened both up to new, positive and exciting possibilities and sub-disciplines.

As an anthropologists studying poverty within a rapidly developing context, this chapter presents invaluable discussions surrounding the complex relationships between and within anthropology and development discourse on poverty.

3.1 Anthropology's long and critical engagement with development discourse and practice

By the second half of the 20th century, development had become a mission, or 'a global project' that has since been in a state of constant evolution (Crew and Axelby 2013:27-31). Disregarding variables such as history and political indigenous systems (Gardener and Lewis 1996:1-2), the post-war concept of development was imbued with the colonial legacy, which promoted dualisms and comparative studies of societies (Crew and Axelby 2013:28). To many, this legacy served to rapidly disseminate 'western' ideologies of linear progression and promote hierarchical views of international societies, signifying power relations at both macro and micro levels (Escobar 1991; Gardener and Lewis 1996; Kuklick 2008:289).

Conflicting with the very nature of anthropology and what anthropologists stood for (Crew and Axelby 2013; Escobar 1991)³⁰; the use of a term that promotes dualisms, and comparative studies of societies (Crew and Axelby 2013:28) to 'describe a set of activities, relationships and exchanges as well as ideas' (Gardener and Lewis 1996:2), as Schnider states, 'raised the hackles of anthropologists' (1988:61). '[N]arrowly defined' as the promotion of monetarisation, industrialism, and infrastructure modernisation through theory and strategies, development was largely 'monopolised by economists, planners and engineers'; anthropologists in the early stages were deemed irrelevant to the mission, and anthropologists, as I will later expand upon, were themselves 'disinclined' to engage with development as it *was* and to some extent still *is* (Crew and Axelby 2013:27- 31).

Ferguson (cited in Barnard and Spencer eds 1996:160) gave a rather poetic description of anthropology;

The field that fetishizes the local, the autonomous, the traditional, locked in a strange dance with its own negotiation, its own evil twin that would destroy locality, autonomy, and tradition in the name of progress. Anthropology resents its twin fiercely . . . even as it must recognise a certain intimacy with it, and a

³⁰ For others, in order to be included, some degree of retraining was required to help anthropologists understand development as a quantifiable and measurable entity, as was alluded to in Mosse's interview (cited in Crew and Axelby 2013:35).

disturbing inverted resemblance. Like an unwanted ghost, or an uninvited relative, 'development' haunts the house of anthropology.

Ferguson's account of anthropology's relationship with development is both entertaining and, as I will illustrate, within this chapter, to a greater extent accurate. Anthropology's 'strange dance with its own negotiation' harks to anthropology's internal conflicts during the post-modern crisis, the impending reality and questioned legitimacy of sub-disciplines, and the question of engagement and compromise (Crew and Axelby 2013; Escobar 1991; Grillo 1989; Grillo and Stirrat 1997).

As Crew and Axelby (2013) note, the origins of anthropology predate notions of development, as it became known during the 1970s. While social and cultural anthropologists had studied many communities deemed to be impoverished, the anthropologists' ethnographic gaze had not fully locked with 'poverty' (Booth et al. 1999; Ferguson 1997; Green 2006:2). Anthropologists' initial discomfort with the term 'poor' would also put anthropologists at risk of being accused of neglecting the poor within ethnography (Jones and Nelson 1999).

Describing this as anthropology's 'paradox', Green (2006:1) states that anthropology had shied away from making poverty the object of study³¹ due to anthropology itself being outside the accepted 'formal apparatus of development studies'. Anthropology's exclusion was in part due to development, by definition, clashing with how anthropologists viewed the world around them. In essence, they were initially deemed incompatible within theory and practice, with anthropologists themselves further critiquing notions of modernisation and development, and what these notions involved and meant³².

However, as Ferguson (cited in Barnard and Spencer 1996) suggests, although development initially stood as anthropology's 'evil twin', reflecting back everything anthropologists loathed, the two concepts also shared an intimacy, evolving parallel to each other. The inability of anthropologists to establish themselves within the developmental movement was in part due to exclusion by developers and governments,

³¹ Green (2006:1-2) further explores the view that 'ethnographies of development' are 'part of the research problematic'.

³² Development thus stood as a stark reminder of the colonialist legacy anthropologists were desperately trying to shed, theoretically embracing and applying dualisms, and performing comparative studies of societies (Asad 1973; Crew and Axelby 2013; Escobar 1991).

but also due to internal conflicts felt by anthropologists within the discipline, and the post-modern crisis (Gardener and Lewis 1996:2)³³.

Debates further centred on whether or not anthropologists can and should branch out from theory and the objective in order to embrace the subjective and consider the applied and engaged (Crew and Axelby 2013; Escobar 1991), and development anthropology as a legitimate sub-discipline was placed on the agenda (Crew and Axelby 2013:27; Escobar 1991). The professionalisation and institutionalisation of development anthropology has been challenged by Hoben (1982): like Escobar (1991) and Green (1986), he held a highly critical view of development anthropology, arguing, ‘anthropologists working in development have not created an academic sub-discipline, ‘development anthropology’, for their work is not characterised by a coherent or distinctive body of theory, concepts, and methods’ (Hoben 1982:349).

Crew and Axelby (2013:40), however later provided a far more nuanced discussion in *‘Anthropology in and of Development’*. A product of his time, Green (1986) voiced the unflattering and pessimistic depiction of development anthropology as the bastardised love child of wayward and reckless anthropologists whose academic amorosity led to discussions across disciplinary divides, and to the production of collaborative, participant-led, interdisciplinary approaches and theories, further challenging the status quo³⁴. Crew and Axelby note a tendency towards being disinclined amongst purist anthropologists. This disinclination was in part due to the ‘widespread view that applied work would compromise independent scholarship’ (Crew and Axelby 2013:31). It was equally due to the reality that as a sub-discipline, development anthropology would have to face ‘old ethical problems and new dilemmas’ (Crew and Axelby 2013:43).

By embracing a form of development that pushed for modernisation, in the absence of anthropologists, development practitioners interpreted local cultures and “‘peasant’ traditions’ as ‘obstacles to development’ (Gardener and Lewis 1996:14-15), causing irreparable damage to vulnerable communities, a failure later explored by many

³³ Crew and Axelby (2013) unpack the reality that, during the 1960s and early 1970s, anthropologists lacked employment opportunities within academia. In the midst of the colonialist movement, anthropologists struggled to gain a foothold within development, their work viewed as peripheral and unnecessarily all encompassing.

³⁴ Crew and Axelby (2013:31-34) unpack and track the challenges facing anthropologists who wanted to break from ‘academic purity’ in favour of ‘dirty engagement’ and the problems associated with engagement, namely those of compromise and complicity (Appendix F).

including Mair (1984) and Hill (1986)³⁵. Development at this time centred on indirect policies targeting productivity and pushing the capitalist dream, ‘rather than directly tackling problems of poverty. Development [became] quantifiable and reducible to economics’, and poverty was featured as a means to an end (Gardener and Lewis 1996:7) and not as a product of social relations. Poverty has been continually relativized within development, often reduced to being a means to an end (Scheper-Hughes 1992). Hans Rosling’s (2007) talk for TED.COM entitled, ‘*New Insights on Poverty*’, inadvertently relativises the experience of poverty for the poor by normalising poverty and illustrating how poverty is a necessary stage of development and a stage every country is undergoing, or has gone through.

During this period, the practice of neglecting the social processes and individual quotidian experiences that construct poverty was established, thereby setting the tone for future developmental efforts and fuelling tensions between developers and anthropologists.

Although traditionally it is the subjective study of poverty that is viewed as being hermeneutic phenomenology³⁶, objective studies of poverty equally represent an approach to knowledge and research that is governed by interpretation. Many examples illustrate the varying interpretations of what passes for measurable and legitimate values of poverty within development practice, ultimately comprising arguments that rest on interpretation. Dandekar (1981) provides an example of such an issue with developments approach to poverty. Within his text, he addresses what he considers to be ‘misplaced criticism’ of his and N. Rath’s (EPW, January 1971) estimate of poverty. Dandekar (1981) addresses Rao and Sukhatme’s (EPW, January 1971) ‘attack’ on the estimates of poverty which he and Rath had applied during a talk on ‘poverty in India’ (EPW, January 1971). Dandekar’s (1981) main defence is that Rao’s (1977) ‘paradoxical’ result is the outcome of not truly appreciating the difference between his use of the terms *poor* and *non-poor*; whereas Sukhatme’s (1977, 1978) criticism lies in a similar confusion around the use of the terms *poverty* and *under-nutrition*. For Rao and Sukhatme, the issue with Dandekar’s and Rath’s presentation lies in ‘statistical-

³⁵ As Norman Long (1992) reflects, the modernisation effort neglected to value local knowledge or actor-oriented research, which at the time was viewed by Mair (1984) and Hill (1986) to be a major failing on the part of developers and governments.

³⁶ An increasingly popular research methodology (Laverty 2003), hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with the human experiences that are often neglected as trivial aspects within experience with the desire to ascertain meaning and a greater level of understanding (Wilson and Hutchinson 1991).

methodological error' (Dandekar 1981:1). This misinterpretation is illustrative of the difficulty of managing subjective perspectives on objective measures of poverty. I, however, share Rao's (1977) concerns about the paradoxical result, whereby absolute poverty lines run the risk of including the non-poor within classifications of poverty, as well as excluding the truly poor as a result of their not fitting statistically within the absolute poverty line, especially when the criterion centres on a single measure, for example, that of calorie intake (Dandekar 1981:1)³⁷.

Expanding upon 'stone age economics' (cf Sahlins 1976), Crew and Axelby (2013:100) argue such measures neglect the reality that some societies place greater value on the non-material and non-monetary. As illustrated in Beck's (1994) account of those he encountered in West Bengal, 49 out of 58 samples of the extreme poor valued self-respect over food (Beck 1994:141). Kabeer (1994:139-144) notes how in Bangladesh, women value money only as a means of avoiding domestic violence and supporting their children; In this case, money is inherently worthless, its value lying only in the social relationships it enables the women to maintain³⁸.

Anthropologists could be viewed as having compromised themselves to a lesser or greater extent in order to gain an audience within the developmental community (Crew and Axelby 2013; Escobar 1991). Escobar's (1991) main objection lies in the role of anthropologists being limited to the initial phases of a project cycle, informing the project but remaining confined to the early stage. For Escobar this was development anthropologists exposing the vulnerable underbelly of the target community to developers, and stepping back (Escobar 1991:671). There was a value in anthropologists' involvement, but Escobar (1991:671) argued they had to be present for the duration of the 'entire project-cycle'. As Horowitz (1982:59) explains, 'The institutionalisation and impact of anthropologists in development work depends on their ability to demonstrate their utility by participating as trusted insiders . . . playing many roles in a broad range of decision making processes'.

³⁷ In this sense, within development discourse, poverty itself is attributed agency; it is a 'thing' to fight, challenge and defeat, 'an entity . . . brought into being through the institutions established to describe, quantify, and locate it' (Green 2006). The role of historical events, social relationships and culturally informed perceptions often being underplayed as the cause of poverty (Green 2006:19). In this context, poverty was not represented as an outcome, but 'as a problem that must be eliminated . . . an absolute measurable condition' (Green 2006:1-2, 19).

³⁸ As Sahlins's (1976:216) aptly stated; 'Money to the West is what kinship is to the rest'.

Horowitz (1982:59) and Escobar (1991) are not the only ones to raise suspicions about the role of anthropologists within development. Crew and Axelby (2013:36) allude to anthropologists' links to insurgency, while Rishi Ram-Singh (1980) and Harman (2009) criticise anthropologists' interest in poverty as being radical and limited, 'pursuing selfish disciplinary motivations for such research' (Ram-Singh 1980:44). In his account of Oscar Lewis's study in Mexico³⁹, Ram-Singh (1980:44) introduces the application of Culture Theory in poverty research as 'highly popular' and a 'loosely formulated concept' (Ram-Singh 1980:45). The controversial core of Culture Theory has been explored and critiqued alongside Biogenetic Theory and Human Capital Theory by Edward Royce (2009:16, 54-72)⁴⁰. Royce (2009) brings to the fore empirical, conceptual and, for me, moral weaknesses in a theory for poverty analysis; there are not only individual level variables, but also larger social forces to consider. One must, however, remember that the theories themselves have been produced by academic elites who are creating theoretical frameworks to help analyse and better define the realities of 'others'.

Robert McNamara's (1975) speech during the mid-1970s, described as 'landmark' by Escobar (1991), before the board of governors of the World Bank and the IMF, drew attention to these failings, enforcing a need for a significant 'reformation of strategies' which would place poverty at the centre of efforts through the formation of poverty-oriented programmes, the re-allocation of resources and shifts in strategies and policy (Crew and Axelby 2013; Escobar 1991)⁴¹.

While poverty was finally being understood in terms of relationships challenging pre-established assumptions, there were those who sought a better understanding of

³⁹ Lewis (cited in Ram-Singh 1980:45) describes how he '...tried to understand poverty and its associated traits as a culture or, more accurately, as a subculture'. He discusses how within Mexico the culture of poverty is 'both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position' (Lewis cited in Ram-Singh 1980:45).

⁴⁰ Royce (2009:16,46) discusses three individualistic and reductionist theories of poverty and inequality. Within Culture theory the poor abide by a distinct set of values and psychological characteristics that promote negative, demoralised attitudes (Royce 2009:54-72). Whereas within his discussions of biogenetic theory, genetics and nature dictate one's life trajectory and inherited low IQs are the cause of poverty (Royce 2009:30, 68). Human capital theory alternatively considers the cause of poverty to be the individual's lack of qualities associated with job performance, or their history of unwise investments and choices (Royce 2009:68). All three theories fail to consider the societal, 'relationships with other societal institutions' and external causes of poverty (Ram-Singh 1980:219), and the State's role as duty bearer (Sen 1981).

⁴¹ During the mid 1970s, the 'New Directions Mandate' (NDM) for U.S. Aid presented a new approach that not only made the poor more visible, but also opened the doors of employment to anthropologists and heightened their visibility in equal measure (Escobar 1991).

‘broader processes of accumulation, dispossession and exploitation in relation to gender, class and age, and how to respond to them’ (Crew and Axelby 2013:102). What appeared to some to be a progressive step forward following the NDM, others like Sachs (1992:5) and Escobar (1988; 1995) saw as further compounding and ‘re-producing’ of a world ‘of post-war development’. They accused many organisations of paying lip service to the NDM, arguing that not only were the strategies applied still monetarised and fuelled by notions of modernisation, but also the comparisons between developed and undeveloped and traditional versus modern were still being upheld; drawing attention to the activities of the World Bank, and others alike where projects maintained a focus on production and trickle down system (Escobar 1991:663)⁴².

Development during the mid-1970s to mid-1980s was linked to macro and micro inequality, the ‘basic needs movement’, and was strongly welfare-oriented: challenging poverty through indirect strategies without challenging existing political structures (Gardener and Lewis 1996:7)⁴³. From the 1980s to 1990s, anthropology made purposeful, albeit in many cases, tentative strides towards and within development. As illustrated in an interview with Mosse (1987), anthropologists at the time were expected to acclimatise themselves to the language of economists and planners (Crew and Axelby 2013). Although the Reagan Years of the early 1980s saw a return to more orthodox practices within development and anthropology, inspired by the NDM, a new discussion path ensued between developers and anthropologists along with a ‘quest for alternatives’ (Escobar 1991:663). The merits of approaching poverty and development through ‘Actor Oriented Research’ (Long 1992), ‘Social Soundness Analysis’ (SSA), and ‘Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice’ (KAP) were indisputable to all, but still challenged by purists from both the developmental and anthropological camps (Escobar 1991:664). Nevertheless, a ‘more pragmatic and realistic mood’ became dominant (Escobar 1991:663).

⁴² Escobar (1991) argues that although this shift signified a positive step for institutions, organisations appeared to be paying lip service in relation to the employment of anthropologists and poverty. While anthropologists’ gaze finally focussed on poverty, their strategies and goals remained centred on monetarisation, modernization and economic growth.

⁴³ During an interview with me held in 2015, Russell, a tropical forestry consultant, recalled working with the Addis-Bah project in Ethiopia for the World Bank between 1987 and 1992, during the Derg regime. Russell’s role was to manage a newly established fuel wood plantation, requiring the removal and resettlement of traditional family groups residing on the land. Russell noted how the livelihoods of these communities, notions of their land rights, ethnic tensions and regional identities were not deemed necessary to consider.

During the 1990s, after ‘breaking through the impasse’ in line with the evolutionary path taken by development, development anthropologists came at last to be recognised as valuable in both analysis and practice (Crew and Axelby 2013:40). Divisions between notions of pure and applied, subjective and objective, theory and action, were at last being broken down or at the very least blurred (Crew and Axelby 2013:40-41).

This period marked a shift in the approach to development, both by development anthropologists and in terms of the anthropology of development (Grillo and Stirrat 1997); the shift was from people to ‘organisational ethnography...from locally bounded subjects of development programs and on to the powerful shapers of these plans’ (Crew and Axelby 2013:41-42)⁴⁴. The insider ethnography, however, brings with it another level of institutional conflict. This was discovered by Mosse (2006:935), whose primary manuscript of *Cultivating Development* was met with negativity and a sense of betrayal by academic colleagues and managers. Mosse (2005:viii) was seen to be ‘too close’ to those under study by ‘substitut[ing] a set of boundaries that kept us *out* (the problem of access) with another set that kept us *in*’ (cited in Crew and Axelby 2013:43).

As expressed by Green (1986:5), this new direction ‘proved ideologically and methodologically compatible with the training, orientation and practice of anthropology’. While Escobar (1991:671) argues that Green’s (1986) view ‘presupposes a certain vision of the nature of anthropology’⁴⁵, there were however those who countered Escobar’s (1991) reflections on development anthropologists. For example, Wulff and Fiske (1987:10) propound the value of development anthropologists to development, noting the role of such anthropologists in ‘brokering’, correcting interventions, collecting ‘primary and ‘emic’ data necessary for planning and formulating policy’. Robins (1986:16-18) stresses that development anthropologists provide the ‘perspective of the people’, are ‘sensitive to ethnocentric pitfalls of cross-cultural comparison’ and ‘view cultures historically’.

Discourse on poverty within development, regularly *loses its senses*, namely touch, sight and hearing. This point is poignantly argued by Rao and Vivekananda (1982) in their critique of empirical approaches to poverty measurement. Rao and Vivekananda (1982:1) call for the poor to be viewed as an economically relevant and valuable ‘social

⁴⁴ Appendix I

⁴⁵ This to Escobar (1991) was anthropology beginning to repeat its historical mistakes by compromising ethically, morally and throwing their disciplinary loyalty in question.

stratum’, asking, ‘in their anxiety to obtain estimates of poverty these researchers tend to lose sight of the poor and of the system of which the poor are a part?’.

For others, the answer lies in better defining development, Crew and Axelby (2013:31) argue that development is ‘better recognised as a set of culturally constructed ideas encompassing a range of promises, hopes, and disappointment; the forms it takes rooted in particular historical, cultural and political contexts’. Escobar (1991:663) argues that projects within development need to be ‘socially relevant...culturally appropriate...involve their direct beneficiaries in a significant fashion’. In order to reach these goals, developers need to achieve a better relationship with anthropologists and the target communities (Pottier cited in Grillo and Stirrat 1997:203; Jones and Nelson 1999)⁴⁶. Although these discussions across the divide signify a positive direction, and although structural adjustments were being made to programmes (Gardener and Lewis 1996:7-8), the damage had already been done (Mair 1984; Hill 1986), and an air of pessimism endures (Gardener and Lewis 1996:7-8)⁴⁷.

These discussions plot anthropologists’ tempestuous and critical engagement with development and development’s tradition of neglecting the social in poverty, illustrating how a complex and at times symbiotic relationship ensued.

3.2 The language of urban poverty

Discourse on urban poverty is a relatively recent phenomenon within ethnography (Jones and Nelson et al. 1999:1-2); the primary cause for this lies in its conceptual difficulties. During the 1960s, anthropologists, unlike economists, struggled with the term ‘poor’, finding it, much like the term ‘development’, to be ethnocentric, relative and ‘holding little comparative value’ (Jones and Nelson et al. 1999; Southall 1967:00). In the absence of a functioning definition of poverty, or an absolute, measurable and comparative term, anthropologists of the time risked being accused of neglecting the urban poor in ethnography through maintaining a culturally relativist stance during the 1980s, instead emphasizing the socio-cultural ‘adaptations to urban life’ (Jones and Nelson et al. 1999:1-2).

⁴⁶ Participatory and collaborative approaches among developers, anthropologists and target communities are further discussed in the works of Pottier (cited in Grillo and Stirrat 1997:203), Grillo (1989) and Jones and Nelson (1999) in the following sub chapter.

⁴⁷ Appendix H

Functioning definitions serve to create a framework within which the reality of those deemed to be the poor can be measured and compared for varying purposes, which in themselves create an air of unease, as previously discussed. When discussing the language of poverty in development discourse and literature as a whole, the politics of language⁴⁸ (Geertz 1964; Grillo 1989; Pritchard 1956), moral and ethical challenges of categorisation (Adichie 2009; Green 2006; Lister 2004:12-15; Mewenda 2009), and the impact of language, directly and indirectly, on the quotidian experiences of those being defined come to the fore (Chambers 2007:39; Grillo and Stirrat 1997; Morduch and Sharma 2002:569; Pottier cited in Grillo 1989:41-59).

The term *poverty* veils the complex, ambiguous and loaded nature of the term itself, as well as the true quotidian experience of the people (Adichie 2009; Mwenda 2007). To explore institutional action, perceptions, and lived experiences of urban poverty, one cannot avoid the relevance of language use, as it is through language that we are known to 'other'. Language shapes, informs, and conveys our perceptions, and transcends the verbal and written, occupying the visual and physical (Geertz 1964:5; Grillo.1989:1; Pritchard 1995).

I argue that while defining and categorising is an uncomfortable practice, it is an unavoidable reality. However, one cannot embrace a purely post-modernist stance, nor can one pursue a purely objective or subjective position. According to Chambers (1997), there is a need to invert the orthodox practice of the external defining the internal, and embrace how the internal defines its own situation⁴⁹. This does not necessarily have to support the all-or-nothing arguments within poverty discourse (Knauft 1997:286-287), but rather it begs for a conversation across disciplinary and social divides in favour of a multi-variable, participatory understanding and approach to poverty as an aggregate (Bahemuka 1998; Green 2006; Pottier cited in Grillo and Stirrat 1997:203; Lawson and Hulme 2010:9; Rao and Vivekanada 1982; Sen 1981)⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ To Pritchard (1964:59), language serves as a vessel for social categories and social systems; for Geertz (1995), it is a 'vehicle of social strategies'; and for Grillo (1989:1), language is a political object.

⁴⁹ Appendix C

⁵⁰ As discussed by Jones and Nelson (1999), there has been a tendency for poverty definitions to fall into camps, whether, qualitative versus quantitative, or participatory appraisals versus needs-based conceptualisations of poverty.

A post-modernist approach to the study of the language and perception of poverty appears to prioritise the real experience of poverty from the viewpoint of the poor, is uncomfortable with the 'reified othering' of the vulnerable, and challenges the existentially formed objective definitions applied within development literature and policies in order to categorise subjective lived realities (Tvedten 2011:11-12). However, a purely subjective and post-modernist approach runs the risk of being as damaging as the classical modernist approach by over relativising the reality of poverty. By going full circle, post-modernists risk subjecting the poor to a similar literary and disciplinary fate, as well as making the study of poverty increasingly difficult with an 'anti-theory, anti-positivist' position (Moore 1999:5). As Bourgois (1995:14) explains,

The post-modernist anthropologists in their eagerness to break down hegemonic definitions and meta-narratives, made it impossible to categorise and prioritise experiences of injustices and oppression . . . this subtly denies the very real personal experience of pain and suffering that is imposed socially and structurally across race, class, gender, sexuality and other power ridden categories.

While Scheper-Hughes (1992:132) argues that 'anthropology has turned away from plain facts of hunger as lived experience', she acknowledges the complexities associated with applying the subjective, stating that the ethnography's self-critical or reflexive nature maintains an awareness of objective relations in field, and through the process of writing up, the deeply subjective components of ethnographic research and writing can be appreciated and legitimately applied (Scheper-Hughes 1992:xii). Taking his inspiration from Easterlin (1995:36), Ohio-Ehimiaghe (2012:10) states 'judgements of personal welfare are made by comparing one's objective status with a subjective living level norm'. My study similarly relies on those who have been attributed an 'objective' status, sharing with me the subjective realities of their lives⁵¹.

With Bahemuka (1998) discussing multi-variable approaches and Pryer et al. (1997) calling for unconventional conceptualisations of poverty, new qualitative definitions of poverty have come to light. Sen (1997) discussed poverty in terms of entitlement; Townshend (1993) considered poverty in terms of deprivation; and Chambers (1983, 1997) unpacked poverty through notions of vulnerability, powerlessness, isolation and humiliation.

⁵¹ Appendix J

By adopting an interdisciplinary, multi-variable approach, one is able to ‘examine the extent to which traditional defining characteristics of poverty influence perceptions of own poverty’ (Ohio-Ehimiaghe 2012:11). Here the functioning definitions within the community or culture under study can be explored in relation to how those deemed to be the poor perceive their own reality, thus shedding light on how and to what extent the definitions of external and yet related imbue the perceptions of own poverty felt by those living it⁵². Pottier’s exploration of language, policy and gender amongst those he calls the ‘CoopaduPeople’ of independent Rwanda illustrates the fact that language does, in this case to a greater extent, ‘assist in the construction of social reality’ (cited in Grillo 1989:59). Pottier explains:

‘The members of CoopaduPeople use language, often proverbs, to break with cultural patterns of the past’ and ‘through being clever with words, by forcing their president to shift from formal to informal style, these more vocal members undermined cultural stereotypes (the language of the dominant ideology) and worked towards instilling some change in the self-perception of fellow members’ (cited in Grillo 1989:58).

Similarly, Alkire (2002) argues that only through an interdisciplinary approach can one achieve new insights and more accurate interpretations of how intertwined are development policies, poverty and culture are. While Alkire (2002:23) argues that development policies, poverty and culture are still regarded as having little connection, Sen’s (1980) work on entitlement theory within famine and poverty discourse, and Tomalin’s (2011) discussion on the need for religions influence on the genders within development strategies to be studied, challenge Alkire’s (2002) concerns.

Particularly relevant to my study is the impact and experience of poverty on the genders. Women in poverty outnumber men significantly, with the condition of impoverishment lasting longer and representing an unequal burden for women (Millare 1996; Benería and Feldman 1992). By studying the connections between poverty, policy and culture, productive discussional paths open up. The study of the sexual division of labour (Millar 1996; Pottier 2015), the impact of social, religious and political control and suppression of women (Pottier 2015;Tomalin 2011; Afshar and

⁵² Ferguson’s (1994) argument on the process of the ‘western modernisation project’ is expanded upon by Arce and Long (2003:1), who suggest that etic ‘ideas and practices of modernity are appropriated and re-embedded in local practices’. Further, this process of modernisation can accelerate the ‘fragmentation and dispersal of modernity in to constantly proliferating modernity’s’ (Arce and Long 2003:1). Ferguson’s (1994) argument, echoed by Roseberry (1994), opens up further discussions on how written poverty has the potential to directly impact those deemed to be the poor.

Agarwal 1989), and the complexity surrounding men and masculinity in poverty (Tomalin 2011; Obbo 1980; Barnes 1999) become possible.

3.3 Written poverty

Critical discussions around written poverty lead to exploring '[strategies] of symbolic exclusion' (Pickering 2001:48), and what Lister (2004) described as 'power relations...inscribed in power relations' (Lister 2004:103). Lister (2004) has created a fair and critical exploration of poverty discourse, based on her own research into child poverty and her experience of becoming a member of the *Commission of Poverty, Participation, and Power*. Lister (2004:10) maintains a 'concern' around what she describes as a 'discourse on dependency culture' and the 'underclass'. Her primary concern is physical and psychological *othering* at both 'interpersonal and institutional levels' through the misuse and manipulation of language and imagery (Lister 2004:1)⁵³.

The further dangers of causing the poor to experience realisation through their labelling and categorisation as 'poor' can itself harbour and nurture poverty (Chambers 2007:39; Morduch and Sharma 2002:569). Realisation and reaffirmation can challenge self-determination, perpetuate feelings of hopelessness and acceptance of the current situation (Adichie 2009; Lister 2004:12-15; Mewanda 2009), fuelling legitimate concerns about the potential psychological, physical, social and political risks for the poor as a result of being denied the 'right to name and define themselves' (Pickering 2001:73). These discussions bow to a neo-Marxist inclination, echo the key arguments within othering discourse (Pickering 2001:73), and stand as a case for participatory appraisal within ethnography (Pottier cited in Grillo and Stirrat 1997:203; Jones and Nelson 1999).

Poverty as a functioning definition within development discourse has thereby historically stripped the individual poor of their agency (Green 2006), voices, perceptions and feelings, submerging them in 'symbols and metaphors or as a positive [human] contribution to a long term adaptation' (Scheper-Hughes 1992:132)⁵⁴ and ambiguous 'buzz word[s]' like 'livelihoods' (Ohio-Ehimiaghe 2012:64-65)⁵⁵. As I will further discuss, Sen (1981:9) challenges the 'reduction of human beings in to a 'means'', unpacking whether the interests of the non-poor should even factor in the

⁵³ Similar fears are explored by Escobar (1991:69), Ferguson (1990), and Tvedten (2011).

⁵⁴ Appendix G

⁵⁵ Ellis (2000:9-10) further explores the apparent obsession with these ambiguous 'buzz words'.

concept of poverty and concluding that if the interest of the non-poor is considered at all, it should fall within the effects and not the concept. While Sen (1981:10) acknowledges the impact of poverty on the non-poor, he asserts that ‘poverty should be a characteristic of the poor’.

Sen (1981) approaches poverty generally and famine specifically through discussions on entitlement relations and ownership legitimacy, unpacking poverty as an aggregate through a critical exploration of Ethiopia’s history with famine. Discussing the concept of poverty through employment entitlement, and social security and exchange entitlement⁵⁶, he questions ‘The Poor’ as a ‘Legitimate Category’ and the role of inequality within poverty through the works of Miller and Roby (1971)⁵⁷. Arguing for the need of categorisation within the entitlement approach, Sen (1981:156) states the individual poor can not be viewed as ‘a member of a huge army’, governed by different entitlement relations, Sen (1981:156) explains: ‘the peasant and landless labour may both be poor but their fortunes are not tied’.

As Tvedten (2011:11) argues, all written poverty includes to some extent ‘terms of marginalisation and exclusion’ which signify an ‘overarching framework of structure and agency’⁵⁸. Walsh (2008:255) takes this further and ‘deconstructs the problematic way the ‘poor’ are represented by the intellectual ‘left’ as a fixed virtuous subject’⁵⁹.

Striving to counter this, an approach favoured by many anthropologists, including myself, calls for a ‘productive conversation across the divide’ (Knauff 1997:286-287), a ‘cross-fertilisation’ (Pradhan and Ravallion 2000:1), an ‘inter-relationship’ between the

⁵⁶ By exchange entitlements Sen (1981:6) is not restricting this concept to market exchanges, but exchanges associated with the State in the form of ‘pension schemes’ and ‘relief’.

⁵⁷ Miller and Roby (cited in Sen 1981:40) poverty is essentially an issue of inequality, and inequality casting the issues of poverty in terms of stratification. The poor being strongly involved in unequal personal relationships within a fluid society (Iliffe 1987), repeating centuries old patterns of social inequality and hierarchy within Christian Ethiopia (Crummey 2000); Inequality and hierarchy- bound up with different forms of property, with different forms of access to the same productive asset, agricultural land. Sen (1981) further questions whether inequality is a different issue to poverty, arguing that ‘neither quality subsumes the other; they can be understood as being associated, though the two are not conceptually equivalent.’

⁵⁸ The political face of poverty as a concept is best observed within the general media, development, and organisational literature (Tvedten 2011).

⁵⁹ An observation echoed by Mosse in his interview (cited in Crew and Axelby 2013:35) notes that Mosse was one of the first anthropologists in development not to have to retrain as an economist; however, he still had to ‘wade through logistics, quantity surveying and “critical path analysis”’. This concern around a created fixed identity, or the framing of a people through the written word and imagery has been widely explored in the works of Adichie (2009), Mwenda (2009) and Walsh (2008:255).

objective and the subjective (Vargas-Amezeua cited in García-Peña et al. 2015). Vargas-Amezeua (cited in García-Peña et al. 2015:104) states that the objective is nothing if humans do not live it, and the objective becomes the subjective through experience. Vargas-Amezeua argues for a discussion between the ‘individualising perspective, countered on the significant and the hermeneutics on the one hand, and the collectivised, depersonalised view on the other’ (cited in García-Peña et al. 2015:104).

The language of poverty, when critically analysed, evokes valuable and necessary discussions around field work, knowledge creation, advocacy, and the ethical and moral obligations of the ethnographer when researching and writing on such a sensitive human condition (Lister 2004; Ohio-Ehimiaghe 2012; Tvedten 2011). As Dean and Melrose (1999:48) note, research in this vein serves as a warning that the language of poverty is a comparative tool that is politically aware, and scientifically categorical (Lister 2004:12-15).

3.4 Conclusion

As previously stated, this chapter presents invaluable discussions surrounding the complex relationships between and within anthropology and development discourse on poverty. While progress has undoubtedly been made, with development anthropology as a sub discipline opening up the study of poverty to new and exciting territories, the fault lines although faint, have endured. This is particularly evident within discussions on the language of poverty and writing poverty whereby functional definitions and categorical imperatives still pose as a necessary thorn in the side of anthropologists. Conceptualisations of poverty, that increasingly began to straddle the post-modernist stance with that of the orthodox and objective, marked monumental shifts in the right direction. These new, interdisciplinary understandings of who the poor were and what poverty was produced a window through which the interconnections between policy, poverty and culture could be productively studied, answering the call for poverty and cultures to be viewed as historically forged and temporal. Building upon this chapter, Ethiopia’s complex historical and social past is now discussed as having shaped the plight of the poor.

Chapter 4. Ethiopia's Historical and Social Context: How Key Events Have Shaped the Plight of the Urban Poor

In this chapter I provide a critical overview of Ethiopia's history, unpacking how a series of key events and the social context have shaped the plight of Ethiopia's poor in rural and urban contexts. Within this overarching discussion social aspects such as pride, language and faith are unpacked as further compounding Ethiopia's complex relationship with poverty. As previously discussed within anthropology's critical relationship with development, the poor and poverty must be viewed as historically forged and temporal. This chapter builds upon ethical discussions on the dangers and reductionist nature of some theories of poverty analysis (Royce 2009; Ram-Singh 1980); embracing Sen's (1981) discussions of entitlement and the need to understand the systems in which the poor find themselves.

Discussions of Ethiopia's modern history are particularly relevant in understanding who the poor are. By contrast, I further illustrate how this modern history has cultivated Ethiopia's current relationship with chronic poverty and the poor, both in their structural situation and how they are viewed and treated. The transition from feudalism to capitalist ethnic federalism is responsible for the displacement of thousands and the loss of family land, livelihoods and traditional social protection mechanisms (Iliffe 1987; Mammo 1999; Mehretu 2012; Devereux 2006).

As will become apparent, while the plight of Ethiopia's poor has been shaped by Ethiopia's political and social history, their discussions of deception, loss, work, and life have been clouded by its memory.

4.1 Demarcating the poor: pride, language, and faith

Ethiopia was home to the politically strong and rich Aksumite dynasty of the 6th century BC. It also subsequently defeated the powerful invading forces of Mussolini (Tibebu 1995). This history has enforced Ethiopia's enduring sense of pride (Welz 2013). Standing as 'the shrine enclosing the last sacred spark of African political freedom' (Tibebu 1995), Ethiopia is a 'living symbol, an incarnation of African independence' (Thwait quoted in Asute 1977). Ethiopia has an 'old culture', unique traditions, and its own alphabet and calendar (Welz 2013), and as Coatsworth et al. (2015:100) ironically note, 'Aksum is to modern Ethiopians what the Roman Empire is to modern Italy, a glorious ancient precursor that serves as a source of national pride'. Even in the wake of

Ethiopia's complex and brutal history with famine and conflict, this collective sense of pride endures.

Iliffe's (1987:9-11) work presents various perceptions of the poor, specifically describing Ethiopia's poor as being incapacitated, 'innumerable and ubiquitous'. While incapacitation is not the full story, it is a contributing factor to poverty, especially when poverty is understood as an aggregate within Sen's (1981) discussion of the entitlement approach to famine and poverty and Mammo's (1999) exploration of internal political factors that construct and compound poverty. These discussions from various standpoints demand an understanding of how Ethiopia's complex political and historical past⁶⁰ (Iliffe 1987; Mammo 1999; Sen 1981) has shaped the plight of her poor (Bekele 2011; Clapham 1990; Devereux 2006; Hamer 2007; Levine 1974; Mehretu 2012; Prunier and Ficquet 2015; Sen 1981; Tronvoll 2000; Tronvoll and Hagman 2011; Zewde 2001).⁶¹ As Bekele (2011:2) succinctly concludes,

Internally, failed socio-political and economic programs of successive regimes, the aftermath of civil war with Eritrea, repeated famine and drought—all these define the profile of Ethiopia poverty [sic]. In the global context, for most Ethiopians, globalization echoes a repetitive story of injustice, pain, neglect, dictatorship and poverty.

As I demonstrated earlier in Chapter 3, it is relatively easy for the poor and the systems in which they find themselves to be overlooked (Rao and Vivekananda 1982). Before embarking on the key markers in Ethiopia's history, I will therefore briefly unpack the relevance of the terms labelling the poor and how the poor are viewed within Ethiopia's prominent religions.

Ohio-Ehimiagh's (2012) study in Lagos State, Nigeria, shows how one can gain a better understanding of the true experience of poverty through the linguistic expressions of the communities under study.⁶² This theory, echoed in the works of Brock (1999:5), considers how '[linguistic expressions] give clues to understanding how they [the poor] experience poverty in the course of their daily lives, and to the linkages between elements'.

⁶⁰ Tronvoll (2000) provides a nuanced narration of the pivotal moments in Ethiopia's history (Appendix K).

⁶¹ As Mammo (1991) explains, since its beginning, Ethiopia has been in a constant state of conflict with itself and 'foreign aggressors', further arguing that it is 'difficult to find a single decade devoted to peace and civil economic activities' (ibid:84).

⁶² Appendix L

By the 17th century, there were at least two terms for the poor in Ethiopia, *meskin* and *deha* (Ilfie 1987). However, various descriptions of poverty were evident, none of which were directly linked to wealth or power (Ilfie 1987; Kebede 2002). As seen in Ohio-Ehimiagh's (2012) study of the Nigerian poor, terms were more closely linked to the capacity and motivation of the individual. While *meskin* referred to destitution in the 20th century, the term *deha* refers to someone who works the land or fief (Ilfie 1987:28). *Də. hə. neut* serves as an umbrella term for poverty, *alms* represents giving, generosity and charity (Kebede 2002:192), while *tsidk* refers to acts 'of righteousness deserving merit' (Wolde-Yohannes 2012:131). *Tiru deha* (Devereux 2003:22) refers to the fascinating concept of *good poor*,⁶³ which is further explored in discussions of the urban poor.

In Ohio-Ehimiagh's (2012) study on the Yoruba, correlations and differences between notions of deservingness parallel similar studies based in Ethiopia. Devereux (2003) and Ilfie (1987) both note that the destitute or those deemed to be the incapacitated poor - Ethiopia's equivalent of the Yoruba's *Olosi*⁶⁴- are regarded as deserving, particularly within Islam and Orthodox Christianity. Whereas those who are capable and motivated are regarded as undeserving of social support; the ability to work hard is expected to involve social struggles. Poverty experienced by those who are capable and motivated is thus blamed on the individual. Hence, efforts to escape poverty, similar to the struggle experienced by the Akuse, are to be faced alone. However, while this is the case for most variants within the poor category, it does not apply in the context of begging (Briggs 2015; Kiros 2005; Poluha 2007; Tibebe 1995). Within Islamic Somali communities it is 'necessary to provide food and clothes for the dead by sacrifices and distribution to the poor' (Trimingham 2013:265). Within the general Ethiopian Muslim and Christian communities 'providing for the poor and needy is an accepted part of their religious obligation'⁶⁵ (Wolde-Yohannes 2012:131). The poor and vulnerable feature highly within acts of religious devotion, with 'concerted efforts' being made to reach and provide (Wolde-Yohannes 2012:131); however within Ethiopian Christianity the poor are 'asking for a common ear... not an individualistic response through the lenses

⁶³ Good poor denotes the deserving poor or the poor entitled to various formal or informal social protection mechanisms (Devereux 2003).

⁶⁴ This term refers to extreme poverty 'peppering' or 'pinching' a person, a continuous pain that is different from other forms of poverty (Ohio-Ehimiagh 2012).

⁶⁵ While monasteries and churches have a strong history of charity and charitable acts of *tsidk* [acts of righteousness deserving merit] (Wolde-Yohannes 2012), surprisingly, the church benefitted from a feudal system that enforced the condition of the poor (Wolde-Yohannes 2012; Mammo 1999).

of their [the church's] respective view of what the Christian mission is all about' (Bekele 2011:1). While awareness of a common goal is 'softening the tension between the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches',⁶⁶ there is still a long way to go (Bekele 2011:1).

Within Ethiopian culture, the concept of begging is more linked to the practice of 'gift exchange between clients and patrons' (Ilfie 1987:28). Although it is described as 'a serious national problem, but which many Ethiopians do not seem to regard as such' (Kiros 2005:100), within Orthodox Christianity and Islam 'begging is not only and acknowledged but a highly respected occupation' (Poluha 2007:192). With a religious duty to give *alms* (Poluha 2007), the beggar views him or herself as 'a respectable individual' who 'made gifts of clothing or other small presents to nobles in order to obtain in return a present of twice the value' (Ilfie 1987:28). As such beggars are considered to embody 'great social mobility' (Poluha 2007:129) and skill.

Although its roots lie in the *geber* system of 'surplus' redistribution 'sanctioned by religious ethics' (Tibebu 1995:99), the Ethiopian beggar is one of two types of beggars: those with ecclesiastical affiliation, such as students, and those who partake in lay begging and are physically incapable of working (Tibebu 1995). Begging seems to be exempted from the rules of deserving and undeserving, occupying a curious position of immense tolerance within the Ethiopian consciousness (Kiros 2005). The activities of beggars are barely distinguishable from gift giving (Briggs 2015). When discussing the involvement of NGOs in Chapter 1, it is apparent that Eurocentric and Protestant ethics challenge such traditional perceptions of the beggar. Instead, begging is associated with shame and immorality rather than pride (Poluha 2007).

When speaking with, Tilahun, the Ethiopian project manager of HOPE, he noted how 'Protestant Christianity promotes and encourages individual growth, development, entrepreneurship and a moderate lifestyle, whereas Ethiopia has many cultural issues, and yet the Orthodox Church still preaches God's will'. For Tilahun, this allows Ethiopia's poor and non-poor to passively justify and accept their situation, and this is the reason behind Europe's economic progression.⁶⁷ While Tilahun's observation may

⁶⁶ 'Ethiopian protestant churches are evangelical in their Orientation' (Bekele 2011).

⁶⁷ It could be argued that there is a form of symbiotic relationship between the Church and the poor here: the Church serves the poor, while the poor serve the Church as a means to gain merit in the eyes of God. 'Never refuse a beggar-simply say 'may god give you' (Kebede 2002:85).

generally be the case for the incapacitated poor, the economic and social situation of the working and able-bodied poor is seen to be the result of their own failings and any effort made to rise from this position is expected to be a struggle (Devereux 2003:13).

As seen in latter discussions on formal and informal social protection mechanisms within this chapter, ‘Ethiopians [do] not criticise poverty, but nor [do] they idealise it. They [see] it with the weary realism of those who lived with it every day’ (Iliffe 1987:28). However, as Bigsten, Kebede, and Shimeles (2005) query, Can poverty ever be accepted as a part of a general standard of living?

4.2 Ethiopia’s political history and the plight of the poor: Key markers from the Era of the Princes, 1769-1855 to the Ethiopian people’s revolutionary democratic Front (EPRDF)

The key markers in Ethiopia’s political and social history provide valuable insights into the relationship between the State and nation, and the ways in which this relationship shaped the plight of the poor (Lewis 1983). The poor have been immersed in an unwavering tide of conflict and political unrest and the accompanying policies, constitutions and ideologies running parallel with famines, droughts, land reforms and enforced ethnic assimilation and federalism (Prunier and Ficquet 2015; Getu and Devereux 2013). As Prunier and Ficquet (2015:416) surmise, ‘the very evolution of their [the country’s leaders’] titles, from Emperor to Prime Minister, is in itself a summary of the country’s slow climb from a traditional quasi-medieval polity to an embryonic democracy’. Establishing Ethiopia’s *true* historical interpretations is challenging at best (Tronvoll 2000), as history is less about truth and more about interpretation (Moreau 2009).

While Triulzi (cited in Kaarsholm 2006:122) describes ‘*The Past as Contested Terrain*’, and Mehretu (2012) critically challenges ‘antagonistic counter-narrations’, the general consensus within academic discourse asserts Ethiopia’s historical narration since the early 1980s as ‘challenged’ (Triulzi cited in Kaarsholm 2006:122), and serving as a divisive tool in the ‘architecture of hegemonic governance’, and ‘country narration’ (Mehretu 2012:118: see also Hassen 1990; Ficquet 2015; Levine 1974:72-86; Sorenson 1993:38), and ‘challenging authenticity of its polity’ (Mehretu 2012:117). It becomes apparent that Ethiopia’s recent history has been and, to some extent, continues to be contorted and modified, accommodating ‘newly imagined projections of collective self’ and ‘new visions of the country’s future’ (Triulzi cited in Kaarsholm 2006:122). As Sorenson (1993:38) states, Ethiopia’s past has been ‘selectively remembered,

conveniently forgotten, or sometimes invented to the exclusion and silencing of certain voices and substitution of a hegemonic mythology’.

The various interpretations of Ethiopia’s past are succinctly analysed by Mehretu (2012:113) through three distinctive narratives: a) the assertion of ethnic conflict suppressed by pre-1974 central governments b) ethno-national groups who formed an ethnocratic ruling elite, with the Amhara and Tigrayan sharing ‘the accusation’ of cultural, political and economic hegemony c) the narrative of colonisation, that of the North embodying a ‘colonizing power’ over the South. The three narratives, to a greater or lesser extent, served each of Ethiopia’s later rulers⁶⁸ (Abbay 1997; Ayele 2003; Levine 1974; Marcus 2002; Wolde-Giorgis 1989).

Ethiopia’s poverty is central to its politics, whereas the poor have been regarded as ‘imprecise and un-important’ (Iliffe 1987:29). The structural and conjunctural poor⁶⁹ are expected to earn a living independently, which is primarily based on agricultural activities. However, as is discussed within this chapter, the poor throughout history ‘were almost by definition those prevented from exploiting it’ (Iliffe 1987:29). Ethiopia’s poor, since the Era of the Princes (1769-1855) to the present day, have been the primary catalyst for revolution against ancient and contemporary regimes (Bekele 2011; Mammo 1999; Tronvoll 2000). They have not been passive in making their voices heard. However, they have paid a high price for this spirit.

The era or the princes, 1769-1855 to the rule of the EPRDF is defined by civil war, acculturation, drought and famine. This transition also plotted the decent of agropastoralist peasantry to the current destitute. While there are wider discussions present within an analysis of how Ethiopia’s history had shaped the plight of the poor⁷⁰, the following discussion has extracted the salient key markers that had the greatest impact in shaping the plight of the poor.

The era of the princes marked a period when Northern Ethiopian nobility ruled through a complex feudal system (Mammo 1999) and ‘conflicts between feudal gentry’ resulted

⁶⁸ As Prunier and Ficquet (2015:415) state, Emperor Menelik, Haile Selassie, Dictator-Chairman Mengistu, Haile Mariam and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, shaped 20th century Ethiopia, and as many would argue, its historical narrative too (Appendix K).

⁶⁹ By structural, Iliffe (1987) alludes to the incapacitated poor, while conjunctural refers to those experiencing drought, famine and other ecological, political and social insecurities.

⁷⁰ Appendix O

in the vulnerable being used, displaced and often losing their lives⁷¹ (Mammo 1999:84). Considered the ‘green house of poverty’ (Mammo 1999: 84), the feudal land tenure system has been highlighted by scholars as ‘a fundamental restraint to the country’s agricultural development’ and an ‘underlying cause of land degradation, and unequal income distribution’ (Rahmato and Assefa 2006:84). Feudalism was assigned responsibility for the demise of informal social protection mechanisms (ISP), and the enforcement of a pyramid system in which the poor and peasants were firmly situated at the bottom, promoting and enforcing caste systems and institutionalising inequality (Crummey 2000; Devereux 2006; Getu and Devereux 2013; Mammo 1999; Sen 1981)⁷².

Led by Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974), the subsequent period of modernisation and acculturation (Aalen 2011; Mammo 1999) continued with the process of assimilation initiated during the era of the princes. This continuation further threatened ISP, displacing the peasantry, and undermining traditional mechanisms of support and governance fuelling unnecessary conflicts. Emperor Haile Selassie’s reign (1930-1974) ‘bridged Ethiopia’s ancient past with the modern era’ (Tronvoll and Aadland 1995:21), and continued the process of centralisation⁷³ (Tronvoll 2000:13). Delays in relief aid during the great famine under Haile Selassie (Sen 1981; Tronvoll 2000), coupled with his being politically ineffective and focused on modernising the economy (Clapham 1990; Hammer 2007), were indicative of his attitude towards the vulnerable and poor (Crummey 2000). As Haile Selassie himself states (cited in Iliffe 1987:211), ‘Rich and poor have always existed and always will. Why? Because there are some people who work and others who do not work [...] Every individual is responsible for his own misfortune’. This statement is illustrative of his views on the poor, but also reflects notions surrounding deserving and undeserving livelihood strategies, indicative of a societal structure that promotes individualistic perceptions of the poor, placing blame on

⁷¹ Mammo (1999) discusses how the able bodied peasants who worked the land owned by nobility were expected to fight during conflicts between feudal gentry.

⁷² Accounts of life pre-feudalism, further illustrate those in the south ‘lived under different social structures...[had] flourishing cultures and local organisations’ within kingdoms such as Konso, Walayeta and Jimma (Mammo 1999:85).

⁷³ Appendix K

the individual, thus alleviating the State the role of duty bearer (Iliffe 1987; Devereux 2003:13; Sen 1981)⁷⁴.

The reign of the Derg, also known as the red terror, embarked on a seven year rule of an autocratic-socialist-military-dictatorship (Smith 2013: 70). The Derg held a particularly influential role in shaping the plight of the urban poor. Although Derg were associated with some positive changes, gaining favour with their call for ‘land to the tiller’ (Smith 2013). They led a bloody campaign, exercising brutal control through the over-centralisation of government practices, youth conscription and harsh taxation with ‘no opportunity for opposition’ (Hammer 2007:215). Forcibly imposed resettlement programmes led to further displacement and the fragmentation of an already vulnerable people. Under Mengistu’s rule surplus food was extracted from the peasantry for the military and State (Hammer 2007), with starvation used by the Derg as a deliberate war strategy to incapacitate and to control⁷⁵ during the rise of the EPRDF in the wake of the Eritrean civil war. At the time relief NGOs were ‘cowed into silence’ (Welch 2001:279) and part of the Derg strategy was to ‘disrupt relief effort...capture Western grain reserves’ and ‘reduce the economic capacity of the civilian population so that they would be forced to go to government held areas for survival’ (Barrow and Jennings 2001:65-66). As Bekele (2011:355) notes ‘economic dependency, often a matter of life or death for the poor of Ethiopia...[forces] conformity with the ideologies of the centre’. Researchers and monitoring missions in Tirgray in 1983, viewed the Derg’s strategies as ‘instrumental in setting the famine in train’, with the drought of 1984 serving as a ‘convenient scapegoat for the famine’ (Barrow and Jennings 2001:65). The Derg assimilated ‘Ethiopia to the Marxist category of a feudal mode of production... they inferred the feudal forms of property’ (Crummey 2000:8), embracing the legacy of previous ruling parties’ who’s favoured view of feudalism, hunger for power, and activities promoting dependency undermined the vulnerable.

⁷⁴ Conversely, perceptions of the poor within the church appear to frame the working poor as undeserving of support, and the incapacitated or destitute poor as deserving (Devereux 2003; Sen 1981). ‘Destitute’ carries with it the notion of the ‘deserving poor’ (Devereux 2003:13). However, as illustrated in the experiences of Dr Amare (2015), later explored in this study, this perception of destitution is not shared by those deemed to be the destitute.

⁷⁵ The Derg had actively lowered food production through limiting the sale of farming equipment in an attempt to physically weaken those members of the peasantry who might support the EPRDF (The Messenger 2014). This was a particularly callous and cruel strategy, in the wake of the devastating civil war that had already brought the country to its knees, and had the most detrimental effects on the poor and peasantry.

The establishment of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) under Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 1995 is defined by ethnic federalism (Mehretu 2012; The Messenger 2014; Tirueh 1993; Tronvoll 2000). In 1991 the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF)⁷⁶ restructured Ethiopia 'spearhead[ing] an innovative and bold experiment that involved transferring authority to regional administrations based on ethnicity'(Tadesse cited in Prunier and Ficquet 2015:271). However, from 1991 to 1992, 'regional power struggles' became 'intense conflicts' and explosive political animosity between the Oromia and Ethio-Somali regional States heightened (Tadesse cited in Prunier and Ficquet 2015:271). The EPRDF's further reluctance to embrace progressive conceptualisations of poverty and the subsequent publication of the controversial land reform policies (Tronvoll 2007: 27), followed in the footsteps of previous ruling parties, with focus firmly set on the development and modernisation plans set out within the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Under this constitutional article and ethnic federalism, the displacement and inhumane treatment of the vulnerable continued (Hagmann and Tronvoll 2011), nomadic herdsmen entitlements became uncertain (Sen 1981) and the displacement of Oromo communities due to the high, middle and lowlands being used for commercial agricultural developments became commonplace (Bondestam 1974; Hussein 1976)⁷⁷.

The two fundamental components of social protection are social assistance for the poor and social insurance for the vulnerable (Getu and Devereux 2013), with the onus placed on the State as duty bearer. Specifically relevant to the urban poor are allowances for income culture shock and physical security due to higher crime rates within cities and towns (Getu and Devereux 2013; Jones and Nelson 1999). Social protection should strive to address both the transitory and chronic nature of poverty. However, it became evident that the preferred trickle down system was not efficient in addressing the complex and multivariable nature of poverty, as the 'vulnerable segments of the

⁷⁶ The fall of the Derg and the rise of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) led to the establishment of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) (Mehretu 2012; The Messenger 2014; Tirueh 1993; Tronvoll 2000).

⁷⁷ Illustrative of this, is the experience of Russell, a tropical forestry consultant. He described to me how, in 2014, he requested barren land to cultivate and transform into a wildlife reserve for growing cash crops for the local community. Upon reading his proposal, the local municipality questioned why he would want barren land and insisted he accept prime farming land instead, as a goodwill gesture. Upon visiting the suggested site, Russell observed agropastoralists cultivating the land. When he voiced his concern about displacing the agropastoralists, he was told, 'no need to worry, they'll move'. Needless to say, he declined their 'kind' offer.

population who cannot take advantage of the favourable economic climate’ need ‘deliberate measures’ to reach them through formal and informal social protection (Teshome cited in Getu and Devereux 2013:95). While significant progress is being made under the EPRDF, and FSP⁷⁸ ‘has mov[ed] up the development agenda in Africa’, it is not a priority as yet and there is still a long way to go (Ellis et al. 2009:234).

4.3 Famine: A paradigm shift

Ethiopia has experienced famine and drought throughout its history. While ‘The Great Ethiopian Famine’ between 1888 and 1892 (Pankhurt 1966; Sen 1981), known as *Kifu quan* [evil days] (Sen 1981) will never be forgotten in the Ethiopian collective consciousness, it is the more recent famine between 1972 and 1974 that Sen (1981) and Aykroyd (1974) refer to as ‘inexcusable at this stage in the history of famine’, with a death toll of around ‘100,000’.

During the great famine of 1972, thousands of agropastoralists made their way to urban locations, with Addis Ababa being the largest (Sen 1981). As the data in this dissertation shows, while some of the urban poor who participated in this study originated from urban locations, the majority were from rural agropastoralist communities, some of whom were ‘driven to urban areas by rural underdevelopment in the first instance’ (Mattingly cited in Jones and Nelson 1999:16).

The relevance of Sen’s (1981) and Devereux’s (2006) discussions on the paradigm shift regarding the nature of famine and how external political relationships impact aid to the poor cannot be overemphasised. Sen (1981) draws particular attention to the role of entitlement relations and internal systems that have changed the face of famine and poverty, not only for those who experience and live it but also for those who study it ⁷⁹. The entitlement approach in relation to the Wollo famine of 1973 queries why someone does not have the ability to avoid starvation when there is no decline in food within their immediate context (Sen 1981). Sen (1981) argues one has to decide whether there were direct entitlement failures or trade entitlement failures at play; in the case of

⁷⁸ Social protection is an ‘umbrella term’ for holistic protection mechanisms such as welfare, social safety nets, unemployment benefits and pension schemes (Getu and Devereux 2013).

⁷⁹ Both Devereux (2006) and Sen (1981) consider the impact of ‘priority regimes’ which placed famine prevention and poverty at the bottom of the agenda

Wollo, Sen is in favour of the former⁸⁰. Discussions of agricultural destitution and entitlement are relevant when considering constructs of the poor's plight, as the largest group of destitute in many of Ethiopia's famines has come from agricultural backgrounds and were themselves farmers, tenants, and cultivators (Sen 1981). Entitlement decline took the form of direct entitlement failure for farmers, without involving the market within the immediate context (Sen 1981). Sen (1981:101) notes the importance of this distinction:

Farmer[s] eat food grown by family without becoming involved in the exchange to acquire food, the immediate influence affecting starvation is the decline of food grown and owned by the family rather than the fall in the total food output...the FAD [and FAO] approach would focus on the latter variable.

As Sen argues, the hunger of the peasant has 'a more direct origin' (Sen 1981:101). Farmers' abilities to exercise market command is dependent on their own crops. If crops fail, they would strive to obtain food through the market, expressing market command. However, personal agricultural failure (Sen 1981) coupled with collapse of market command, results in a lack of income, meaning a farmer cannot 'supplement his reduced food output by market purchase' (Sen 1981:101). Tenants suffering from the inflexibility of rents and enduring feudal dues during droughts (Cliffe 1974; Hussein 1976) further illustrates the impacts of entitlements causing and compounding agricultural destitution, famine and poverty (Sen 1981). The poor and vulnerable are denied the ability to be self-sufficient, which coupled with political uncertainty, blights the desire and ability to pursue self-determination through agropastoralist endeavours.

Ethiopia has received plenty of negative press in the past in relation to its history with famine and civil war. More recently Ethiopia's relationships with NGOs and other charitable organisations have come under focus. The political tensions between aid donors and national governments have played a detrimental role in 'failing to prevent' predictable famines, with food aid 'frequently [being] used as a political weapon' (Devereux 2006:9). Devereux (2006:9) draws attention to the 1974 famine in Bangladesh, during which the United States (US) 'withheld food aid' due to Bangladesh having trade deals with Cuba. The US further delayed sending food aid to Ethiopia ten years later in an attempt to 'undermine the Marxist Derg regime' (Devereux 2006:9). During this particular famine in Ethiopia, the poor and needy found themselves in a

⁸⁰ By direct and trade entitlements, Sen (1981) is discussing one's ability to grow their own food and ability to access the market, as the entitlement approach has a focus on an individual's 'means of commanding food that are legitimized by legal systems in operation' in that location (Sen 1981:Page number required).

hopeless situation as political pawns of both external and internal political motivations. Their survival and access to necessities were withheld not only by external aid donors, but also by their own government.

During discussions with Russell, a tropical forestry consultant, I was told that history had repeated itself during the 1994 Eritrean famine, during which Russell, a member of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) team, described how he had observed a pyramid of grain left at the Eritrean and Sudanese border. Upon asking their Eritrean driver, he explained that the grain had been left there for two years by the Eritrean government who had rejected it. The driver further explained that it was a gift from the Sudanese government, which had donated 100,000+ tonnes of grain to the Eritrean lowlands as a gesture of support and empathy. However, this gesture was rejected by the Eritrean government, which instead chose to await the aid of FAO and other aid donors. It later emerged that the Eritrean government suspected that the Sudanese government had supported the Derg, which supposedly justified the rebuff of food aid, leaving a huge amount of good grain exposed.⁸¹ Distrust permeated the relationships between the State and aid donors during the 1999-2000 famines, where donors ‘failed to respond’ due to the conflicts between Eritrea, the Ethiopian government and the donor agencies, creating ‘a climate of mistrust’ and hitting the most vulnerable the hardest (Lautze and Maxwell cited in Devereux 2006:9).

4.4 The narrative of ethnicity and acculturation

Land, ethnicity, and oppression are common narratives within discourse on Ethiopia’s poor. Linked to ‘social integration’ and the ‘question of nationalities’ (Brietzke and Scholler 1976:), the ‘relevance of ethnic diversity in informing the rich basket of perspectives [on poverty and the poor]’ cannot be overlooked (Ohio-Ehimiagh 2012:152), as ethnic tensions can lead to social stigmatisation and ‘socially stratified communities’ (Devereux 2003:13), further leading to the marginalisation of the poor and informing local notions of the deserving and undeserving poor.

The poor become more vulnerable within a social structure with a ‘seemingly integrated national identity’ that obscures ‘the stigmatisation of certain ethnic groups on the basis of their occupation and religion’ (Kissi 2006:5). The narrative of the Abyssinianization of Ethiopia’s lowlands carries with it notions of colonialism and assimilation of the

⁸¹ Russell further expressed his great disappointment in FAO for their lack of interest in this conflict and waste of food internally.

Amhara language and Christianity, quashing traditional diversity in its wake. As Getu and Devereux (2013) state, few ISP mechanisms have survived the test of time, but those that have are predominantly Amhara,⁸² compounding colonisation narratives of the dominant Amhara. Mammo (1999:93) further discusses how a process of acculturation induced the ‘formation of fictitious kinship relations’ through enforcing the transformation of *balager* [common person] to a *bale’abat* [refined citizen] as a necessary step⁸³. This caused irreparable damage to traditional governance and sense of identity, and contributed to the demise of ISP mechanisms.

The concept of colonisation that features heavily in interpretations of Ethiopia’s history projects Eurocentric interpretations onto an African past (Mehretu 2012) and promotes images of one all-powerful force, assimilating and overpowering all in its path. Within this narrative, it is the Christian Highland-Northern rulers who embody the ‘whig interpretation’, implying a ‘progressive march of Ethiopia’s State towards unity and modernity’ (Triulzi cited in Kaarsholm 2006:122). Slavery and brutality on the part of the ruling forces is equally discussed as a ‘foundation of unity’ (Levine 1983:40), while neglecting to address the fact that many of the indigenous-colonising forces were not ethnically exclusive, and that this was a case of ‘Ethiopians enslaving Ethiopians’ and not ethnicity enslaving ethnicity (Levine 1983). Levine (1974) stresses that just as the north is portrayed as fighting for the south and east, so too was the south fighting for central and east Ethiopia. However, this bidirectional hegemony, to a great extent, has been muted and overlooked (Hassen 1990).

These narratives neglect how ‘history of migration, conquest, subjugation, and hegemony was bidirectional’ (Mehretu 2012:118: see also Hassen 1990). Ethiopia has many strong arguments that suggest a ‘much greater ‘pan-Ethiopian’ unity than is often suggested’ (Abbink 1984:3 on Lewis 1983). The gospel of historically grounded, enduring ethnic tensions, is invested in neglecting Ethiopia’s historically ‘pluralistic unity and collective identity’ (Levine 1974:86), ‘contiguous sovereign territory’ and the ‘flexible and dynamic nature of ethnic bonds and identity’ (Abbink 1984:3 on Lewis 1983). As Mehretu (2012:113) passionately argues, these narrations ‘minimized the collective identity of Ethiopians’, which led ‘to their decomposition into tribal

⁸² Such ISPs are: *idir* [membership-based burial society], *iqub* [membership-based saving society] and *mahiber* [an association of like-minded people] (Getu and Devereux 2013) (Appendix N).

⁸³ The imagery of *abe’lej* [family] was enforced within state ideologies of the new Ethiopian united empire, especially the ‘symbolic sharing of the same breast of one mother’ [*Ye’tut*]⁸³ (Mammo 1999).

groupings', known as *killiloch*, and not the traditional boundaries associated with land ownership.⁸⁴ While land reforms under the Derg were initially popular, there were 'ethnic and regional component[s]' and 'Amhara landlords and tenants generally did not benefit as much as Oromo and Southern Tenants' (Ottaway and Ottaway 1978:84). Peasants in the south 'spontaneously revolted and chased Amhara landlords from their holdings' (Keller 1995:195). As Smith (2013:70) states, 'All Ethiopian peasants were oppressed by land alienation and denied citizenship, but only non-Amhara bore the additional burdens of language and religious oppressions'.

Established in 1991, ethnic federalism supposedly offers the only 'means of maintaining intact a multi-ethnic Ethiopia' (Turton 2006). However, many view this 'Ethiopian experiment' suspiciously (Vaughan cited in Prunier and Ficquet 2015:286), set against a legacy of Ethiopia's heads of State pursuing selfish desires, Ethiopia's 'dismemberment' (Mehretu 2012) through the guise of 'national union' and the 'limited autonomy of minority groups', has been discussed as a political ploy inspired by the desire to divide and conquer (Mehretu 2012:4), while pursuing comparative alliances with different minorities (Clapham 1990; Levine 2008; Turton 2006).⁸⁵ Ethiopia's variety of ethnic groups promotes 'proud individualism' (Devereux 2003:14) among people who come from bilateral familial groups, are highly mobile and who have emerged from a complex and hostile environmental, socio-political, and historical context, further contributing to the likelihood of chronic poverty experienced by the individual. Clapham (1990) in response argues for a federal system which places less emphasis on nationality and more on territoriality. Many Ethiopian scholars resent discussions of ethnicity as being detrimental, illegitimate and irresponsible, the present structure assumed by the EPRDF as a 'prison house of nationalities' (Milkias 2011:403).

4.5 Conclusion

In this overview of Ethiopia's history, I have looked to show how a series of key events has cultivated Ethiopia's current relationship with chronic poverty. The transition of social consciousness away from generosity, coupled with the displacement and demise of traditional agropastoralism, ISP and the infringement of direct entitlements, and the

⁸⁴ It is believed that the 'view from the Amhara centre of new Ethiopia' was of a vast state of 'peripheral regions with no 'cultural' value, but economic and political interests...a civilizing rule' (Tronvoll 2000).

⁸⁵ The EPRDF 'administrative space in Federal Ethiopia came to be closely identified with ethnic affiliation', a 'phenomenon that has generated various localised, but violent ethnic conflicts across the country...particularly acute in pastoralist areas' (Hagmann and Tronvoll 2011:235).

way in which this has run parallel with civil war, droughts and famine cannot be overlooked as contributing factors to chronic poverty. The journey from feudalism to capitalist-ethnic federalism has scarred Ethiopia's face, not only shaping the plight of Ethiopia's poor, but also influencing how Ethiopia's poor engage with and view the societies in which they live. In the following chapter, I build upon this through discussions with the urban poor who partook in this study, showing how their collective memory of these historical markers have shaped their present structural situation, how they are viewed and treated, and how they view and perceive those around them.

Chapter 5. Discussions with the Urban Poor

Building on previous discussions on Ethiopia's complex history of famine, conflict and displacement, this chapter presents the experiences of the urban poor as being, to a greater extent, historically constructed. Here I explore the lived reality of urban poverty and establish how beneficiaries perceive and experience their relationships with family, their communities, the State and, most importantly, themselves. Although I did not anticipate gender and generation being a significant theme in the planning phases of my research, it emerged in the field that poverty is 'an unequal burden' (Benería and Feldman 1992). Accordingly, I discuss how individuals' tread a fine line between pride and shame within survival strategies (Aldersons 1980; Biswas-Dener 2011; Devereux 2003) and highlight gender and generational differences within my analysis of the meta-narratives of *work*, *family*, and *life within the community* that emerged. In particular, these three meta-narratives reveal gendered dimensions⁸⁶.

It is a common assumption that pride has little, if any, effect on the quotidian experience of the urban poor, although there are some notable exceptions; Goodwin Parker, for example, (1971:33) states 'poverty is an acid that drips until all pride is worn away' (see also Alderson 1980; Fernando 1985; Lister 2004; Taylor 2013). Notwithstanding, the assumption is that 'poverty by its very nature is deficit' and so 'what is going right in the lives of the poor' is often neglected as incongruous within development literature and poverty discourse (Biswas-Diener 2011:125). Echoing the unease created by discussions about the deserving and undeserving poor, it may be difficult to comprehend how, from the belly of poverty, pride can be cultivated. However, building upon earlier discussions on the need to study the systems in which the poor are a part, there is an effort to acknowledge and 'better understand what makes life more bearable for the world's poorest citizens and use this knowledge to help those in poverty to gain access to resources and tools that will help them to empower themselves' (Biswas-Diener 2011:125). Biswas-Diener (2011) argues for an understanding of the psychological needs of the poor, and the possession and attainment of these needs to be accepted as a necessity within policy, research and intervention efforts. Alderson's

⁸⁶ While it could be argued that the gender contrast seems somewhat overstated within this chapter, apart from my data in itself showing clear distinctions between male and female beneficiaries' topics of conversation, due to the gendered nature of the organisations within which I met beneficiaries, it was inevitable that the gender contrast would appear more explicit.

(1980) work with the poor of St. Laurence is illustrative of how an understanding of these needs drastically changes the face of the poor within ethnography, as well as ethnography on poverty. He pioneers this shift in priorities within development literature and poverty discourse by bringing the poor's psychological needs for self-image, self-awareness, self-esteem, and pride to the fore, through their own words.

5.1 Begging

I encountered beggars regularly, especially within Addis. When I asked people why they beg, they explained 'it's just what we do'. Young adults, I observed on the streets of Addis and Batu, had forged an accepted vocation from within poverty, honing a skill comprised of charm, a basic awareness of international languages, deception, humour, and a firm social network of other young adults from a similar background, all of whom adopted the same 'profession', and exhibited camaraderie reminiscent of Fagin's boys from Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. This was an observation easily made within Addis⁸⁷ due to sheer numbers (Briggs 2015). As discussed within Orthodox Christianity and Islam, Ethiopia's beggars are given a 'remarkable degree of tolerance' (Fassil 1993; Krios 2005; Mesfin 1986). Immersed in practices of *Tsidk* and *alms*, begging within Ethiopia provides a means for the faithful to gain merit in God's eyes: therefore, beggars occupy an invaluable position within their communities (Briggs 2015; Kiros 2005; Poluha 2007).

Beneficiaries who listed begging as a survival strategy did so with visible shame and sorrow, which clashed with my observations of street children and young adults. My informant's ages ranged from 21 to their early 80s. Through my personal experiences and interviews it is apparent that traditional attitudes towards begging are shifting. Challenging the historical legitimacy of begging, older beneficiaries, between the aged of 50 and 80, expressed great shame and humiliation at the thought of begging. The disconnect between my older informants, traditional culture of begging, and observations of street children initially puzzled me; however, on reflection this disconnect could be attributed to the ways that organisations my beneficiaries attended taught more Eurocentric, Protestant ethics of life and subsistence, where begging is an illegitimate and shameful survival strategy. Such values and teachings within these

⁸⁷ During a journey through the city centre we stopped at traffic lights; a teenage boy knocked on my window and with a huge smile said 'give me 400birr'. I smiled back and said 'I have no money, so I am poor, give me 400birr.' He burst with laughter and gave me a high five through the window as the traffic lights changed and we waved goodbye to one another. There was no urgency in his demands, and he enjoyed the exchange; this seemed to be the reality of begging for younger generations who continue to embrace it as a profession.

organisations appear to have begun to alter perceptions of beggars and begging within Ethiopia; where begging was once a 'profession' tolerated by society, with greater exposure to international and Protestant ethic, it is becoming a practice that is judged a problem (Kiros 2005).

However begging is still prolific as a means of survival amongst all generations. I encountered a man who intentionally coated himself with the dirt at the side of the road. Based on frequent observations, this older man dirtied himself in order to *appeal* to those considering giving to beggars; the worse off he looked the greater his chances of being the one beggar of many to win favour in the eyes of the passing donor. Another informant explained how, upon seeing a beggar occupying a threshold of a shop, he offered this man some birr on his way into the shop. While paying for his items my informant explained how the cashier had run out of change and asked him to wait while she 'found some'. The cashier walked straight to the beggar, who pulled wads of currency from the folds of his dirtied robes. A female beneficiary Meskawet's statement that, 'working is better than begging' was an opinion that appeared to be held by many of the beneficiaries who claimed that if given the chance to work they would not beg. Those who admitted to begging either did so through an entrepreneurial gaze, or they were older and had accepted age as a limitation to employment, with some having children to support.

Discussions with Zenebe, a female beneficiary, were illustrative of this. She explained how she had grown up in a rural setting with her parents, had married at the age of 10, and had subsequently become pregnant by the age of 15 with her first child, proceeding to have three more children in the following years. She explained how it is traditional for girls in Ethiopia to marry young; although she does not see this a good aspect of traditional Ethiopian life, she told me 'you have to accept it happens'. During the 1984-85 famine her eldest child died from a 'skin sickness'. The famine placed her family under immense stress resulting in her decision to migrate to Addis, during the journey another of her children passed away. One of her remaining daughters was 'taken' by a resettlement program; her last remaining daughter followed her to Addis. This daughter became pregnant whilst they lived on the street in Addis, and during the birth of her 2nd grandchild, tragically, Zenebe's daughter also passed away. She now supports her two grandchildren by begging at the age of 70. Zenebe's experiences are regrettably common, with many of my older female beneficiaries sharing similar tales. More men than women admitted to begging as a source of income, however, they often referenced

the debilitating effects of old age. Age was viewed as inhibiting ones' ability to work and, therefore, be hired.

During interviews Dawit noted that as he aged he became less employable, and with old age came illness, which further hindered his ability to compete for work. Similarly Zumet exclaimed that he was strong and did labour work, but the city has fewer opportunities for someone older such as him. While Dawit expressed willingness to work but a lack of capacity, Zumet expressed both a want and capacity. Zumet felt he was limited by society's perception of him as a result of a stigma surrounding those of a certain age. Maru perfectly summarised the discussions around age and employability, discussing age as a limiting factor for those who want to work; further stating that there is a 'stigma...an ageist stigma that means work becomes unreliable for the older members of society.' He explained to me that 'My health is good, and my mind is sharp. It is my age that limits me.'

This, however, was not necessarily the case for women. My data suggests women were able to continue working in domestic roles in old age and support themselves. It was only when they had dependent children that they turned to begging. Male beneficiaries placed greater blame on society for their turn to begging; they expressed a willingness to work but felt limited by society's stigma towards older employees. Whereas female beneficiaries were more reluctant to admit to begging, when they did, they spoke of begging as a necessity in a matter-of-fact tone, contrary to the feelings of shame exhibited by male beneficiaries.

5.2 Professions within urban poverty

All beneficiaries chose to discuss professions within poverty, and dependency was also a central theme, along with pride and a collective understanding of what it means to be *tiru deha* [good poor]. Pride among the Ethiopian urban poor appears to stem from a sense of belonging and the ability to provide for oneself, children and family. This makes them *tiru deha*: poor but independent of other people's help. For instance, through petty trade, survival strategies like HOPE's reciprocal interactions, labour work, and domestic work, the urban poor will class themselves as *tiru deha*. Conversely, to beg as a form of income within Ethiopia, according to traditional conceptualisations, would also mean you are classed as a *tiru deha*, even though, in theory, you are dependent. There appears to be a fine line distinguishing begging from dependency (Devereux 2003:16).

Women noted a diverse scope of professions ranging from housekeeping (where daily tasks included cooking, washing clothes, cleaning) to construction and farming jobs. Some women were involved in petty trade and the selling of *collo*, a traditional roasted snack grain, while others revealed more creative and entrepreneurial ventures like the collection and selling of waste materials. Several beneficiaries illustrated examples of creativity during interviews. Alganesh explained how she did manual labour during the day and studied in the evenings, but ‘the money was not enough’ to fund her schooling. She started working as a housekeeper, but still did not earn enough to fund her schooling. She now sleeps by the church because ‘religious people help her and her children’; their gifts of *Alms* and *Tsidk* subsidise her domestic work income. She told me the following:

Maintaining an income in Addis is unreliable and difficult. In order to secure a more regular income and some level of financial stability I have memorised the different religious celebrations. There are many in Ethiopia, and I rotate between the different churches and mosques.

She also visits the larger hotels and seeks support, both financial and emotional, from travellers visiting the country; the manipulative and creative survival strategies Alganesh uses echo Obbo’s (1980) observations of women in Kampala, who make the most of their environments, which included a Nkole woman who divorced her husband and became a road sweeper in the town. This woman explained that this life was ‘better than starving in the rural’ (Obbo 1980:29). Obbo (1980:28) explains that for women, towns were a considered a ‘necessary evil’, and women were ‘prepared to weather drudgery’ for possible opportunities and the prospect of economic independence (Obbo 1980:101).

My female informants generally showed pride and excitement when discussing their resourcefulness, resilience, entrepreneurial achievements, the strength of their personal relationships, and their influence on their children. Women are carriers of tradition and keepers of their households both symbolically and physically (Ogden 1996). Ogden (1996) discusses this phenomenon in Kampala, as does Englund (2002) in Malawi, with both further arguing that key survival strategies for women in urban poverty depend on building strong community relationships. This is potentially due to how women in urban poverty interpret their situations, which differs greatly from impoverished urban men.

The spectrum of unskilled work available to women is greater than that afforded to men. Alganesh’s experience, noted above, of fluidly moving from job to job was echoed by

many female beneficiaries, but not representative of male beneficiaries' experience of employment. This seem to be because women have more transferable skills applicable to both urban and rural contexts, whereas professions for male beneficiaries were predominantly restricted to rural locations. While women's domestic roles did not differ greatly between contexts, men in urban poverty struggle to apply their agropastoralist skills in the urban localities of Addis and Batu.

The majority of male beneficiaries interviewed went into great detail about their working histories and focused less on their current strategies of survival. They reminisced about working the land as agropastoralists, working in construction, agricultural work in governmental projects, and positions in the military. In fact very little detail was provided regarding their current professions, modes of income, and their motivation for pursuing these modes of income⁸⁸. Resonating with Pottier's (2015) findings within Kampala, a similar gender dichotomy can be observed whereby women chose to settle in town while men predominantly wished to accumulate 'capital to invest on returning home' (Pottier 2015:5 see also Elkan 1960:42-3).

There were of course exceptions to this pattern where by men preferred to remain in the towns. As in the case of Yamsalekaki, who was an animal keeper in Arsi before coming to Addis. He explained that he now salvages and sells clothing to the poor on the streets. He also locates NGOs for support and advice, in order to keep abreast of new projects and available support. Likewise, Dawit explained that he enrolled in the military at the age of 16, had been promised a pension following the war, and expected to return to his family when it ended. However, he never saw his family again. When Mengistu lost the war, the change of government meant that none of the soldiers were provided the pensions they were promised. He is resentful towards the Derg⁸⁹. He returned to Ethiopia from Eritrea and came to Addis in search of work. He pursued manual labour, and explained that after his unsettled life, 'this provides some quality of life and provides some stability.' Adane, in contrast, worked the land and ploughed for his family when he lived in Gojam. One year before the Derg Regime came into power, during the time of Haile Selassie, he came to Addis in search of work and was employed by a governmental construction organisation. The completion of the contract

⁸⁸ Beneficiaries stressed the temporal and unreliable nature of work, speaking of daily labour, being private security guards, and begging; there were, however, exceptions to these trends.

⁸⁹ Dawit's story is common, as many male beneficiaries were ex-soldiers, and many blame the Derg for their loss of family, land and faith in government.

coincided with the rise of the Derg Regime, making it even harder to find work. Adane had to beg, and for the last 23 years he has been begging; he states that he begs to support his children's educational expenses.

While all men highlighted had powerful motivations for their resilience, their motivations differ; while Yamsalekaki's and Dawit's motivations are self-growth and self-sufficiency, Adane's motivation is the well-being of his children. A large proportion of the male beneficiaries were in Addis and Batu alone, their families living outside of Addis or Batu. Many of them lacked pride and self-esteem, occupying a complex and uncomfortable position as a result of being unable to achieve the social role expected of them.

The impact of women's need for independence and rural-to-urban migration on men cannot be underestimated (Afshar and Agarwal 1989; Barnes 1999; Obbo 1980; Tomalin 2015); tied up in perceptions of masculinity and self-worth, for men in sub-Saharan Africa, women are a 'strategy of production and expansion' (Obbo 1980:101). They provide 'comfort, wealth and descendants' (Obbo 1980:101). As seen in Afshar and Agarwal's (1989) study of purdah and poverty in Pakistan, female employment or financial autonomy becomes a reflection of her husband's own failings as a man and provider. As Obbo (1980) and Barnes (1999) further illustrate in their respective case studies from Kampala and Zimbabwe, 'the complexity of the African man's response to urban migration of the African woman should not be underestimated' (Barnes 1999:71), as this is a phenomena that is 'highly sensitive for authorities and poor men' (Obbo 1980:101).

5.3 Dangers associated with work

The dangers discussed by female beneficiaries ranged from sexual assault to being misled, both professionally and personally. Fatima recalled how women from Addis who worked in a bar encouraged her to come to the city, although 'when I arrived in Addis it was not what I had expected. I did not enjoy life in Addis.' Fatima explained how these women had not told her about the need for a 'warranty man': someone to take responsibility and vouch for her so she could work. Without one she was only able to wash clothes for rent money, or collect and sell waste materials; this was not what she had hoped for, nor what she had been promised. Similarly, Etnesh had no support when she arrived in Addis, and the first secure job she found was as a house servant. While working with this family she had a relationship with the eldest son and became

pregnant. As a result she lost her job and was condemned to the streets by her employers; she begs to survive. It is a regular occurrence for young women in the domestic work force in Ethiopia to be exploited by family and employers (HCFAS 2007:2102; VAGA 2006:13). A survey carried out by the ACPF in Ethiopia recorded a quarter of all rape cases were at the hands of male relatives, further recording how 'prevailing poverty leaves girls with little choice but to join the workforce, often under exploitative and sometimes violent conditions' (VAGA 2006:13). The majority of my informants explained that young unmarried women migrating from rural to urban Ethiopia for work are not sexually active prior to arriving in Batu or Addis. Further telling me that if they are sexually active it is as a result of sexual assault, arranged marriages, intoxication, or as Yemis told me 'falling in love with the wrong men who use us and leave us'. Young women within this context are also uneducated when it comes to sexual health and so the risk of unplanned pregnancies, sexual assault and contracting sexually transmitted infections such as HIV are high. This paired with historically enforced and socially accepted patriarchal views towards women and a strong classist hierarchy make young, uneducated women from rural and religious fundamentalist backgrounds amongst the most vulnerable of Ethiopian society (Tomalin 2011). However some believe that the compliance of women within rural traditional settings is not illustrative of an internalisation of patriarchy, and actually, by actively undermining their economic contribution women are in fact implementing a 'long term strategy' for security both within their households and the immediate community (Raheja and Gold 1994; Sen 1990; Agarwal 1994).

Fatima's and Etnesh's experiences of exploitation and deception appear to be common. Men and women are encouraged to migrate to urban centres in search of a better life, yet find themselves economically trapped in Addis and Batu as they can only occupy low paying vocations and cannot work their way out of poverty (Ehrenreich 2014). Working outside of the home puts them at risk. Manual labour and agriculture within the city, and on the outskirts of the city and towns are not gender focused, as Tadessa told me 'men and women are one and the same in labour work'. The urban poor are vulnerable to physical dangers associated with low wage work and lax human rights laws within industries; as one female beneficiary called Mimi explained, 'I had to leave

a polytunnel flower growing project because the pesticides and chemicals caused me skin irritations, and severe respiratory problems'⁹⁰

It becomes evident that the poor are vulnerable, and at times preyed upon as a result of their vulnerabilities, making them suspicious of their communities. Female informants had a fear of being used, misled, abused, or worried about their children's wellbeing. Male informants' suspicions centred upon their personal notions of self-worth: for example questioning what possible value they could be to this study. These examples are indicative of the nature of prior interactions the poor have had with the non-poor, not only illustrating how the poor perceive international and indigenous non-poor, but also how they believe others perceive and value them. This is further indicated in the manner in which I experienced a lot of suspicion and concern regarding the *other* in everyday life and the *other's* motivations to converse with me. While in the field, I experienced a level of suspicion from a sample of female informants; this was partly due to the emotive and sensitive nature of studying poverty perception, and partly due to me not being fully Ethiopian. One young woman in HOPE asked me if I was there to adopt or take her children. She expressed genuine fear and concern prior to my successful efforts to reassure her.

My informants' concerns and suspicion are, to some degree, well founded. Transnational adoption from Ethiopia has boomed, rising 115% between 2004 and 2008 (Chavkin and Maher 2010), leaping from an estimated 85 children adopted to the United States of America in 1997, to 4,500 children adopted out per year in 2009 and 2010 (Joyce 2013). One can observe the influx of new parents from across Europe in Bole Airport, Addis Ababa, clutching Ethiopian babies and toddlers. When observed from a distance the true face of this 'gift child' and the impact on his or her new parents is undeniably one of love and gratitude (Yngvesson 2002:1-5, 24). However, as Yngvesson (2002:1-5, 24) explores, there is a need to consider the experience of transnational adoption on a human level, specifically the emotion and power of the interaction between the giftee, the gifter and the child as gift in relation to the tensions that can ensue with market practices. Moreover, Chavkin and Maher (2010), Joyce (2013), and Karen et al. (in Joyce 2013) alike draw attention to the illegal activities and infringements on human rights by agencies residing in Ethiopia that rely on intercountry adoptions for financial buoyancy.

⁹⁰ During the interview she insisted on showing me her scars and skin lesions, which she claimed to have acquired due to being exposed to harsh chemicals while working in the polytunnels.

5.4 Undermining campaign and deception

Many of my female informants made reference to the importance of education in countering deception by family, lovers, partners and their communities; for example, Shagito told me,

As a woman, you shouldn't fight to have a husband; a good education is what you need. You need to build your future. While we may know what we want, we need guidance and ideas sometimes. But most importantly we need encouragement, not suspicion

Gennet echoed Shagito's statement by telling me 'For any woman, if she has an education, she would not be fooled, or pushed, and she will have strength. Education provides women with strength'. Both beneficiaries' comments were illustrative of the distrust experienced by women in poverty.

Deception is a curious topic, transcending all strata of Ethiopian society. Mesfin, an employee within WID, stated that pride, concealment, and deception work hand-in-hand in discussions of poverty, a position somewhat echoed in the works of Obbo (1980) and Mugula (in Obbo 1980) who consider manipulation as a strategy of economic autonomy amongst women of Kampala. At times dubious and deceptive practices results in unfavourable judgements of individuals by respective communities. Bizuye explained, 'I tell offices in Addis that I need their waste paper to sleep on, so they freely give this to me. I have taught myself basic origami and create food containers which I sell to street food vendors'. She explained how she had to lie to the offices about her use of their waste paper: they charged her after realising she was trying to make a profit from their waste paper. Similarly in Batu, a 'coffee lady' set up shop outside my family's business. Within two days of her arrival, Tadessa, from the AOG, warned us that these people had set up their roadside makeshift coffee stop in order to take trade away from us when we opened our lodge. I remember the confusion and sadness we as a family felt at the urgency with which Tadessa viewed the need for the coffee lady's removal because she might make 10 birr a day from selling coffee in that location, which in Tadessa's mind meant we, as a company, would lose out. Within Batu, petty trade like coffee ladies is not permitted within the town as they 'clutter' the roadsides; however, as our lodge marked the town's boundary line, the coffee lady had positioned herself as close to the town as possible. The poor who attempt to survive through petty trade are marginalised within Batu and Addis as they challenge the ideologies of community order.

Such campaigns to undermine the efforts of the most vulnerable of society echo the State's relationship with its people, especially in relation to land ownership, policies, political involvement, and entitlements to resources vital for individual survival. This corresponds with trends in notions of deservingness observed by Ohio-Ehimiagh (2012) within Nigeria⁹¹, who discusses the assignment of blame in the absence of truly understanding the context leading to the individual's impoverished situation, which, in turn, appears to motivate the non-poor to undermine the entrepreneurial efforts of the poor. As an outsider I felt a level of amusement and admiration at the creativity exhibited by the poor, whereas the communities in which they lived appeared to view them with suspicion, disdain, annoyance, and what could be argued a severe and genuine concern. It could also be argued that, similar to the observations made by Ehrenreich (2014), the poor have an expected level of social interaction within their communities. By becoming entrepreneurial they are challenging these socially and historically enforced modes of interaction with the middle and upper classes, and so their efforts are met with distrust as they challenge the status quo. Judging by the experiences of the urban poor, their communities' attitudes towards them seem to fall into two camps: either the poor are of use to the middle and upper classes in menial and domestic roles (Green 2006; Ehrenreich 2014) or they are deemed a threat and viewed with distrust.

5.5 Family

Family as a topic encompassed the existence of a family, lack of family, familial experiences during childhood, family loss as conducive for significant changes in life trajectory, and family as a driving or limiting force. Men primarily reminisced about family and familial links in the past, discussing childhoods, failed marriages, and children they no longer saw, whereas women focused on the present and the future, discussing their children's futures, education, their aspirations, how they as mothers and grandmothers survive. When men did mention their children they spoke of their achievements, their grades and occupations. Adane told me of his marriage and four children, the eldest of whom is 16. Adane was eager to tell me that one of his children was already in grade 9 and the youngest was in grade 5. For the majority of my male informants their inability to provide for family appeared to result in their voluntary withdrawal from family life, as a result of shame due to un-fulfilled responsibilities (see also Chase et al. 2015; Alderson 1980). Whereas, for a sample of female beneficiaries,

⁹¹ Appendix L

expectations linked to the traditional treatment and behaviours of young women compelled them to run from their families, in both rural and urban contexts.

Discussions of women running are complex and broad, with Pottier's (2015) and Obbo's (1980) discussions on women in Kampala mirroring Nelson's (1978) study of women running in Nairobi, and Bonner's (cited in Walker 1990) account of 'runaway wives' in Batsutoland, all of which echo my findings in Ethiopia. As Walker (1990:189) argues, 'escape' is the most fitting term for describing 'a major component of female migration'. While Walker (1990) argues that the concept of women running should not be overstated, it equally cannot be overlooked, as women in search of economic autonomy and freedom from the constraints of traditional sanctions and kinship obligations make dangerous decisions at times (Wallman 1996). My mother, herself an Ethiopian woman who 'ran' with the help of family in Addis, relayed how traditional life for women in sub-Saharan Africa is physically and emotionally demanding, and often entails FGM [female genital mutilation], early marriage, religious fundamentalism and patriarchal societies – all of which hinders female emancipation (Obbo 1980).

Ethiopia's long history of conflict further exemplifies the notion that 'instability erodes traditional norms' (Obbo 1980:28), not only in the form of ISP as previously discussed, but in relation to 'new opportunities' and 'progressive transformations' within gender equality and development (Benería and Feldman 1992). As is apparent within my findings, 'alongside these very real descriptions of women's low worth, we find images of great strength' (Grillo and Stirrat 1977:161); by turning their backs on tradition, women that run are actually freeing themselves of the social and cultural pressures, expectations and limitations of their 'safety net' (Afshar and Agawal 1989; Obbo 1980). As Wallman (1996) argues, one needs to understand the social, economic and political contexts in order to see if the end justifies the means, a point supported by Tomalin (2011) who argues the relevance of religion's impact on gender equality is often overlooked.

5.6 Life

The reality of life for the urban poor is difficult. Inflation in the cost of living has forced the urban poor to become more creative with their income-earning strategies. Yilma explained, 'life is unpredictable and so I cannot describe my life as the days are unpredictable'; he succinctly illustrates the reality of life in Addis where achieving a routine and security is a daily or even hourly concern for the urban poor. I was told that

life is hard in Addis and full of struggles, but you can create a routine. Dawit said, ‘a routine provides a sense of normality and stability’, and living in the city seemed to provide my informants with the hope of achieving this through greater opportunities. Whether or not these opportunities in fact exist is unclear, but the belief in greater opportunities served as a pull factor and one reason for remaining in Addis and Batu. A common practice amongst male beneficiaries in particular was to reflect on life in rural areas as a means of evaluating their present state. Yamsalekal argued, ‘there are no jobs in rural areas, no opportunities. In rural areas if you do not have land life is not good’.

When considering the structure of households and living conditions, the majority of the urban poor who participated in my research were highly mobile, with dwellings being both temporary and at times too highly priced both monetarily and emotionally. Dependency on friends and family was a common source of anxiety. Yilma explained that his cousin provided him with shelter, but his cousin was not happy to provide him with this accommodation as he cannot ‘contribute or earn his keep’. Yilma explained that he feels like he is dependent on his family, he ‘feels guilt and shame’, he feels like he is a ‘drain’ on them, so now he begs in order to try to contribute something to the household income. Yilma stated that he measures his personal worth as a member of his family on a daily basis: he is worth whatever he earns begging on that day. As Adane explained to me, ‘I do not live my own life. I hate this. I depend [on] others’ gifts’. However, Adane was with his family. Alternatively Maru had removed himself from his family, telling me how he feels he is ‘of no value to them,’ He explains, ‘I cannot provide for them, so I feel it is better for me to keep away. I seek information of their wellbeing from friends who travel, but I do not see them with my own eyes anymore’. Maru’s willing isolation from his family is a behaviour echoed in the works of Chase et al. (2015:212) who unpack men’s internalisation of their situation as indicative of how they see themselves in comparison to others, both poor and non-poor. Both Maru and Adane had clearly neglected themselves physically, Maru had scares and cuts on his arms and hands that had not been tended to, while Adane explained that, at times, although he is hungry he chooses not to eat, revealing the harrowing reality that ‘on some days I question what would be the point’.

Begging to pay for personal needs compounded this sense of shame experienced by beneficiaries. As Alderson (1980:61-62) noted amongst the poor of St Laurence, ‘if one’s self-esteem needs are not met’ the individual’s self-image and self-concept deteriorate. The early stages of my interviews with these particular men were filled with

smiles, and comfortable, confident body language; however, throughout the course of the interview their tone changed. These men questioned their sense of self, their purpose, their value to family, friends, and even to my research; their body language further illustrated a level of hopelessness. As Alderson (1980:61-62) states, 'Our self-concept depends in part on the way we perform in our everyday social positions, and the way others respond to us'.

When discussing shelter, beneficiaries referred to the support of the local community, government housing schemes, or sleeping on the streets alone or with friends using make shift covers of plastic, cloth, and card. There are various governmental options for shelter referred to by beneficiaries. They explained that governmental accommodation for rent was available for a fee per day and/or night of 5-10 birr: this gives them a room with other individuals and/ or families in a similar situation. Women also told me they could apply for a small plot of land. The intricacies of this are still unknown to me but, from interviews, I understand that you apply to the government to temporarily 'own' a plot of land on which you can build a 'plastic house'. These houses are not necessarily safe and are not permanent dwellings, with some women making reference to their vulnerability to hyena attacks within Addis Ababa during the nights. However, they expressed gratitude to the government for the opportunity to have the land. Hyenas infiltrate the city from the rural fringes in search of food in the form of rubbish, street dogs, sheep, and sometimes even people who are unfortunate enough to be on the streets at night; my family and I have observed this harsh reality. These governmental options were only referred to during interviews in Addis Ababa, and not Batu. Other housing options for both women in Addis and Batu were with family, however, very few women made reference to living with family or acquiring help or support from family. Women in Batu referred to the local community housing them, their value as house sitters for those homeowners who travel, or to sleeping on the streets uncovered. As Ogden (1996) notes 'maintaining good relations with ones neighbour through *empisa* is felt to be one of the keys to urban survival'⁹². As explained to me by Etnesh 'the community protect me from sexual abuse when I am on the streets. They care for me'.

As discussed, reasons for remaining in urban localities were complex and often gendered, as noted by Pottier (2015:5). While women were purposefully running from

⁹² *Empisa* is a Baganda term Ogden (1996) considers in respect to the production and maintenance of respect and 'proper' women (Englund 2002). The term itself is closely affiliated with the concept of conduct and behaviours.

their rural backgrounds in search of economic independence and emancipation, push factors for male rural to urban migration lay in land ownership disparities. Yilma, a male beneficiary, told me;

Life was good, life was green. But now Shewa has become a town and is no longer a rural village, the natural resources are controlled and limited, the land is shared out, and the land policy is difficult to understand. You can no longer own your own land and pursue your own income easily.

His confusion and visible distrust in land ownership is a common tale, and experienced by generations throughout Ethiopia's history. Yilma continued that he is better off remaining in Addis, because in the rural areas 'the culture has changed'. In Addis he has a roof over his head, and he can beg. Dawit reflected warmly on rural life stating that 'the current reality is probably very different to the happy childhood I recall', explaining how 'these days you cannot access land easily, subsistence is very hard now', and personally he feels any family he did have 'in the rural area have either passed or moved to the city'. In contrast Hannah, born in a rural context, explained;

I find the idea of going back with no money difficult. I do not want to be a drain on my family. Because my future lacks an education due to being a rural girl. If I had had an education I would not be in this situation. Rural people are backwards, they put me backwards. I hope my daughter gets away from that lifestyle. This is why I will not go back any time soon with my daughter.

An important discussion around life within urban poverty was that while beneficiaries acknowledged their situation, dichotomies were drawn between measures of poverty: women noted that, while they were economically poor or educationally poor, they are still thankful for what they have, i.e. their children, creativity, health and independence. Men placed greater value on monetary measures of self-worth and self-sufficiency. Male beneficiaries had a role and identity in their rural communities and familial units as providers, protectors and farmers; in urban localities they felt stripped of this identity. In contrast, many female beneficiaries embraced the sense of liberation from dependence and control of men in the rural context through being a member of the urban poor⁹³.

Women's motivations for turning their backs on tradition became evident. For example Fatima considered the main difference between living in rural and urban contexts lies in the fact that 'you need a man in a rural area if you want to survive, but you manage better by yourself as a woman in Addis'. Hannah spoke of the sense of freedom she felt

⁹³ See Afshar and Agarwal 1989; Obbo 1980; Millar 1996; Raheja and Gold 1994; Thian 1978.

in Batu stating ‘while your expenses are covered in rural areas by your family, as a woman you have no freedom and so I am a lot happier in Batu’. As illustrated in Haile’s (2009) study the women of Shoa and Batu recent demand for access to contraception, signifies a monumental shift in choice generally only afforded women in urban areas. Tigst’s⁹⁴ narrative illustrates this growing awareness of contraception and a woman’s ability to not have children: ‘For a girl to have a future, you must try to hold back from having children, because no one wants to employ a woman with children. Without children a woman can have a future...women have the drive’. The potential for access to education, contraception, and economic independence were central pull factors for my female beneficiaries.

5.7 Loss

Loss was woven into informants’ narratives: loss of the physical connection to family, loss of security, loss as the result of death, the loss of self-respect and self-worth, and loss of trust in family, communities, and State. The majority of male informants made reference to the civil war when discussing the loss of family both through displacement and death, while my female informants made very little reference to the civil war, and instead marked the great famine as having the greatest impact on family life and the loss of family. Ethiopia’s civil war, beginning in 1974, was a conducive affliction for male beneficiaries. Reference to the Derg regime was made repeatedly as being a significant cause of a monumental change in their lives, be it a result of removal from their families at a young age and displacement, a loss of professional vocations due to acquired injury, or social and economic upheaval due to the new Regime and accompanying land reform policies⁹⁵. Based on the ages of my male beneficiaries and the information they provided me, they were more heavily involved in the civil war than the women I interviewed. This was due to young men and boys being forcibly recruited during the civil war, many of whom became displaced in the process. The civil war caused many of my male informants to lose or be separated from family. In contrast, my female beneficiaries were far too young to have appreciated or experienced the civil war, instead falling to the throes of the great famine as children, young women, or young mothers who lost children during the famine.

⁹⁴ Tigst wore a cord around her neck which usually would have a wooden cross pendant suspended from it; the cord alone symbolised her faith in God even though it lacked the cross.

⁹⁵ Appendix K

While male beneficiaries spoke more of the loss of their parents during the civil war and through other means such as childbirth complications or accidents (as was the case for Yilma's father's death by accidental shooting at a celebration) women made little positive reference to their parents. Shagito told me;

I was married and had four children. My husband had three extra wives and I was very unhappy so I divorced him. I grew up in a rural area with my father. I didn't have a mother. I missed having a mother. As a result I can take or leave my childhood.

She would prefer to be married, but only if she were in a good relationship. Because she had a bad experience of marriage, she explained that she has put off marrying again. Despite lacking the support of a 'good man', she is happy. The majority of my informants were divorced or estranged from their partners, with one female stating that she had lost touch with her husband for several years and did not know if he was still living.

Women went into great detail about their experience of famines, their children and grandchildren, and their relationships. They discussed the loss of partners and high infant mortality, and made reference to the impact of losing their fathers on their mothers. Unable to cope in the rural context in the absence of their husbands due to civil war and famine, many women lost their lives. In contrast, male beneficiaries made no reference to child mortality or love; they spoke of wives and marriages, not being in love, falling in love or coping with heartbreak.

Among female informants, the topic that stirred the greatest emotional response was when they recalled men they had loved and lost, and deception by men they had loved and lost. I found the emotion almost overwhelming when speaking to young mothers in WID and HOPE who recalled and relived the reality of everything they had survived; heartache as a result of a failed romantic relationship was one of the most hurtful experiences to a nomadic poor woman and appeared to cut deeper than the other hardships they had overcome. This is illustrated by the personal history of Yemis-Seratch and her 11-month-old baby boy, Mikiyas.

I am originally from Arba Minch, and I used to live with my parents. At the age of 9 my mother passed away and my father remarried in Harar, after which I was given to my aunty in Awassa. My aunty had mistreated me by not feeding me, making me a house servant, sending her own children to school and not sending me. I heard of work opportunities in Batu and so I ran away. At first life was good in Batu. I became a hairdresser's apprentice and met a boy, fell in love and

soon after married him. I became pregnant but it didn't matter as we had been saving money.

Yemis explained that her husband claimed to have secured a good job in Addis and that a beautiful home was a part of this new job. He packed all of their belongings and told her to wait for him because he did not want her to travel when she was seven months pregnant. He took their savings and belongings telling her he would come back for her soon. She recalled how she waited for him, but he never returned. Yemis began to cry during the interview, and visibly became uncomfortable and unsettled, and her anguish at being abandoned and betrayed by the man she loved was visible. She continued to describe how she had tried to take her own life by drinking detergent and then, when that attempt failed, she tried to drown herself in a river near a bridge. She said that she and her son are only alive now because school children found her and pulled her from the river. She recalls that they supported her on the streets for some time, and that no one had wanted her because she was heavily pregnant. Only when she was close to giving birth did the children manage to find a kind lady who took her in. The woman's family did not understand why she was helping a stranger, and so Yemis was sent back to the streets with her new-born. It was then that WID found her.

5.8 The community

When discussing their interaction with their communities, the general consensus was that the communities in Addis and Batu were supportive and accommodating of the urban poor. Alganesh explained that 'people are generous' to her. Etnesh referred to a protective local community, telling me 'they help me achieve a good night's sleep'. Yamsalekaki further explained how some of the young men in Addis built him a home by the river. Andatgu went further and made the curious statement, 'I prefer life in Addis rather than being with my own people [...] I am a proud Ethiopian'. This statement could be interpreted as Andatgu having physically and mentally distanced himself from his original region.

While there are those who appear to have benefitted from positive interactions with their community and acknowledged the value of being socially integrated, some were unable to integrate easily and so felt further isolated. Dawit, for example, defined life in the city unfavourably, stating that he struggles socially, environmentally, and economically, while Zumet explained 'living in the streets is difficult. There is no home, no one who helps me, and I never go to church'. As a result of not going to church he suggests that he is further isolated from the surrounding, heavily religious

community in Addis. There are, however, those who chose to isolate themselves as a result of distrusting the non-poor, as voiced by Yilma, who made a poignant statement. 'other people can love you if you have something in your hand... when you have nothing you don't know who your friends and enemies are anymore'. Yilma's apprehension around an unknown *other* is heavily influenced by his negative experience of his family, how he begs to contribute to his family's home and how he begrudged the way they do not support him when he is unable to contribute.

Then there are those who acknowledge the value of a supportive community but who do not feel a need to depend on them, as in Meskawet's case. She expressed that she 'does not need the community . . . family help each other . . . but the people in Addis are nice and do not have rude hearts'. Meskawet was an intriguing case as she and her partner worked in petty trade and begged to subsidise their incomes, during which their children attended school or cared for one another. While they had no secure dwelling or household, sleeping under a different roof each night, and although Meskawet voiced her concerns and fears associated with strangers at night sharing the one rental room, her family had forged a routine and for that they were grateful. Meskawet's statements are coherent with her previous discussions around a good work ethic and the need for independence and self-determination; her statement about 'rude hearts' links to a recurrent view among my female informants that those in rural areas do not understand the plight of the poor, which can lead to mistreatment, especially of women⁹⁶.

Tesgaw relocated due to famine, as the full guardian of two grandchildren. She described life on the streets as 'miserable', stating that 'she wishes she had never been brought into this world'. However, she went on to say that life in the city is better because there are a lot of people in the same situation and as a result more empathy, understanding and support. In towns and cities she had more options available, such as begging and house work. The rural people had less of an understanding of her life. She also stated that Addis provided her HIV positive grandchild with greater access to medical help and advice. She explained to me that 'they [the community] understand my situation'.

⁹⁶ As is later discussed, community integration, commitment and membership are valuable measures of deservingness within the poor's communities.

5.9 Conclusion

Building on previous discussions on Ethiopia's complex and contested history, the experiences of the beneficiaries who partook, to a greater extent, can be argued as being historically constructed. The relevance of key markers such as famine, civil war, changes in land policy and changes in government cannot be overlooked as these events have shaped the plight of the urban poor, and their discussions of deception, loss, work, and life have been clouded by its memory. The lived reality of urban poverty and how beneficiaries perceived and experienced their relationships with family, their communities, the State and, most importantly, themselves is apparent. Gender and age were significant variables within the understanding of the language, perception and experience of urban poverty. While the gender dichotomies within this chapter could seem overstated, they represent the fact that these beneficiaries were interviewed within male and female feeding centres and gendered organisations. However, as is apparent in new discussions within development and feminist research poverty by its very nature is gendered (Obbo 1980; Benería and Feldman 1992; Grillo and Stirrat 1977; Afshar and Agawal 1989; Wallman 1996; Tomalin 2011). This reality is illustrated through the varying perceptions and experiences portrayed by male and female beneficiaries. The topics of women running, survival strategies, work, deception, manipulation, and the complex position of men in poverty, support this claim. Discussions on the fine line between pride and shame within survival strategies (Aldersons 1980; Biswas-Dener 2011; Devereux 2003), and the significance of beneficiaries' psychological fulfilment, in how they physically experience life led to the exploration of pride, identity, shame, anxiety and autonomy (Alderson 1980; Biswas-Diener 2011). By setting these findings against a culturally and historically informed back drop, the subjective nature of their discussions can be presented knowledge (Lagerspetze 2008:6). In the following chapter I build upon these discussions in relation to how the non-poor perceive the urban poor. Based on interviews with those working in close proximity to the urban poor either through developmental programs or within NGO's and GO's, it becomes apparent that perceptions of the urban poor often reflect a dichotomy hinging on whether the poor are victims of circumstance or victims of their own fatalistic attitudes.

Chapter 6. Discussions of the Urban Poor

Working from interviews with those in close proximity to the urban poor either as members of their community, or through developmental programs and agencies, this chapter explores how gatekeepers and non-poor informants perceive and interact with the poor, and poverty within Ethiopia⁹⁷. This chapter reflects on the apparent dichotomy between the poor being viewed as either victims of circumstance or victims of their own fatalistic attitudes through discussions on national pride, the concept of ‘our poverty’, social integration, dependency, institutional action, blame, and ethnicity.

This chapter is defined by contrasts and contradictions. The poor at once embody Ethiopia’s institutional weaknesses, challenge ideologies of what Ethiopia should be, while equally serving a vast spectrum of valuable roles within society. The poor are considered one and the same, while immersed in hierarchical social structures, and *their poverty* is at times applied as a social crutch, symbolising *our poverty*. The urban poor within Batu and Addis occupy an uncomfortable in position in society. As discussed in the previous chapter, the poor delicately negotiate a sliding scale of perceptions and interactions that denote them as deserving and undeserving of aid, compassion and acknowledgement. This chapter further contextualises the reasons behind both negative and positive interactions beneficiaries experienced with the non-poor, and within society as a whole. By considering how the non-poor perceive the poor and poverty, one can achieve a better understanding of poverty as historically constructed and the outcome of social relationships.

6.1 A threat to national pride

How the non-poor perceive the urban poor relates to national pride and understandings of what it means to be Ethiopian. These understandings are entrenched in Ethiopia’s historical claims and success in the face of invasion, as discussed. The way the poor are perceived and experienced is highly complex and can threaten the ideologies the non-poor hold of Ethiopia. To accept these threats⁹⁸ is to accept Ethiopia has institutional and cultural weaknesses; placing blame on the individual poor helps maintain these

⁹⁷ During my interviews with these became clear there were various differences in how these individuals referred to the poor and the topics upon which they chose to focus. These differences can, in the main, be attributed to whether they are Ethiopian or non-Ethiopian, work in a GO or NGO, work as academics and/or if they were directly or indirectly involved with the realities the poor experience.

⁹⁸ By threats I am referring to what the poor symbolise.

ideologies, while acknowledging poverty as a problem. For others, the individual poor are acknowledged as being victims of their social and natural environments and externalities. Dr Amare, an Ethiopian anthropologist frequently contributing to rural development projects, explained to me, ‘the poor are victims of circumstance (the general sociological causes being orphanhood, migration, illness, divorce, lack of opportunities, educational skills, old age, physical disability etc.). I may, at times, feel that they may be demoralised and fatalistic’. Whereas, Meskerem, an Ethiopian anthropologist and curator of the arts, told me:

I see the poor from very different angles. I see those who are in position to make a difference, but don’t do it because they are lazy and/or greedy [due to being] mentally impoverished. I see some of the poor on the streets of Addis as either smart business people or talented performers. Some beggars use their physical appearance and perform every day to an audience consumed with guilt and/or ego. Anyone who begs regardless of their position in life are either poor physically or mentally.

Both perceptions of the poor are true to these individuals and I have observed circumstances supporting both positions. Meskerem perceives the poor as being orchestrators of their own fate when lacking motivation, by arguing that they are talented and have options. She suggests there is no excuse, physically or mentally, for the poor to beg. Her use of terms ‘lazy’ and ‘greedy’ echo the language used by Zenebe, who considered ‘Ethiopia’s relationship with poverty’ through a confessional stance and a deep sense of disappointment in Ethiopia’s past and present. Embracing Sen’s (1981) discussion of entitlement, Zenebe directed rhetorical questions to me like, ‘Why Ethiopia?...Who’s fault?’, while unlike Sen’s (1981) discussions, simultaneously suggesting answers such as ‘laziness...cultural hindrances...impoverished upbringing...lack of forward thinking...God’s will’. He goes further and said, ‘Ethiopians are proud of their poverty’, explaining that ‘instead of fighting for survival’ he observed Ethiopians, during the great famine, allowing their families to starve while, next door, a fully stocked shop would sit unguarded. Zenebe argued people would deny their desperate situation when asked. Ethiopia’s curious historical relationship with begging, paired with the expected social positionality of the poor to their communities could result in the misconception that Ethiopia is proud of its poverty.

Meskerem and Zenebe’s perception of the poor and poverty are based on Eurocentric and somewhat unsympathetic labels, whereas Dr Amare considers the poor to be ‘demoralised and fatalistic’, attributing blame primarily on externalities and placing greater emphasis on the psychological state of the poor. An influential figure in the

University of Addis, who wished to remain anonymous, further considered the psychology of poverty, telling me:

while many perceive poverty as a material impoverishment, from observations, I do not agree with this perception of poverty. Poverty is not only the material, but is related to the mind-set, thinking. Change the mind-set of the [Ethiopian] people, the media, the universities, the government, the NGOs and everything else follows...it's a case of attitude.

Poverty as a 'mind-set' as a theme repeatedly emerged during interviews with gatekeepers and the non-poor. As expressed by beneficiaries, mind-sets has great bearing on the poor's motivations, sense of self-worth and how they interact with their respective communities. Mesfin, a project manager within WID, said he found a new level of appreciation for the life of the poor, 'especially women' since working with WID. He explained 'before I would not truly see the poor, I have since gained a better understanding of what I can do to support those marginalised of the community. Poverty is in the mind'.

Although inducing a more holistic understanding of the poor's wellbeing, the concept that 'poverty is in the mind' is controversial, considering the varying ways it can be interpreted. Mesfin was referring to depression, anxiety, feelings of depravity, hopelessness, lack of guidance and isolation from the greater community felt by those deemed to be poor. He argues, from his experience, that the psychological is inductive and nurtures the physical issue of poverty; a point echoed by Tadessa who stated 'the psychological can be seen through the physical'. However, Zenebe and Meskerem presented the same idea from a subtly reworded position, presenting a drastically different understanding. Their position, more aligned to earlier discussions on the dangers of a biogenetic theory and human capital theory, presents reductionist and individualistic perceptions of poverty. Zenebe argued the 'impoverished mind' is synonymous with lacking education, willingness, ambition and drive, ignorance, a culture of dependency, demanding a need for realisation on the part of the poor as they embody a dislocation from the collective mentality of what it means to be Ethiopian⁹⁹ and what will benefit Ethiopia as a whole.

While Mesfin and Tadessa consider the individual quotidian experience, Zenebe and Meskerem's interpretation considers the meta-narrative and how Ethiopia is perceived.

⁹⁹ As discussed, Ethiopia's collective sense of pride stems from historical achievements. To be Ethiopian is to be a part of a progressive and developed empire that has never been colonised, that stands alone with its own colander and alphabet.

I challenged Meskerem's and Zenebe's reference to ambition and dependency, as Ethiopia, since the Era of the Princes, has systematically enforced a culture of reliance and dependency on the graciousness of their princes, lords and emperors for land or access to basic needs, as was the case during the reign of the Derg (Holcomb and Ibssa 1990). As discussed, a legacy of not possessing your own means of survival and a campaign of deception lingers in the collective memory of the most vulnerable in Ethiopia's society. When I broached the concept of poverty residing 'in the mind' of the individual or instilled in the collective psyche of the poor with Meskerem her anger and frustration was obvious. Somewhat contradicting an earlier statement. She argued that this mentality towards the vulnerable of society is detrimental and hindering for any efforts to alleviate and address poverty. She explained 'it is not *a culture* or a *mind-set* that people adopt for the sake of it, it is a real problem and the poor are trying to survive'. By suggesting poverty is in the mind the individual poor are alleviated of responsibility and instead suggests a culture of poverty within Ethiopia, ultimately threatening her ideologies of what Ethiopia should be that runs counter to an arguably historically enforced campaign of destabilising and undermining the vulnerable by those in power. Working from discussions with beneficiaries, Mesfin's statement that 'poverty is in the mind' is perhaps a more subjective and progressive understanding of the quotidian experience of the individual, as he stated, 'if you can do nothing more, it is better to support the minds of these men and women for they are the marginalised of society'.

6.2 Our poverty

Another controversial topic discussed by my informants considers poverty as a crutch within communities. I was told poverty, at times, serves as a valid excuse for the terrible experiences of the poor at the hands of the non-poor. As Meskerem argued, some have adapted Ethiopia's poverty to 'justify anything'. She told me 'it is not unusual to hear someone in public or private office to blame their lack of performance or professionalism on Ethiopia's poverty. The non-poor often say *dihenetachen-new* which translates to 'our poverty'. Meskerem argues that this stems from a deeply embedded perception within the 'consciousness of the public' that Ethiopia is a poor country. As a result 'when things go wrong, the excuse is perceived to be poverty'. This is a difficult concept to accept considering the historical and cultural notions of national pride and construction of the urban poor, through interaction and institutional action. However, this perception of poverty could be a way to explain contradictory perceptions of the

poor; they are deemed one and the same as everyone else in society and yet they are frequently blamed for their situation and *othered*. The belief that everyone in Ethiopia is living within an impoverished context could explain why the plight of the classified poor is seen as irrelevant in the greater scheme. As Myers (2011:182) notes, ‘the non-poor have a great deal invested in rationalising things as they are’.

6.3 Community, social integration and interaction

Meskerem argued that the way in which the non-poor engage with the poor is as wide as the term poverty itself. This idea is illustrated by the term ‘*Yene Bite*’ [similar to me], traditionally used for beggars in Ethiopia. Meskerem feels this is illustrative of the relationship the Ethiopian non-poor have with the poor, stating ‘there is recognition that the tables could have so easily been turned and so you treat others how you would wish to be treated’. During my interviews with Tadessa, he made concerted efforts to reflect the community in a positive, supportive and inclusive light with regards to the resident poor. I understand and acknowledge the fact that Meskerem and Tadessa, as known figures within Batu and Addis, have a responsibility and loyalty towards the community. However, while a significant proportion of my earlier discussions with beneficiaries supported such claims of inclusivity regarding Batu and Addis’s collective consciousness of the poor, a notable proportion challenged such claims. Especially in relation to deception and exploitation.

As such, it could be argued that the ideologies of inclusivity and the collective community conscience defended by Meskerem and Tadessa do not always correlate with quotidian experiences. Meskerem conversely noted there is a social issue within Ethiopia when considering a collective mentality. She used an analogy of why traffic in Ethiopia’s urban locations is so bad, stating that everyone is so consumed with their own motivations and individual needs that they become unable to see the bigger picture or work together to overcome challenges. I witnessed this apparent practice of single-mindedness and myopic outlooks on situations primarily among the non-poor and their interaction with others in their community. While this may not have always been the case, as Ethiopia’s complex history has changed people, and the practices within ISP it could be argued suggest life within Ethiopia was not always so individualistic.

I observed encouragement of community participation within organisations and concerted efforts by the poor to integrate with the community through various guises. For example, HOPE and WID’s efforts to establish seller consumer relationships could

be seen as actively challenging pre-established perceptions and interactions with the poor and re-establishing fairer interpretations of exchange in what was a tradition of begging¹⁰⁰. Zenebe explained how ‘community service’ has positive connotations within Ethiopia, in-comparison to the negative stigma of punishment attached to such interactions with the community in the UK. He argued that community service was a valuable vessel of interaction, reflecting the poor’s willingness to integrate and contribute to the community. I observed the poor doing manual labourer jobs and adopting domestic roles in an effort to integrate themselves within their communities and gain support in the form of food, accommodation or a low wage. The poor also serve as a means by which the community can exercise their faith by attending feeding centres and donating *Alms* or *Tsidk*, to beggars who gather outside of churches and mosques¹⁰¹. The poor also provide a rich source of potential new followers for religious groups striving to ‘recruit’. During my time in Batu and Addis I frequently encountered American Mormons and Amish who simultaneously preached and taught as they helped in feeding centres. I also observed churches run by Ethiopian representatives offering help and support to members of their flock who were classified as destitute¹⁰². While the support these religious groups offer cannot be denied, the uneasy reality is that support in this guise is not freely offered, as the cost is a pledge of devotion and a listening ear.

In the early hours of the morning, I would walk to the centre of Batu’s town and observe young men and women gathering in the centre of Batu, waiting to be selected for manual labour work in fields and on building sites outside of Batu. Observing this daily occurrence, I felt intense concern for those chosen and herded in to the back of trucks. Tadessa explained to me ‘they are at the total mercy of their bosses for the day, some do not get paid, some are not brought back to Batu, some are kept on the farms to work the land as they are totally dependent on their boss to provide transport ‘home’. Controversially, when the poor did not engage in the aforementioned ways, they were spoken of in an unfavourable way by those I encountered in the communities of Batu and Addis. This led me to some concerning but, at times, seemingly justifiable

¹⁰⁰ By fairer, I am challenging traditional Ethiopian Orthodox conceptualisations of ‘gift exchange’ within the practice of begging, and embracing more Eurocentric and protestant practices of petty trade, where by the product or labour being sold crosses that divide between gift exchange or charitable exchange to that of a more empowered consumer seller relationship.

¹⁰¹ Devereux (2003:13) notes Ethiopia’s religious traditions of charitable support, stemming from Christianity and Islam, pivots on notions of the ill and incapacitated as comprising the deserving poor. *Tsidk* serves as a means through which to earn religious merit.

¹⁰² While visiting the Assemblies of God charity/ church I observed that the majority of beneficiaries I met were loyal followers and attended the meetings and services regularly.

perceptions and stigmas held of the poor, which influenced their eligibility for aid or support from the local community.

Devereux (2003) and Iliffe (1987) discuss how the destitute, or those deemed to be the incapacitated poor, Ethiopia's equivalent of Yoruba's Olosi¹⁰³, are viewed as deserving, particularly by the religious, while those with capacity and motivation are understood as undeserving of social support. Curiously, the ability and motivation to work hard is expected to incur social struggle. Poverty experienced by those with capacity and motivation is blamed on the individual, and efforts to escape poverty, similarly to the fight faced by the Akuse¹⁰⁴, is one faced alone.

One afternoon, I observed Tadessa chase away an elderly beggar who approached us during a walk. When I enquired why he had reacted in such a way to the man's pleas, Tadessa explained that he 'had not seen him in the community before; those poor who are highly mobile and nomadic are viewed unfavourably by the community'. Social inclusivity of those deemed to be the poor as a measure of deservingness further complicates how the poor are perceived at a local level. This need for inclusivity and participation is contradictory when you consider the strategies of exclusion and distancing that are formed through the social and political construction of the poor. This understanding of poverty and the poor has been cultivated within Ethiopia's ruling classes throughout history, whose gaze, firmly fixed on modernisation and developmental project, embodies the reductionist notion that the answer to poverty lies with the poor (Kiros 2005).

The bifurcation of the poor to that of the deserving and undeserving allows for the negative and detrimental interactions between the poor and the non-poor, impacting the poor's 'treatment by fellow citizens and the welfare state and powerful classificatory institutions' (Lister 2004:102). While this process of *othering* enables the definition of the self, it simultaneously 'operates as a strategy of symbolic exclusion' which can transcend that of the merely symbolic¹⁰⁵ (Pickering 2001:48). Heavily seated in the politics of representation (Hooks 1994:169) *othering* establishes hierarchies with the individual as 'other' serving as a social warning, and at times being denied certain human rights such as that of naming and defining themselves (Riggins 1997:8). To

¹⁰³ Appendix: L

¹⁰⁴ Appendix: L

¹⁰⁵ Lister argues that *othering* has far reaching consequences, which are illustrated in my findings; 'Other has symbolic, cultural, psychological and material effects' (2004:102).

discredit an individual as being undeserving attributes a negatively charged stigma that could further lead to marginalisation. To *other* is to mark an individual out as different from one's self, at its most extreme leading to dehumanisation (Oliver 2001), loss of identity, self-worth and pride; as has been seen within discussions of women running away and socially imposed gender roles within traditional society (Afshar and Agarwal 1989; Benería and Feldman 1992; Grillo 1989; Obbo 1980; Pottier 2015; Tomalin 2011; Walker 1990).

6.4 The dependent poor

'Thinking that I would be righteous, I put her on my back, but she remained hanging there'.

(Iliffe 1987:28)

Dependency is a deciding factor when considering the deserving and undeserving of Ethiopia's needy, but also within discussions of national pride. I witnessed genuine concern about dependency producing a negative image of Ethiopia as a whole, while also serving as a deterrent at state level in the formation of FSP mechanisms. As argued earlier, dependency has been historically enforced, some could argue as a strategy of control, however, as the proverb above illustrates, and discussions with beneficiaries have reiterated, dependency is a very real concern within Ethiopia, for both poor and non-poor.

Teresa expressed how, within WID and Batu, dependency was feared by the community and organisations. She explained that as a result, coupled with a need to have assurance that those the organisation supports would be able to motivate themselves after leaving, WID could only support those deemed to have natural drive, ambition, personal goals, natural skill and talent¹⁰⁶. Each woman could only be afforded a year within WID, on the completion of that year they were expected to re-enter the community and have a better basis for self-sufficiency. When speaking to WID's beneficiaries, several women expressed a level of anxiety and fear around their day of 'graduation'. Discussions with Zenebe raised similar themes, as he argued that challenging dependency and supporting self-determination amongst the poor were central to HOPE's aims.

¹⁰⁶ This support strove to aid women to fine tune basic creative skills, learn a trade, gain a basic education and provide the opportunity to earn money while their children were safe in child care facilities provided on site.

Zenebe voiced his frustrations with the Ethiopian government's priorities regarding the urban poor and institutional action; similarly Mesfin insisted on discussing the core issues in the social structures undermining self-determination amongst the poor. Fulfilling a legacy of unfulfilled promises at state level, he argued 'if we had a reliable and good quality healthcare system, better educational facilities, and law enforcement systems we [Ethiopians] could have more faith in, people would be free to put in action self-determination'. Tilahun, however, challenged this perception of self-determination within poverty, discussing a thesis he had written analysing the significant rise in prostitution within Ethiopia. He made sweeping, but what appears to be informed, judgements of young women who are prostitutes or who become prostitutes, saying 'women in Ethiopia lack good work ethics...lack entrepreneurship...skills...have no interest in petty trade, or business acumen'. He further argued that younger generations have lost the understanding of what it means to work hard stating 'they want fast money'¹⁰⁷. Several discussions during my time in Ethiopia, primarily with white men residing in Ethiopia for the purpose of investment, claimed that various successful Ethiopian businesswomen had gathered the start-up funding for their businesses through prostitution. In this case, it could be argued that rather than serving as a quick financial fix for young women who lack work ethics, these women view prostitution as a means to an end and actually embody enduring entrepreneurial qualities.

Teresa and I discussed the young men in Batu who appear to have adopted a culture of standing, 'passive'. I observed this culture of standing during my time in Batu, and when travelling between Batu and Addis, where groups of men, young and old, would stand together or alone for days on end, seemingly doing nothing, a practice that arguably promotes the notion that the poor lack self-determination. While people in Batu willingly support the notion of change and learning to better their environments through bettering themselves, Teresa explained the t-shirts many of the young men were wearing would have been obtained by attending environmental and educational workshops, yet the men did not seem to be applying the information or skill base they learnt, 'instead they stand'. This could in part be the outcome of men feeling of lacking purpose and direction within urban settings, as discussed earlier with male beneficiaries, especially those who felt incapacitated due to age, instability or feelings of distrust. Teresa further told me that 'people do not really engage, but focus on survival. They

¹⁰⁷ However, Tilahun argued that through his study on prostitution, he had in fact gained a valuable level of sympathy and knowledge around the female experience of poverty.

will passively join initiatives but not off their own backs’, a reality I observed while helping my family with their investments in Ethiopia. I heard stories of international investors setting up farms, having to leave for short periods of time, and returning to find the people they employed to maintain the farm had left, leaving herds of cows, rabbits and chickens dead in their midst. While many of my beneficiaries discussed work as infrequent and unreliable, from my experiences as a business owner and from discussions with other business owners, even when permanent work is offered, it is still treated as unreliable and infrequent by employees who will casually leave a position with no notice, not turn up to work and will continue to accuse employers as providing unreliable and infrequent work. This breeds mutual distrust and perpetuates a negative work-employer ethic.

Those deemed deserving of support by organisations generally differ from the categorical imperatives members of the poor community use to denote deserving from undeserving. For AOG and WID deservingness is dependent on the poors’ ability to illustrate their destitution as well as self-determination, passion, drive, intelligence and hope. Tadessa explained ‘we are not encouraged to support those who do not pursue betterment’. Teresa explained, due to limited resources, the organisation could only support women who showed they had not allowed life to wear them down irreversibly; WID needed an indication they were not investing time, effort and money into lost causes. Both HOPE’s and WID’s approaches rely on the community, both local and far afield, to make them, as an organisation, aware of those in need. Once they have been located, organisation members ascertain the individual’s deservingness of a place within the organisation. WID and HOPE acknowledge the value in adopting a collaborative approach with the community in choosing who will and will not receive support. In this case, those who are successful have been accepted not only by the organisation’s categorical imperatives, but have also fulfilled their communities’ notions of deservingness.

There are clashes between the objective categorisations that denote the poor as deserving and undeserving in the eyes of organisations and the subjective qualities that guide the community. Ethnic tension is an example of such a clash, a topic I will expand upon later in this chapter. Ethnic profiling came to the fore when I encountered statements such as, ‘the Orominia people are lazy...those from Gurage and Ziway work

harder than those from Harar’ and ‘do people know you’re half Tigrayan?’¹⁰⁸. Teresa confirmed these experiences and explained how difficult it is to hear and manage ethnic stigmas amongst Ethiopian friends and the poor themselves. She spoke freely and challenged my other non-poor informants’ denial of such social tensions. Teresa described how, when interviewing prospective vulnerable women who wish to be enrolled in WID, she has always included some currently enrolled women on the panel, and that this had created tensions as panel members had rejected women purely on the interviewee’s ethnicity. Teresa and I discussed how, although the women on the panel had shared and experienced the cruelty and hardship of poverty felt by the interviewee, the stigma around some ethnic groups overrode the experiential links of relatedness.

6.5 Institutional action

Notions of deservingness are accepted aspects of policy (Guetzkow 2010). By working back from policy and institutional action, one can determine if the state sees its poor as deserving of social protection and social support, undeserving, both or neither (Green 2006). There is a need here to acknowledge the clear distinction between the urban and rural poor and the adversity they face in poverty. Such differences are represented and acknowledged in the relevant development of pro-poor policy that considers how the urban poor differ politically, socially, demographically and economically. They lack human capital, physical capital and are heavily influenced by wage labour and the labour market (Sen 1981). As DeHaan (1997) and Gebre-Egziabher (2011: viii) argue, wage labour and the labour market are the main determinants of urban poverty and, although their work is not necessarily seasonally reliant, as is the case in rural areas, incomes are almost equally as unpredictable. While poverty alleviation has appeared central in the EPRDF’s plans to meet the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), in the light of the increasingly urbanised face of poverty, it becomes apparent that urban poverty has been neglected in policy and macro strategies (Gebre-Egziabher 2011:2-3).

The National Urban Development Policy addresses the urban poor, in terms of housing systems, land provisions and small-scale enterprise development, but these policies and strategies do not address the non-material vulnerabilities of the urban poor, nor the variation in urban environments in which the poor are situated (Gebre-Egziabher 2011:vii-viii). Further discussions with Conway, the senior social protection officer and

¹⁰⁸ A discussion further explored within discussions of begging culture within Ethiopia by Poluha (2007), in which Poluha (2007) states Gurage work ethic is more akin to that of a Protestant ethic, where by, if you do not work you are expected to feel great shame and re-evaluate your morality.

social development advisor for DFID, and Tilahun, the Ethiopian project manager of HOPE, considered the Ethiopian government's reluctance to embrace the MDGs understanding of poverty and State's responsibility as duty bearer (cf Sen 1981) by favouring the trickle-down system through a spectrum of overarching development and economic policies and indirect strategies. Tilahun said this approach 'does not address the social issues' and could be argued as counter-productive (Escobar 1988, 1991).¹⁰⁹

Many of my poor and non-poor informants discussed the involvement of the government in the lives of the poor, arguing the government lacked a true understanding of the lived reality of urban poverty. Tilahun argued that those with the power to influence and make changes come from political, economic and developmental backgrounds, explaining 'there are no sociologists or anthropologists advising the government on what is a chronic humanist problem' and further arguing that Ethiopia requires 'the subjectively understanding gaze of someone who studies people, not statistics'. Conway noted how, while the government does lack a humanist gaze, its 'distance' can be justified in the name of policy.

My informants acknowledged that the government is making 'vague attempts' at addressing the 'structure of social issues', with the Girl Summit, women in policy gaining momentum, greater priority being given to more informed child policies, and social protection within policy. However, echoing the concerns of Tilahun, Conway, and Zenebe contended there is a lack of expertise within the government, leading to ill-informed advances and efforts and compounding institutionalised hierarchies. As Joshi (1979:214) said, 'the issue of poverty is put in the centre of politics, but the poor are not'.

6.6 Blame

Green's (2006) balanced exploration of an apparent trend in welfare and policy within Mexico, mid-20th century England and the USA, considers the poor as being perceived as undeserving and the orchestrators of their own fate. While the state accepts the poor are in need of support, this negative, individualistic perception and framing of the poor informed the creation of policy tools and welfare efforts. Green (2006:25) argues that 'workfare' and similar policy tools purposefully replicate prison conditions, institutional racism, social stigmas and social exclusion, thus promoting the psychological and

¹⁰⁹ This is particularly true in the case of the urban poor where overall State consensus is in favour of the trickle-down system (Teshome cited in Getu and Devereux 2013).

physical conditions of impoverishment. She further explores the debate that the allocation of blame is a deciding factor in terms of who is deemed to be deservingly poor, arguing that the allocation of blame rests firmly upon those with capacity, but lacking motivation. Adair (2002:460-62) argued that there is ‘a notion of understanding’ that supports the belief that the poor cause their own impoverished situation as well as the belief that the ‘moral failing’ of the individual further ‘justifies punitive welfare interventions’ (Adair 2002:460-62).

Green (2006), together with Ehrenreich’s (2014) work, addresses why food for work programs and low wage employment¹¹⁰ do not enable the poor to leave poverty, but merely serve to retain their social position as cheap work force and how policy tools and welfare regimes are formed and applied as a form of punishment for the poor’s choice to be impoverished. The majority of poverty indicators settle on material wealth and monetary values. Thus, perceptions of the poor who have capacity and motivation can be deceptively simplified to an individual’s failure to be economically responsible (Green 2006). The way policy makers ‘frame target populations’ rely on perceptions deep-seated in a complex mix of socio-cultural stigmas that denote the deserving from undeserving (Guetzkow 2010). Once target populations are framed, the policy tools are created and applied accordingly. Guetzkow (2010) explores how ‘capacity’ and ‘motivation’ denote deservingness and undeservingness within policy, which, on a local level, is also illustrated in Ohio-Ehimiagh’s (2012:153) study of the language use that denotes the deserving and undeserving of the Yoruba poor.

Those who create policy, and the subsequent tools, are themselves, however, also a product of their environment. Policy makers, specifically members of the government, are not immune to cultural influences and socially imbued behaviours. This echoes Foucault (1982:221), who argues that both policy and policy makers can be understood as ‘the conduct of conduct’ (see also Ferguson 1994). In short, ‘culture’ affects both the actions of people living in poverty and the actions of the non-poor’ immersed in poverty (Guetzkow 2010:1). The deserving and undeserving within policy and institutional action among the poor of Batu and Addis, at both state and local levels, are decided, then, by a complex combination of contemporary social thought in a rapidly developing

¹¹⁰ Clothing brands have begun to flood Ethiopia in order to make use of its work force, in light of countries like India phasing out the acceptability of cheap labour in clothing factories for ethical reasons. Ethiopia has been labelled in the international media as the last frontier for cheap clothing production, raising ethical and moral debates about the impact of this industry establishing itself in Ethiopia and how the government is applying its poor in order to achieve its MDGs. (<http://www.wsj.com/articles/search-for-ever-cheaper-garment-factories-leads-to-africa-1436347982>)

country, pre-established social stigma and historical events that have permanently altered the collective social conscious in Ethiopia (Guetzkow 2010).

The poor are politically excluded and immobile; however, the urban poor are further neglected in policy and suffer as a result. Policies that refer to urban poor adopt an indirect tone and strategy, further supporting Green (2006) and Guetzkow's (2010) argument that, through the consideration of pro-poverty policy and perception, one can ascertain whether the policy makers view the poor as deserving or undeserving. While the MDG challenged the notion of blame in pro-poverty efforts, it is clear that blame still maintains a role in Ethiopia's construction of pro-poverty policy when targeting the urban poor and urban poverty. This individualistic perception of the urban poor echoes the late Haile Selassie's perception of the poor¹¹¹. This individualistic understanding may have been challenged by policies targeting the rural poor, but continues to denote the virtue of deservingness that still lingers for the urban poor of Addis and Batu.

6.7 Ethnicity

When I asked Meskerem if she felt the tensions between Ethiopian ethnicities contributed to some stigmas held of the poor, she became frustrated and it became apparent that the fact that Ethiopia was even experiencing ethnic tensions saddened her greatly. She requested more time to answer this question. Several weeks later she responded by saying, 'Poverty seems to cut across religious and geographical lines. It is perhaps the saddest common experience of the country.' While you cannot ignore that ethnic tensions are still rife, it appears to be more taboo and emotive than poverty itself amongst Ethiopian academics aware of the complex nature of Ethiopia's historical flux between being united and fragmented. Meskerem (2015) questioned why Ethiopia is tearing itself apart from the inside out, referring to Ethnic federalism¹¹².

Meskerem and Dr Amare both exhibited obvious discomfort when discussing ethnicity around poverty perception. Dr Amare stated, 'I am not aware of much of a link between ethnic tensions and perceptions of poverty and not sure about what you are thinking about, but we can talk further about this'. I found it surprising that Dr Amare did not see, or want to see, the link between ethnic tensions and poverty perception, due to the

¹¹¹ Haile Selassie himself states (cited in Iliffe 1987:211), 'Rich and poor have always existed and always will. Why? Because there are some people who work and others who do not work [...] Every individual is responsible for his own misfortune'

¹¹² Ethnic Federalism encourages various social conversations asking 'Where in Ethiopia are you from?', or even the re-affirmation of these ethnic tensions and separate identities on the radio and news stations where specific regions are called out to or addressed.

way he works directly with planners, implementers and beneficiaries within Ethiopia. Anon and Teresa spoke more freely and openly about the reality of ethnic tension within Ethiopia, and in discussions with Anon, it became clear that the way in which the poor are perceived relates to ethnic tensions, with Anon stating, ‘the new federal government promotes ethnic federalism, where regions were geographically divided, the boundaries are now based on ethnicity’. While ethnicity is not a primary influence on how the poor are viewed and understood, it cannot be discounted as a significant factor; life can be difficult if you are in the ‘wrong region’, employment opportunities, segregation and discrimination counter the government’s claims of equal employment opportunities. Assumptions are made of those from specific ethnic groups, for example, the Tigrayan’s and Gurage’s are known for being hard workers and self-reliant (Poluha 2007), an observation also voiced by Teresa from WID. Oromo, however, due to their environment, are seen to be people who struggle (Jalata 2010). Anon told me that when you consider the general belief that Tigrayans formed the cultural empire that was and is Ethiopia through less than humane means, it becomes all the more relevant that those in power and in government are predominantly Tigrayans from the TLF.

Teresa produced some of the most abstract and daring interpretations and shared observations she had made during her over ten years experience in Ethiopia, helping the vulnerable, primarily families, women and children. Teresa herself is Spanish, but had fully embraced what it means to be Ethiopian. Her perspective on this study came from a rich experiential foundation, as she embodied both internal reflections as a member of the community and external reflections as an aid worker. When discussing her perception of poverty and life for the poor, she expressed that, in all of the regions she had worked in, the problems faced by the poor had been identical, or at least very similar. However, when she came to Batu, she became aware that Batu was and is an Oromo region. In her own words ‘the Oromo ethnic group is very different’ to the other towns she had resided and worked in. She further stated ‘the community here is primarily Muslim, instead of Orthodox, which professionally and personally open up the already vulnerable to being even more vulnerable, especially young women. Society here is disinterested in women.’

6.8 Conclusion

Within Batu, ethnicity and the extent to which an individual is deemed to be poor and integrated as a member of the community are equally considered. What denotes the deserving from the undeserving, within the local collective consciousness in Batu, is

complexly informed by cultural and historical stigmas and perceptions held by both the poor and non-poor. Whereas at the local level, the Addis community, in which the poor find themselves, appears to be a far more forgiving social environment due to high mobility in the general population of the city and there not being a dominant ethnic group within Addis, contrary to that of Batu.

I surmise that the non-poor perceive the urban poor as a threat. The poor symbolise weakness and negativity among the nationally proud. This is based in historically and socially constructed notions of poverty and of who the poor are. The urban poor are perceived as the masses, and rarely discussed in humanised terms as individuals, instead referred to within meta-narratives or overarching developmental theories.

Through unpacking how gatekeepers and non-poor informants perceive and interact with the poor, it becomes apparent that the urban poor occupy an uncomfortable position within social collective consciousness. The poor delicately negotiating a sliding scale of perceptions and interactions that denote them as deserving and undeserving of aid, compassion and acknowledgement. Subsequently the dichotomy between the poor, who are viewed as either as victims of circumstance or victims of their own fatalistic attitudes, is deceptively simple. This chapter reveals the internal conflicts experienced by the non-poor who are immersed in an rapidly developing context, and yet still defined by poverty. As such this chapter is defined by contradictions compounded by ideological beliefs of what Ethiopia should be, and an enduring social memory of how historical events have shaped and constructed chronic poverty within Ethiopia. This chapter contextualises discussions and experiences of the beneficiaries in the previous chapter, unveiling the reasons behind both negative and positive experiences beneficiaries have had through interactions with the non-poor, and within society as a whole. By considering how the non-poor perceive the poor and poverty, a better understanding of poverty as historically constructed and the outcome of social relationships can be better grasped.

Chapter 7. Discussion

The interrelationships between institutional action, perception and lived experience present urban poverty as historically shaped and as the sum of social relationships. The plight of the urban poor has been shaped through a succession of regimes, famine, and civil war. Anthropologists' long and critical history of development discourse reveals the ever-evolving perception of poverty. The progressive birth of subdisciplines indicates the need for the study of the systems in which the poor find themselves and for a balance between the objective and subjective. Building upon these discussions, the *experiences of* the urban poor have been considered in relation to *discussions on* the urban poor, the social context, and key historical markers.

7.1 Our poverty

The poor occupy an uncomfortable position within the collective consciousness of the communities in which they live. The non-poor are conflicted in how they perceive the urban poor, discussing the urban poor through contradictions: they are constructed as *other* while simultaneously being discussed as 'similar to me'. The urban poor are equally discussed at both state and local levels as being either victims of their own fatalistic attitudes or victims of circumstance. Permeating developmental discourse and anthropologists' critical relationship with development, this dichotomy encompasses the assignment of blame and both individualistic and reductionist conceptualisations of poverty. While the former premise (i.e. victims of their own fatalistic attitudes) constitutes an archaic understanding of poverty, the latter position is more akin to the progressive theories for poverty analysis employed by development anthropologists who explore poverty as a historically forged aggregate.

The poor are presented as members of the community and threats to state ideologies of what Ethiopia should be. They are innumerable and ubiquitous. And yet poverty is often reduced to the failings of the individual. Poverty itself blights such ideologies, while its existence is readily used as a social crutch and considered 'our poverty'.

Sen (1981:10) asserts that poverty should be a characteristic of the poor, however the poor and non-poor share a history and culture, interact and experience one another

through specific platforms¹¹³. As such, poverty cannot be considered to be purely a characteristic of the poor.

7.2 Gendered poverty

The gendered reality of urban poverty came to the fore within my findings, especially within discussions of work and survival strategies. While I argue the contrasts at times seem overstated, the contrasts are not merely the result of beneficiary status within gender specific organisations.

Within development discourse and practice, more progressive strategies and theories have been evolved to address gender, especially through sub-disciplines. Discussions on the merits of GAD in relation to the counter-productive strategies of WID are illustrative of shifts in conceptualisations. Strategies within WID marginalised men and further marginalised women from participating in existing development efforts for gender equality (Assefa 2008; Eversole 2003; Steans 2006).

Poverty for women lasts longer and women in poverty outnumber men in poverty (Millare 1996; Benería and Feldman 1992). However the complex reality of poverty for men cannot be neglected, especially within discussions of urban poverty (Tomalin 2011; Obbo 1980; Barnes 1999). The impact of women's need for independence and rural-to-urban migration on men cannot be underestimated (Afshar and Agarwal 1989; Barnes 1999; Obbo 1980; Tomalin 2015); tied up in perceptions of masculinity and self-worth, men in sub-Saharan Africa still view women as a 'strategy of production and expansion' (Obbo 1980:101). Women provide 'comfort, wealth and descendants' (Obbo 1980:101). As seen in Afshar and Agarwal's (1989) study of purdah and poverty in Pakistan, female employment or financial autonomy is understood as a reflection of a husband's own failings as a man and provider. As Obbo (1980) and Barnes (1999) further illustrate in their respective case studies from Kampala and Zimbabwe, 'the complexity of the African man's response to urban migration of the African woman should not be underestimated' (Barnes 1999:71), as this is a phenomena that is 'highly sensitive for authorities and poor men' (Obbo 1980:101). As was illustrated within my findings, men perceived themselves as lacking a role within the communities in which

¹¹³ The term '*Yene Bite*' [similar to me], traditionally used for beggars in Ethiopia, is illustrative of the relationship the Ethiopian non-poor have with the poor. There is a recognition that the tables could have so easily been turned.

they lived. Male beneficiaries' willingness to isolate themselves from their families is a behaviour echoed in the works of Chase et al. (2015:212), who unpack men's internalisation of their situation as indicative of how they see themselves in comparison to others, both poor and non-poor.

Ethiopia's long history of conflict further exemplifies the notion that 'instability erodes traditional norms' (Obbo 1980:28), not only in the form of ISP mechanisms, but also in relation to 'new opportunities' and 'progressive transformations' within gender equality and development (Benería and Feldman 1992). As illustrated in Haile's (2009) study, the recent demand which the women of Shoa and Batu made for access to contraception signifies a monumental shift in choice generally afforded only to women in urban areas¹¹⁴. Building upon beneficiaries' discussions of key historical markers, Ethiopia's history of civil war and famine has further defined the gendered face of poverty. Famines, civil war, and rural to urban migration in itself fragment households and families.

As is apparent within my findings, alongside 'descriptions of women's low worth, we find images of great strength' (Grillo and Stirrat 1977:161); by turning their backs on tradition, women that run are actually freeing themselves of the social and cultural pressures, expectations and limitations of their 'safety net'¹¹⁵ (Afshar and Agawal 1989; Obbo 1980). As Wallman (1996) argues, one needs to understand the social, economic and political contexts in order to see if the end justifies the means. Tomalin (2011) argues that the relevance of religion's impact on gender equality as a variable is often overlooked. The impact of religious fundamentalism, particularly within Islamic communities, can counter efforts for gender equality within poverty and policy (Tomalin 2011). As illustrated within Batu, where Islam was the dominant religion, society was often disinterested in the plight of women in urban poverty¹¹⁶. Scholarly discussions on work present another platform where gender contrasts are explicit. Within Ethiopia, the traditional domestic skill base of women is more adaptable to

¹¹⁴ Tigest's narrative illustrates this growing awareness of contraception and a woman's ability to not have children: 'For a girl to have a future, you must try to hold back from having children, because no one wants to employ a woman with children. Without children a woman can have a future...women have the drive'. The potential for access to education, contraception, and economic independence were central pull factors for my female beneficiaries.

¹¹⁵ By safety-net, I am referring to Afshar and Agawal's (1989) and Obbo's (1980) discussions of women accepting traditional roles within society as a long-term survival strategy.

¹¹⁶ This disinterest could account for the establishment of WID within a context that, due to religion, places women at a disadvantaged position.

urban contexts than the men's skill base. While age was not considered by female beneficiaries as a limiting factor within work, men frequently discussed their experiences of ageism when looking for work. Within the mutual experiences of deception between the poor and non-poor, women were more at risk within the workplace and general society of experiencing deception and exploitation. While community integration has been discussed as a survival strategy within the works of Englund (2002) and Ogden (1996), deception, manipulation and distrust are woven into everyday interactions between the poor and non-poor (Obbo 1980). This was especially demonstrated within discussions of the unreliable nature of work and employees, exploitation, ageism and undermining activities of the communities in which the poor live.

7.3 Dependency

Dependency presented a very real concern for both the urban poor and the non-poor. This concern was woven into ideologies of what Ethiopia was and should be and into the urban poor's attainment of *tiru deha* [good poor] status. The fear of dependency permeated all strata of society. The non-poor rejected the view that historical events played a role in shaping the plight of the urban poor, often reducing dependency as being the result of the individual's moral weaknesses. As such dependent poor pose a very real threat to national pride and to the ideologies held by the non-poor. While the urban poor internalised dependency as being to a greater extent their responsibility; they referred to historical events that undermined efforts for self-sufficiency such as land reform politics, changes in government, and imposed dependence as a political strategy for control.

The evolving role of the beggar and the concept of begging within Ethiopia is fascinating. Begging is traditionally considered a profession affiliated with religious devotion. Although beggars are dependent, they serve a purpose as a means through which the non-poor can exercise their faith through *Alms* and *Tsidk*. Grounded in historical Orthodox Christianity and Islam, begging has held a separate, rather favourable position within urban communities. However, the discussions with beneficiaries who attended WID, HOPE, and AOG indicated that, through the

dissemination of protestant ethics, traditional notions of begging and beggars are being challenged as morally unacceptable¹¹⁷.

7.4 Community and interaction

The poor hold valuable roles within their communities. They occupy the unskilled-low-wage sector and serve as a vessel through which religious devotion and the attainment of merit can be achieved through *Alms* and *Tsidk*. However, these platforms of interaction are imbued with complex rules of engagement centring on the poor being socially integrated and showing a desire for self-betterment. The urban poor must negotiate these rules of engagement on a daily basis, as compliance denotes deservingness. Discussions of deception, religious affiliation, ethnic tensions and fears of dependence further complicate these established modes of interaction.

Through their maintenance of menial positions, the urban poor are acknowledged as serving a role and a purpose within their immediate communities. However, when the urban poor challenge the status quo through entrepreneurial ventures, the apparent abandonment of tradition, and accepted gender roles, they are viewed suspiciously and at times actively undermined.

7.5 Shaped by history: The plight of the urban poor

The era of the princes to the rule of the EPRDF, plotted the descent of Ethiopia's peasantry from traditional agropastoralists to the modern day destitute. The succession of regimes and accompanying policies led Ethiopia's most vulnerable from feudalism to ethnic federalism in the midst of famine, droughts and invasion. As such, the already vulnerable were raised to their knees. The period from the era of the princes to modernisation embodies the damaging effects of post WW2 notions of development. Holding little regard for variables and indigenous systems (Gardener and Lewis 1996:2-1), ISP mechanisms struggled to adapt, and FSP mechanisms were not on the agenda. The subsequent rule of the Derg embodied a paradigm shift in understandings of modern famine through entitlement theories (Sen 1981) led to the question of *who* was responsible instead of *what* was responsible. The Derg regime instigated changes in social consciousness and used famine, forced resettlement, and land reforms as strategic

¹¹⁷ While this has visibly enforced a desire for self-determination and independence, in a social context where ISP is sparse and FPM are still lacking, begging served as a vessel of traditional support and help that, for those exposed to protestant ethics, is no longer a respectable strategy of survival. This shift in view is further compounding the feelings anxiety and low worth already present amongst the urban poor.

tools for control. Although feared by both poor and non-poor, dependency was cultured throughout Ethiopia's history through the gradual erosion of individual means of survival from feudalism and subsequent controversial land reform policies. The enforcement of dependency was used as a political strategy for power and control. Ethiopia's society in the wake of the succession of these regimes was ruled by suspicion for one's neighbour, the demise of ISP mechanisms, the Lack of FSP mechanisms, and bilateral and individualistic mentalities. People changed, and the damage caused by these key markers was extensive, shaping the plight of the urban poor.

7.6 Institutional action

The historical constructs of the urban poor are translated through institutional action and pro-poor strategies. A historical tradition exists of placing the poor low on the political agenda and addressing the poor through indirect policies in favour of the trickle down system. The experiences of the poor reduced to a necessary stage in development.

The limited number of policies and strategies within the EPRDF that target the urban poor in relation to the number that target the rural poor is suggestive of the favoured position held by the rural poor. How the government frames the target population influences the policies and strategies created for them. By working backward from policy and strategies, one can surmise how the urban poor are perceived by the government. The favourability of controversial land reforms throughout history, the promotion of individualistic and reductionist conceptualisations of poverty and the use of work fare and similar strategies imply that the urban poor are assigned blame for their current situation. As such the poor's perceived moral failings justify the punitive efforts within the policy.

Through the language of urban poverty this paper explored how institutional action, perception, and lived experience intersect, interact, and influence one another. The political nature of the language¹¹⁸ of poverty is dependent on an understanding of the historical, cultural, and political context which bore it and on the literary discourse that engulfs it (Green 2006; Woldehanna 2004). As such, this study has discussed how historical and social relationships have shaped the plight of the urban poor through

¹¹⁸ The language of poverty, much like the term *poverty* itself, is a problematic and "discursive practice" (Lister. 2004:103) and an "analytical dilemma" (Sheeper-Hughes 1992:533). Once unpacked, poverty is a Pandora's box of philosophical and theoretical paradoxes, binaries and camps (Rao and Vivekananda 1982:1).

critical analysis of the complex interplay between themes of dependency, religion, gender, notions of deservingness, and the politics of social construction.

As such the plight of the urban poor can be understood as socially and historically shaped. A succession of regimes has undermined individual means of survival, cultured dependency, altered social consciousness, and triggered the gradual demise of ISP mechanisms. The social and historical constructs of the urban poor are translated through institutional action. The lack of policies specific to urban poverty and the preference for indirect pro poor policies and strategies and for the 'trickle down' system are indicative of how the state frames the urban poor as being the orchestrators of their situation and victims of their own fatalistic attitudes. Ethiopia's urban poor occupy a complex and uncomfortable position within collective consciousness. The non-poor are conflicted in how they perceive the urban poor, discussing the urban poor through contradictions. The poor are constructed as *other*, while simultaneously discussed as 'similar to me'.

The fore mentioned discussions produce fascinating opportunities and avenues for further research, some of which could be:

'The assimilation of ethics through non-indigenous NGO's: How this impacts on traditional modes of thought and practice'

'The symbiotic relationship between religion and poverty: Debilitating or invaluable'

'Religion and development: The fight for gender equality'

'A comparative study of how the rural and urban poor are politically and socially framed within rapidly developing contexts'

'The role of blame: The deserving poor in policy'

'The relationship between the material and the psychological: How the poor perceive themselves'

'The plight of the poor: The extent to which social and political histories shape the plight of the poor'

'Gendered poverty: The complex nature of how men experience poverty and 'women running'.

This study prompts a re-evaluation of how poverty in Ethiopia is understood and addressed within discourse and anti-poverty policy, promoting the value in addressing urban poverty as an outcome of relationships. This research further contributes to the sparse and limited discourse on urban poverty within Africa, embracing progressive multi-variable approaches within development anthropology.

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Appendices

A

Jalata speaks of ‘Abyssinianization’, a process by which Jalata (2010:22-23) argues Abyssinians ‘suppress their Africaness-or blackness’ in order to justify and rationalise ‘colonization...dehumanization’ of other ethnic groups.

Jarso Waaqo a young Oromo political poet (cited in Hayward and Lewis 2005:235-242) holds nothing back through a series of rhetorical questions which reveal glimpses of how Oromia’s people have experienced their interactions with Abyssinians both past and present, the transcripts of his work reveal the ‘dehumanization’ claimed in the works of Jalata (2010:22-23):

‘Didn’t these fleas [the Abyssinian soldiers] drink the blood of the sons of Oromo and fatten themselves?’

‘When Haile Selassie came, didn’t he reduce us even more’

‘Didn’t they get hold of our boys and cut their arms from their shoulders?’

‘Didn’t they get hold of the girls and cut their breasts off completely’

These few particularly emotive lines are taken from various parts of the full transcript of Jarso Waaqo (cited in Hayward and Lweis 2005: 235-242). They not only cover the barbarism experienced by the Oromo at the hands of the Abyssinian military, but Jarso Waaqo equally acknowledges the organizational prowess of the Abyssinian military, their strength and determination, reflecting on the Oromo’s lack of fight:

‘you did not kick as much as a donkey mare as it is mounted’

‘Like a weakling thrown down by a strong one, you lay under him and didn’t even bite’

While these experiences and beliefs should not be trivialised and underplayed, one must appreciate they have emerged from deep rooted, historically compounded belief and experience of institutionalised persecution, inter-ethnic racism and land right issues (Hayward and Lewis 2005; Jalata 2010; Prunier and Ficquet eds 201; Zewde 2002; Levine 1974).

A more balanced discussion of the political processes that cultivated these experiences and opinions can be found in the works of Hayward and Lewis (2005), Levine (1974),

Forrest (2004), Tadesse (cited in Prunier and Ficquet 2015), Zewde (2002) These works critically and thoroughly unpack the efforts made by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in 1991 to restructure the Ethiopian state through the decentralization of power 'transferring authority to regional administrators based on ethnicity...[giving] legitimacy to ethnic nationalism' (Tadesse cited in Prunier and Ficquet 2015) via the newly appointed Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

Tadesse, an expert in peace and security issues, notes how this was an 'ideological direction' and an 'innovative and bold experiment' by the government as they reversed the efforts of previous heads of states and reverse the centralization of power (Tadesse cited in Prunier and Ficquet 2015). This ideological direction however backfired as 'regional power struggles escalated into intense conflicts', primarily within Oromiya and Ethio-national regional states. Not only did these groups clash with the EPRDF but equally each other (Tadesse cited in Prunier and Ficquet 2015). Suspicions regarding the motivations of the TPLF-led EPRDF decentralization of power have been fiercely defended by the Oromiya Liberation Front (OLF) who argue that the EPRDF is merely paying lip service with this apparent restructuring of the state and have in fact, through this strategy further illustrated their maintained power and the unwavering notions of entitlement and superiority over Oromiya, a view that is illustrated through the highly controversial and explosive articles posted on the OLF website and the works of Jalata (2016).

B

I maintained an awareness of the responsibilities associated with the complex and sensitive limitations of cross-national research. In order to better manage this, I initially endeavoured to make contact with the Ethiopian Government. However, as this proved to be unachievable, I requested assurance from the Managing Director of HOPE Enterprises (which he provided) that I would not need approval for this study from the Ethiopian government. I also made contact with the British Embassy in Ethiopia and made them aware of my presence and research within Ethiopia. I had to acknowledge the political and social sensitivities within Ethiopia.

C

When considering language use, Zenebe, the managing director of HOPE, noted the dilemma that has been weighing down the organisation since its emergence. The creation of a tag line for the organisations that pleased those deemed to be the poor while equally serving to attract the most financial support from sponsors abroad. He noted how HOPE Enterprises tag line has evolved from: providing hope for the Needy to Providing hope for the Poor, to Providing hope for the Poorest of the Poor. At the time of this study HOPE was again in discussions about potentially re-adopting the original tag line, viewing needy as the most inclusive, least offensive and still functional in relation to attracting funds. This is a wonderful example of how engaged and pro-active those deemed to be the poor are in the way they are represented by the indigenous NGO HOPE Enterprises. Here they are given a strong voice in how they want to be represented a fact supported by my earlier works in to related reciprocity.

Dr Yared told me about a comparable experience he had where by a project he was working with, which attempted to study Agriculture and Food Security within the Amhara Region, was not appreciated by those deemed to be the destitute due to the application of the term “destitution” in the place of alternatives like chronic poverty and extreme poverty. In his own words Dr Yared suggested ‘They probably were tired enough of concepts such as poverty and food insecurity and did not want or really understand the need for yet another term’. The term destitution he claims arose from Save-UK’s/ DFID’s understanding of extreme poverty, he further claims, as a term, it was ‘used as an advocacy tool to change policy discourse’.

Conway, further noted how DFID’s efforts are somewhat hindered by the Ethiopian Governments distain for specific terms used within development literature and project proposals; words like crisis, emergency, poverty, poor, vulnerable, extreme poverty, Aid, charity, support etc. It became clear that this sensitivity around such terms and phrases frustrated Conway, but he fully acknowledged why such phrases posed a threat in the eyes of the Ethiopian Government;

‘As I said, one of the things I struggle with in Ethiopia is that many of the concepts and tools for what is in effect poverty analysis come out of an acute emergency...humanitarian...food security...famine prevention or response world’.

For Conway, definitions and concepts that have emerged from this crisis context serve only as ‘technical guides and frameworks’, as he states ‘not everything important is measurable’. I take this further and argue that these terms are also non-indigenous and

loaded, projecting ideologies that are not native to Ethiopia and thus risk detrimental impacts on the collective psyche.

Tilahun stated that ‘many people understand themselves to be poor, but purely based on economic notions of poverty, while some understand a more holistic view of what accounts for impoverishment, the majority adopt the monetary measurement of what wealth and poverty is’. These notions of monetary values of quality of life according to my findings have emerged from two key sources, the indigenous elite, international development aid efforts and organisations definitions and categorisations of poverty. Tilahun explained that Ethiopia, as a country, has had relatively little exposure to the international community, and what exposure it has had throughout its history has been the result of invasion attempts, emergency aid and development efforts, and journalistic voyeurism of these pivotal socio-political events.

D

Alex, a friend of my family, although being Ethiopian himself, appeared to experience culture shock at the levels of poverty present in Ethiopia. He was forced to meet and acknowledge the real human face of poverty in the forms of those we interviewed. His body language and tone were introverted, and he struggled to maintain eye contact. He moved in his seat and at times challenged my motivations for asking personal questions stating ‘why do you want them to remember?’¹¹⁹.

Tilahun on the other hand I noted as being initially abrupt with informants¹²⁰, attempting to summarise their descriptions and accounts; his body language exuded confidence and ease. When asking permission to take a photograph at the end of an interview Tilahun, and the informants for that matter answered my request with laughter, Tilahun reiterated that I did not need to ask permission to take photographs and that ‘they will be fine with anything’.

I insisted on following protocol, but this could be interpreted as Tilahun’s familiarity with the reality of poverty through working closely with the poor within HOPE, countering the feelings of Otherness, discomfort, and culture shock experienced by Alex who had never had to really face the reality of poverty before.

¹¹⁹ By this Alex was refereeing to realisation and the recalling of at times painful memories. I repeatedly made sure I monitored how he felt; it took him a day or two to ‘over-come’ the initial shock.

¹²⁰ I addressed this privately with him before proceeding with interviews but I found this quite telling.

Both responses to meeting those deemed to be the poor made me feel uncomfortable initially, as they revealed a further complex dimension of perception felt by those immersed in poverty but not suffering from the condition. I found the two approaches fascinating as both could be interpreted as respecting the reality these people face: one from a position of familiarity between poor and non-poor, and one from a position of un-knowing. While both could equally be critically scrutinised as a reaction to inherent guilt or culture shock felt by Alex or the enforcement of classist and hierarchical behaviours by Tilahun. It could also be argued that Tilahun was simply treating the poor as they would traditionally be treated in society. By this I mean members of a lower social class, who thus relinquish their right to having a choice during the interview, leading to, what I perceived to be an abuse of their vulnerability. However, the shared laughter between Tilahun and beneficiaries when I asked permission, or offered choices, paired with the notably more relaxed atmosphere during those interviews¹²¹, makes me believe that if this interaction is to be viewed critically, it was a dynamic that all involved within my study were most comfortable with.

E

An Anthropology of Perception:

[Bourdieu] emphasises the primacy of relations. Society does not consist of individuals, he maintains: rather it expresses the sum of connections and relationships in which people find themselves. His notion of Habitus is related to how historical and structural relations are “deposited” in individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception and action (Tvedten 2011: 15 on Bourdieu 1990).

Here Tvedten (2011), through the work of Bourdieu (1990), eloquently discusses how it takes measurable actions in conjunction with subjective perceptions for the quotidian realities of the community and the individual to be revealed. To study perception is not to neglect the community, you are instead acquiring an insight on that community that both reflects the individual and the meta-narrative. However, as Knauft (1997) argues ‘...Careful descriptions are too easily dismissed as a totalising or master narrative...we still need detailed accounts of people’s everyday lives’ (Knauft 1997: 286-287). One should see value in the personal narrative primarily and consider the meta-narrative secondarily (Knauft 1997: 286-287., Scheper-Hughes 1992: 132).

¹²¹ In comparison to those interviews conducted with Alex.

Traditionally viewed as the poorer relative to the objective and measurable quantitative forms of data, perception naturally adopted that of the opposite, subjective, immeasurable, incomparable, and relative (Legerspetz 2008). It seems only recently that discussions of perception have acquired a valid persona as a source of knowledge creation, having evolved and re-introduced itself within the folds of various disciplines.

Lappe and Collins (1979) and Lappe et al (1980) suggest poverty is not a 'sui generis fact' but a 'symptom of powerlessness'; I take this further and argue it is a symptom of perceived powerlessness brought about by reaffirmation, both internally and externally (Adichi 2009; Moyo 2007; Mwenda 2009; Widmark 2002). While I do not want to jump to the meta-narrative reflected upon by Knauff (1997), I have illustrated within my findings, it is an interpretation that cannot be ignored or left to the peripheries when analysing and interpreting the language of poverty within Addis and Batu.

Ohio-Ehimiaghe (2012) fervently argues that researchers are choosing to pursue collaborative approaches and apply interdisciplinary methodological approaches in order to assess 'the extent to which traditional defining characteristics of poverty influence perceptions of own poverty' (ibid: 11). Ohio-Ehimiaghe (2012: 10) and Santini (2010:4) further contest how individual perceptions of poverty are a complex tapestry of economic, personal, political, environmental 'expectations and attitudes' (Ohio-Ehimiaghe 2012: 10). As Ohio-Ehimiaghe (2012: 10) argues: 'Subjective assessments of own-poverty held by those who are objectively classified as poor'.

Ohio-Ehimiaghe's (2012) sentiments echoed that of Streeten's (1998) 'a person may be miserably poor and not feel deprived...any attempt to understand poverty must include the way in which poor people perceive their situation' (Streeten 1998:22). Streeten's (1998) understanding of poverty is perfectly illustrative of, at the time, pioneering understandings of perception. As Legerspetz (2008) explains, it was only during the early 20th century that it was understood, those best to reveal the reality of poverty were the poor; the study of perception was a methodological practice that emerged from a disciplinary culture striving to distill the real experience of poverty from the mouths and minds of the poor themselves. Similar arguments are made by Ravallion (2002: 5), who supports the notion that the qualitative value of data provided flesh, and new exploratory avenues to the quantitative bones of classical poverty discourse.

When considering the evolution of economic literature on poverty (Akire 2002:182; Deaton. 1997; Lipton and Ravallion 1995; Ravallion 1992, 1996, 1998) it becomes

evident that efforts to challenge *faceless* measurements of poverty were difficult, however, participatory and subjective approaches to poverty discourse began to take hold, and were fervently established by Sen (1983) and Chambers (1994, 1995, 1997).

As Ohio-Ehimiaghe (2012:21) states: ‘Research on poverty increasingly began to involve the people whose ‘realities [do] count’; the poor people themselves.’

Chaudhuri’s (1993: 1) publication in *The Indian Journal of Statistics* is a wonderful example of a collaborative approach for a rich and holistic study of the changing perceptions of the poor. Considering qualitative data from pre-colonial and post-colonial India he states:

Most states recognise some formal responsibility towards the poor and deprived populations in society. They differ, however, in their perceptions of what constitutes poverty and in defining the legitimate domain of state action. The very different experience of poverty reduction in different states that are at a comparable level of wealth, output per capita and economic structure is largely attributed to these perceptions.

In order for an ethnographer to understand the objective face of subjective perception, Legerspetz (2008) notes Winch’s argument, that ‘scientists must make ‘judgements of identity’’ (ibid: 8-9). Here he is considering the potential for a quantitative value of perception when exploring how perception can be considered as a source of knowledge, or result in a truth claim. It could be misconstrued that Legerspetz (2008:6) is implying a level of distrust towards informants divulging their perceptions, however, he is not suggesting the informants are being deceptive or that they are not providing insights into their actual lives; more so he is working from a philosophical stance, and is heavily influenced by the works of Bruno Latour (1996) and *Descartes’ Error* (Damasio 1996:96-97), whereby there are an infinite number of lived realities, each individual and each true. This extends to perception, just because perceptions may conflict, it does not invalidate them, however, it does make it difficult to draw correlations, truth claims. As Latour (1996:ix) argues: “I have to restore freedom to all the realities involved before any of them could succeed in unifying the others” .

F

Green (2006) makes a clear and robust argument for the role of anthropology in poverty discourse in stripping poverty of its agency, by approaching the study of poverty through what Grillo and Stirrat (1997), Green argues (2006:1-2);

...anthropological perspective throws considerable light on the constitution of poverty, as both a category of development thinking and as a label applied to particular categories. The application of these categories and the political implications of such classifications are explored through an explanation of some recent ethnographies of poverty as a process of classification. Anthropological perspectives on poverty prioritise poverty not as an absolute measurable condition but as a qualitative social relation.

Here Green (2006) highlights trends in development literature to focus on poverty as a linear, measurable entity, whereas ethnography focuses on the relationships within poverty and how these relationships contribute to the creation of poverty and construct the poor.

G

As illustrated in the works of John Bird's (2012) uncomfortably light hearted exploration of poverty in America entitled *The Necessity of Poverty*, the reader is purposefully jarred with phrases like 'there would be less fun without poverty to provide the grit and the story line'. However, Bird does make very clear and well researched points. He notes that there has been and will always be a romanticised image of poverty that serves as inspiration for middle class music, fashion, literature, and self-purpose. Bird, although apparently making a case for the need for poverty, states that unless we understand this need¹²², we cannot 'defeat poverty' (Bird 2012:2-4). As Ram-Singh (1980:44) states, this structural functionalist approach to poverty presents quantitative evidence that suggests poverty holds a valuable structural role in society.

H

In the face of critiques, the dual crisis of the post-modern and post-development movement, as crew and Axelby (2013) explain, anthropologists endeavoured and increasingly established themselves as "stake holders" amidst these internal and external conflicts (ibid: 40).

¹²² Bird's (2012) argument for this need centres on a need felt by the middle classes. He contests that it is from poverty culture and creativity emerge.

Emma Crew and Elizabeth Harrison's (1998) mining of their experiences of working for the practical action and the food and agricultural organisation FAO, produced *An Ethnography of Aid*. In a similar vein David Mosse's work with DFID produced *Cultivating Development* (2005), which like Crew and Harrison's (1998) work are examples of a new kind of discourse, that of studying up and studying through. There were those who chose to critique the work of organisations like Michael Goldman's work on The World Bank (2005) and then there are those who positively reflect on the works of developmental efforts like Stephen Hopgood's Amnesty International Secretariat in London (2006). This new acceptance of organisational ethnography and development anthropology as a subdiscipline paved the way for anthropologists to reflect on their experiences by studying up, but equally enabled them to analyse policies: unpacking the processes from creation, dissemination, and impact; ethnography had overcome geographically and institutionally bounded studies (Crew and Axelby 2013: 42), as is visible in the works of Anna Tsing (2004) and Tania Murray Li (2007).

I

Adjacent to the initial belief that anthropology and development were incompatible and destined to separate evolutionary paths, this was the believed case for linguistics and anthropology too (Henson 1974). As with the conflicts and critiques that engulf evolution of development anthropology as a sub-discipline, linguistic anthropologists equally struggled to establish themselves, incurring scathing critiques from the likes of Parkin (1984: 348), who argued their 'deliberate Epistemological nativity' in an attempt to 'carve out domains of social behaviour, dub them politics, and proceed to analyse the ways in which people talk about them and within them'. Drawing on discussions of performativists and linguistic philosophers, sociolinguists 'are held together by a specific interest in the creation and distribution of power' (1984: 348). Although Grillo (1989:2) asserts this critique is applicable to only one way anthropologists engage with language; the social in the linguistic marked a general dissatisfaction with what has happened in mainstream linguistics (ibid:2).

As with the distinction between the development anthropologist and an anthropology of development as a discursive practice (Grillo and Stirrat 1997), there appears to have been a clear distinction carved out between the sociolinguist such as Trudgill and Labov (cited in Grillo 1989:3), and the sociologists of language like Fishman and Haugen, both challenged the 'dominant, orthodox linguistic paradigm' (Grillo 1989:3).

Chomsky (1997: 190) argues ‘Sociolinguistics [are] presumably concerned not with grammars in the sense of our discussion but rather with concepts of a different sort, among them, perhaps, “language”, if such a notion can become an object of study... questions of language are basically questions of power’ (ibid: 191). Chomsky’s discussion with Mitou Ronat could be deemed tentative and sceptical, while implying this transformational stage of the study of language is a revelation to him (Grillo 1989:2).

Many, like Chomsky (1997), would challenge linguistics as an area of social study; however by placing grammar at the centre of their mission, linguists are denying language of its ‘defining characteristic’, that of having a role in social communication (1989: 2); a belief discussed earlier by Malinowski on Saussure in (Grillo 1937).

Neglect of language by British social scientists, as Parkin notes was due to language being ‘a tool of discovery but not the discovery itself’ (1984:346)¹²³. However during the post functionalist era of the early 60s to early 70s, predominantly influenced by French structuralism, there was a heightened interest in language within anthropology, marked by the 1st of two rediscoveries of language for British anthropology. The relationship between a concept-bearer, native quotidian experience, language and politics could not be grasped, and was in fact grappled with initially. During anthropologies 2nd rediscovery of language, conceptualizations finally fell in sync with the positions of Geertz ‘a vehicle of conception’ (1964:59). Evans Pritchard argument that language serves as a vessel for social categories and social systems as a whole (1956). The political face of language was finally apparent ‘located’ (Grillo. 1989:5) during a time where ‘what constituted as political’ was evolving.

Grillo unpacks language as a political object, a political resource and as control (1989:1), a discussion expanded upon within the work of Crew and Axelby (2013), who unpack development as a tool for control, empowerment and modernity. As with development anthropology anthropologists engagement with language is submerged in a politics of use, and a politics of meaning in what can be understood as a ‘discursive practice’ (Grillo 1989: 1).

J

¹²³ Further explored in the works of Nadel (1951: 39).

Within poverty and welfare discourse, there are equally those who attempt to challenge the seemingly subjective in order to re-introduce the subjective as having potentially objective capabilities and values. Kingdon and Knight (2003) for example attempt to apply perception as a measurable indicator of poverty. Olli Lagerspetz's (2008) expands on Kingdon and Knight's (2003) point arguing that philosophical analysis of perception applying Coady's (1992) *perception verbs* and *success grammar* enables the potential for some aspects of recorded perception to stand as a truth claim or fact (Lagerspetz 2008: 6). This approach to topics such as perception within anthropological discourse is further explored within the works of Copestake et al (2009), Easterlin (1995), and Ravallion and Lokshin (2001), but I feel this discussion further highlights the need for collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches, regardless of whether those theorising believe they are making the objective subjective, or vice versa.

K

In the light of discussions on the contested nature of Ethiopia's past, Tronvoll (2000) provides a nuanced narration of the pivotal moments in Ethiopia's political history and its transition from a 'unitary State to ethnic federalism'.

Emperor Tewodros was crowned in 1855, marking the first of several efforts to unify Ethiopia. However this soon emerged as embodying authoritarian goals. Subsequently, the regional king of Tigray becoming emperor Yohannes IV (1872-1889), who was willing to devolve power to monarchs and subordinates who accepted him as 'king of kings'

Emperor Yohannes IV's successor, Menelik II (1889- 1913) Former King of Shewa, put in to motion policy of expansion, faced and conquered the Italian invading troops in Adowa in 1896. The start of the 20th century 'Ethiopia was formed' and in 1906 was internationally legitimised as an independent state through the Tripartite between Britain, France and Italy. I argue that it is safe to determine that it was at this point that colonisation appears to have been adopted as a concept as Menelik II had a pre-established desire to win territories in the Southern regions or Oromia, Gurage, Sidama, and Wolayta.

Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-74 defecto from 1916-74) 'bridged Ethiopia's ancient past with the modern era' (Ficquet 2015). Continuing the policy of centralisation, with a

focus on nation building, national institutions, pan-Ethiopian economy (Ficquet 2015; Tronvoll 2002).

Following the bloody rule of the Derg Regime:

The civil war concluded in 1991 with the establishment of the EPLF and the TPLF who informed the latter EPRDF who brought about ethnic federalism (Young cited in Ali and Mathews eds 204; The Messenger 2014; Tirueh 1993; Tronvoll 2000; Mehretu 2012; Messer et al 1998).

The infamous Constitution of the federal democratic of 1994, marking a ‘departure from all previous Ethiopian constitutions’ (Nahum 1997), unpacking the ‘intricacies of federalism and the unfolding of a democracy in a country that since pre-Christian times was run as a feudal state’ (Nahum 1997). As Hammer (2007), Briggs and Blatt (2009) and the USA International Buisness Publications (2009) note, this constitution implied hope and change for the better, decentralising many aspects of government, embracing a federal structure, based on socialism, respect for ethnic divisions and the bill of rights indicating the importance of legal, religious and personal freedom (Hammer 2007). The most controversial item within the constitution lies in the ownership of land and ethnicity (Nahum 1997).

Hammer (2007) notes, these items and ideological goals within the constitution have been ‘largely ignored’, ‘in order to discourage opposition, the EPRDF begun undermining other political parties attempting to participate in the 1992-1994 and the 1995 elections’ (Vestal 1999: 96-7). The trend in the peasantry and Ethiopia’s vulnerable being pandered to in order to secure support and for these ‘promises’ to never come to fruition marks a dangerous and counterproductive trend in the treatment of the general populous majority by the elite, ruling minority.

L

Within Ohio-Ehimiagh (2012:153) work, the Yoruba within Lagos State were asked to describe poverty. I have simplified his exploration of their language use by placing the terms, their definitions and explanations within a table.

Yoruba Term	Definition
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Ise	Is a form of poverty that fights with a person, but can be overcome or defeated through hard work.
Akuse	An individual “immersed in Ise”
Osi	Extreme poverty “peppering” or “pinching” a person. A continuous pain that is very different to bear.
Olosi	A carrier of extreme poverty. It is believed that any attempt to overcome Osi is futile, and that any attempt to help an Olosi is hopeless. Divine intervention is the only escape from Osi.

Table 1: All data and information within this table has originated from Ohio-Ehimiagh study (2012: 153).

Here it can be seen that there is a clear distinction between those who can help themselves out of their situation and those undeserving of help from their community; this does not hinge on notions of blame, or quantitative data, but the capacity and motivation of the individual. The Olosi are deemed a lost cause by their community and thus undeserving of help from mortals as they carry Osi; whereas through hard work an Akuse is able to fight Ise. Purely by working through the language of the Yoruba, poverty can be understood as being something you either fight alone through hard work or leave to divine intervention. At a local level poverty is not associated with blame, but a fight for victory which, you as Akuse, is only deserving of if you work hard.

M

The NDPF (National Development Policy Framework) was subsequently formed, leading to the production of the PRSPs (Poor Reduction Strategy Papers) during 2000/01, which in turn issued the SDPRP (Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme) between 2000/01 and 2004/05. SDPRP was the first phase of the PRSPS which focused on agricultural and rural development as well as food security through strategies like that of the ADLI (Agricultural Development Led Industrialisation) (MOFED. 2006). During the SDPRP the decentralisation of power distributed responsibilities of social policy amongst local authorities. This empowered

them with the responsibility to, at a meso level, translate the overarching policies and strategies at the macro level to that of the micro level where CBOs (Congressional Budget Office), NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisation) and GOs (Governmental Organisations) implement the policies. The second phase of the PRSPs lies in the PASDEP (Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty); this phase places a greater “emphasis on the commercialisation of [primarily] agriculture, “private sector development” and “scaling up resources to achieve the MDGs” (ECOSOC. 2007:3).

Both the first and second phases of the PRSPs primarily target, and are tailored to rural poverty, however, the strategy of decentralisation is potentially more beneficial to the urban poor as it enables local municipalities to tailor and translate the policies and strategies to their respective communities to the best of their abilities. This allows for some provision for the urban poor at meso and micro levels.

The second phase of the PRSPs targets urban problems, in the light of the urban development policy of 2005. However, as I have stated above. This does not specifically target the urban poor and in fact can lead to detrimental implications for the urban poor, and the compounding of urban poverty through a lack of representation in policy or misrepresentation in policy.

During 2015 I observed efforts to relocate Addis’s urban poor to the outskirts of the city and alternative accommodation in the form of basic housing developments that resembled blocks of flats. A representative of an indigenous charity associated with HOPE enterprises voiced a genuine concern for the future of their established feeding centres in the centre of Addis Ababa, in the midst of the rising value of in city land and surrounding developments. He stated that the government had proposed the feeding centres relocate to the outskirts of the city, supposedly expecting those who HOPE support to relocate also. This whispered threat illustrates the uncertainty and vulnerability felt by the poor and those who strive to support the poor in a rapidly developing and increasingly commercialized socio economic structure.

It becomes apparent through daily observations that poverty and the poor, from the point of view of the elite and middle classes, are at times viewed as a hindrance to development efforts; as a result the poor who do not actively serve a “useful role” are regularly viewed of and referred to in terms of laziness, deception, and being of a lesser or lower class. While poverty alleviation and supporting the poor are central to the

political agenda, this support is expected to be provided from a distance; as Joshi states, “concern for poverty but distance from the poor...is a marked characteristic of politics in countries like India” (1979:2) .

The point made by Joshi (1979) in his study of India’s poor as a valid social strata is echoed in the later works of Ronald Bishop (2008) who in 2001 explored Goodwill Industries in Central India, and the T.V adverts that accompanied them; he argues that the adverts, much like the structure of this industry purposefully enabled a distancing from the poor. He stated that “shoppers want the satisfaction, not to mention the congratulations that comes with the charitable act” while maintaining a safe physical and mental distance from the poor as Other (ibid:1).

While there are similarities and correlations between Joshi (1979) and Bishop’s (2008) observations and my own in Ethiopia, Ethiopia is not merely trying to alleviate poverty, or harvest self-gratification from charitable acts, and efforts to publically illustrate concern for the poor at state level through policy. Ethiopia is actively fighting to redefine itself on the international stage. Poverty as I have stated, has detrimentally defined Ethiopia in the international consciousness. Within Ethiopia, this awkward spatial and psychological distancing from the poor by policy makers and the majority of donors involved in anti-poverty efforts could be argued to equally be symbolic of a want for Ethiopia to shrug off this acquired international image of impoverishment following the 1984-85 famines.

While othering, and the impact of Othering is evident, there are efforts to bridge this apparent rift in lived realities by challenging the interactions between poor and non-poor; for example HOPE’s feeding centres enable the beneficiaries to purchase a token for 1birr . The meal costs more than 1 Birr to produce, but the act of purchasing a token for their meal positively transforms the relationship between the organisation and the beneficiaries to that of a consumer seller relationship and interaction; this relationship provides direct support while promoting self-determination, nurturing notions of self-worth and promoting interaction in the absence of a hierarchy where the poor will always come off worst.

It could be argued that the Governments apparent reluctance to fully endorse a social safety net is a more extreme and less holistic variant on HOPE’s construction of the consumer seller interaction; the work for food schemes create an employer/employee relationship with the poor who engage. A relationship critically explored in the works of

Green (2006) and others as an option open to the poor heavily associated with individual blame, classism, institutionalised hierarchies . While efforts in this vein by policy makers provides direct support in the form of food, this model could compound the negative impacts of constructing Other, as the poor are bound to working hand to mouth with no opportunity for individual development, self-determination or escape.

N

Informal social protection mechanisms (ISP) pre-Derg Regime within Ethiopia. All information within the table below has been taken from the work of Getu and Devereux(2013:118).

Term	Region of Origin	Definition
Idir	Amhara	Membership based burial society.
Afosha	Oromo	Oromo version of an idir, which ensures a decent burial for the dead and further supports the survivors to stand on their own two feet.
Awraj	Amhara	Assistance triggered to ensure the target household fulfils social obligations. Mainly in relation to weddings.
Baussa	Borena/Oromo	A voluntary ‘contribution’ towards assisting a clan member (family or individual) to withstand shock.
Dabarree	Oromo	Derived from ‘dabarssu’- to pass it on.
Dagu	Afar	Traditional informal sharing system. Within Afar custom it is obligatory to share views when any person passes through a village. News of drought, conflict and other disasters helps in their prepared’ness and triggers a tradition of support.
Debu/Jigi	Oromo	‘Working together’. A labour co-operation and mutual support mechanism triggered during the peak of the agricultural season.

Gonofaa	Borena/ Oromo	Obligatory contribution towards assisting a clan member (family or individual) to withstand shock.
Gudifecha	Oromo	To 'bring up' or adopt. This is one of the only child support mechanisms in which better off families take on a poor child as their own. It can be legally binding or voluntary.
Mahiber	Amhara	Association formed by like minded persons, often around a given saint. However alumni-type non-religious associations also exist.
Iqub	Amhara	Membership based saving society in which payments are made on a regular basis and money is given out in turn on a lottery basis.
Ita	Amhara	The news that a relative has died.
Merdo	Amhara	Similar to Awraj
Sahan	Somali	Traditional information system which serves both as an early warning system/ as a resource management system.
Uucha	Borena/Oromo	Elders who have the wisdom to 'predict' shocks or disasters.
Uussa	Borena/ Oromo	Traditional early warning system in Borena that triggers traditional support mechanisms.
Zakat/ Saduk	Afar/ Somali	An Islamic tradition of giving to gain Allah's blessings.

O

The Era of the Princes, 1769-1855: This era marked a period when Northern Ethiopian nobility ruled through a complex feudal system (Mammo 1999) and 'conflicts between

feudal gentry' resulted in the vulnerable being used, displaced and often losing their lives¹²⁴ (Mammo 1999:84).

As Afework Gebre Yesus (cited in Pankhurst 1967:174) states,

The entire [feudal system]...which has no idea of the work but only of pillaging and oppressing the population lives on the back of poor [peasants]. The latter, unable to bear the continual vex-actions of the former [the monarchy, the nobility and the feudal army] emigrate no matter where and abandon their land [farm] without any hope of returning. With war and poverty, which annihilate the population, how can the country prosper?

The feudal land tenure system has been highlighted by scholars as 'a fundamental restraint to the country's agricultural development' and an 'underlying cause of land degradation, and unequal income distribution' (Rahmato and Assefa 2006:84). During the Northern conquest¹²⁵, feudalism cultured poverty, with the vulnerable becoming 'victims of the feudal conquest' (Mammo 1999:85). Feudalism was assigned responsibility for the demise of informal social protection (ISP), and the enforcement of a pyramid system in which the poor and peasants were firmly situated at the bottom, promoting and enforcing caste systems and institutionalising inequality (Crummey 2000; Devereux 2006; Getu and Devereux 2013; Mammo 1999; Sen 1981). Accounts of life pre-feudalism, further illustrate those in the south 'lived under different social structures...[had] flourishing cultures and local organisations' within kingdoms such as Konso, Walayeta and Jimma (Mammo 1999:85).

Ethiopia's sparse, complex and conflicting formal social protection [FSP] mechanisms (Sen 1981), and more widely used ISP mechanisms (Getu and Devereux 2013; Jones and Nelson 1999), further reveal the relationships between state and society, but equally highlights the informal relationships within society. Pre-Derg ISP was more prolific as FSP was low on the agenda. However, as the political and social climate changed, ISP mechanisms struggled to adapt, and their use rapidly declined during a period when such mechanisms were most needed (Getu and Devereux 2013). As a result, some blame the feudal systems for undermining traditional mechanisms of governance and support (Gemechu 2001), while others lay blame on new ruling parties. As a

¹²⁴ Mammo (1999) discusses how the able bodied peasants who worked the land owned by nobility were expected to fight during conflicts between feudal gentry.

¹²⁵ I use the term 'Northern conquest' loosely; as has previously been discussed, nothing within Ethiopia's history is clear-cut.

chairperson of an *idir*¹²⁶ from an Oromia region, when discussing the impact of the Derg on ISP (cited in Getu and Devereux 2013:102), explains,

The social support mechanisms do exist but are not as they used to be. There was a tradition that people used to invite people to stay with them; eat with them and even share clothing. There was love for one another. However, such mechanisms of sympathy for one another started to deteriorate during the *Derg* regime. People became conscious of many things. People were requested to register the people who are guests as the guests were suspected to be spies or thieves and threats to the revolution and there were a lot of reasons. People refrained from such acts and started to forget their culture. The ideological fighting between the EPRP and the *Derg* also developed cruelty among the people.

Explained through the first-hand experiences of beneficiaries, the feudal system and the subsequent ruling of the Derg are believed to have had a detrimental impact, then, on social consciousness and the ISP mechanisms that so many relied upon during times of need.

While Getu and Devereux (2013) somewhat support Iliffe's (1987) and Robinson's (2012) assertion that Ethiopia has a relatively weaker tradition of extended familial support than the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, their work draws attention to the fact that traditionally, pre-Derg, the vulnerable relied heavily on ISP mechanisms. However, as Iliffe (1987) and Robinson (2012) argue, the nucleated structure of Ethiopian households ties in with the ways in which Ethiopia's primary societal structure has become bilateral over time,¹²⁷ promoting individualism and high mobility 'both socially and geographically', with a divergence from 'corporate descent group [s]' (Iliffe 1987:181). While Getu and Devereux (2013) discuss ISP mechanisms, central to notions of community, belonging and survival, as being prolific pre-Derg and the Era of the Princes; If we are to work from Robinson's (2012) and Iliffe's (1987:15-16) arguments, Ethiopia is even more vulnerable to chronic poverty as a direct result of its turn to bilateral societal structures¹²⁸ and its gradual loss of ISP mechanisms in response to political and structural changes.

The period of modernisation and acculturation: The period of modernisation (Aalen 2011; Mammo 1999) continued with the process of assimilation, further threatening

¹²⁶ An *idir* is an Amhara term, denoting a membership-based burial racket (Getu and Devereux 2013).

¹²⁷ With the exception of the Gurage people.

¹²⁸ Insecurity associated with bilateral societal structures is further discussed by Iliffe, who states that this is a key consideration when explaining poverty in Ethiopia (1987:15-16).

ISP, displacing the peasantry, and undermining traditional mechanisms of support and governance fuelling conflicts. Emperor Haile Selassie's reign (1930-1974) 'bridged Ethiopia's ancient past with the modern era' (Tronvoll and Aadland 1995:21), and continued the process of centralisation¹²⁹, thereby 'developing Ethiopia's bureaucratic administration and centralised State as a counterweight to centrifugal forces that threatened Ethiopia's unity' (Tronvoll 2000:13). Haile Selassie's attitude towards the vulnerable and poor (Crummey 2000) and delays in relief aid during the great famine (Sen 1981; Tronvoll 2000), coupled with his being politically ineffective and focused on modernising the economy (Clapham 1990; Hammer 2007), led to his toppling. The already vulnerable Ethiopian peasantry found themselves further impoverished (Tronvoll 2000). As Haile Selassie himself states (cited in Iliffe 1987:211), 'Rich and poor have always existed and always will. Why? Because there are some people who work and others who do not work [...] Every individual is responsible for his own misfortune'. This statement is illustrative of his views on the poor, but also reflects notions surrounding deserving and undeserving livelihood strategies, indicative of a societal structure that promotes individualistic perceptions of the poor, placing blame on the individual, thus alleviating the State the role of duty bearer (Iliffe 1987; Devereux 2003:13; Sen 1981)¹³⁰.

The Red Terror: Mengistu's rule and the Derg: The Derg, also known as 'the creeping coup', brought Haile Selassie's reign to an end in 1974 (Tronvoll 2000); itself evolving from a Junta, embodying 'radical socio-economic ideological policies' (Tirneh 1993), the Derg embarked on a seven year rule of an autocratic-socialist-military-dictatorship (Smith 2013:70)¹³¹. The goals of the Derg's regime won favour due to their call of 'land to the tiller' (Smith 2013) and focus on assisting the vulnerable through shifting priorities of government from centralisation and economic growth to the apparent dissemination of power and the needs of the vulnerable¹³² (Tafari cited in Marcus 1994:170). Derg's land reforms were deemed 'radical', achieving what the Emperor had not, ending 'customary land tenure systems' (Rahmato and Assefa 2006:84), with rural land declared state property and redistributed to the tillers, primarily based on family

¹²⁹ Appendix K

¹³⁰ Conversely, perceptions of the poor within the church appear to frame the working poor as undeserving of support, and the incapacitated or destitute poor as deserving (Devereux 2003; Sen 1981). 'Destitute' carries with it the notion of the 'deserving poor' (Devereux 2003:13). However, as illustrated in the experiences of Dr Amare (2015), later explored in this study, this perception of destitution is not shared by those deemed to be the destitute.

¹³¹ The Derg promoted a Marxist-Leninist dogma (Levine 1974:72-86).

¹³² Students demonstrated in favour of rebel groups, voicing their concern for the poor's 'exploitation' to satisfy the needs of the wealthy (Tafari cited in Marcus 1994).

size and quality of the land. The Derg attempted to create equality and fairness in land acquisition (Rahmato and Assefa 2006).

However, Hammer's (2007) account of the Sidāma people's experiences under the Derg illustrates the complex relationship between the state and nation. On one hand, the Sidāma held a 'favoured' view of the Derg as the Derg had returned some of the land previously obtained by the 'northerners' (Hammer 2007). However, the realisation that most of their land had been claimed by the new socialist state (Shanqo 1996) undermined the Derg's campaign of supporting the vulnerable. While the Derg were associated with some positive impacts, they led a bloody campaign, exercising further control through the over-centralisation of government practices, youth conscription and harsh taxation with 'no opportunity for opposition' (Hammer 2007:215). Forcibly imposed resettlement programmes led to further displacement and the fragmentation of an already vulnerable people.

Under Mengistu's rule surplus food was extracted from the peasantry for the military and State (Hammer 2007), with starvation used by the Derg as a deliberate war strategy to incapacitate and to control¹³³ during the rise of the EPRDF in the wake of the Eritrean civil war. This further casts doubt on the party's commitment to aid the vulnerable and the peasantry (The Messenger 2014). At the time relief NGOs were 'cowed into silence' (Welch 2001:279) and part of the Derg strategy was to 'disrupt relief effort...capture Western grain reserves' and 'reduce the economic capacity of the civilian population so that they would be forced to go to government held areas for survival' (Barrow and Jennings 2001:65-66). As Bekele (2011:355) notes 'economic dependency, often a matter of life or death for the poor of Ethiopia...[forces] conformity with the ideologies of the centre'.

As observed by some researchers and monitoring missions in Tirgray in 1983, the Derg's strategies were 'instrumental in setting the famine in train', with the drought of 1984 serving as a 'convenient scapegoat for the famine' (Barrow and Jennings 2001:65). 'Land to the tiller' promised the abolition of the feudal systems that had previously caused so much unrest and damage through serving as a 'greenhouse of poverty' (Mammo 1999:84). However, the Derg assimilated 'Ethiopia to the Marxist

¹³³ The Derg had actively lowered food production through limiting the sale of farming equipment in an attempt to physically weaken those members of the peasantry who might support the EPRDF (The Messenger 2014). This was a particularly callous and cruel strategy, in the wake of the devastating civil war that had already brought the country to its knees, and had the most detrimental effects on the poor and peasantry.

category of a feudal mode of production... they inferred the feudal forms of property' (Crummey 2000:8), embracing a legacy of unfulfilled promises issued by the previous ruling parties, with the poor falling at the bottom of the political agenda once again. The rule of the Derg immersed the vulnerable in bloodshed, imposed distrust, brought displacement and the new land reforms did not deliver the promised changes that the vulnerable had hoped for.

Ethiopian people's revolutionary democratic front (EPRDF): The fall of the Derg and the rise of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) led to the establishment of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) under Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 1995 under whom ethnic federalism was established (Mehretu 2012; The Messenger 2014; Tirueh 1993; Tronvoll 2000). Following the TPLF and OLFs success, in 1991 the TPLF restructured Ethiopia 'spearhead[ing] an innovative and bold experiment that involved transferring authority to regional administrations based on ethnicity' (Tadesse cited in Prunier and Ficquet 2015:271). However, from 1991 to 1992, 'regional power struggles' became 'intense conflicts' and explosive political animosity between the Ormomia and Ethio-Somali regional States heightened (Tadesse cited in Prunier and Ficquet 2015:271).

Initially, the EPRDF had 'encouraged southern nationalities to form their own parties and develop programmes for dealing with economic, political and social issues' (Forrest 2002:199). However, as Hagmann and Tronvoll (2012) state, the EPRDF had 'seriously flawed mechanisms of formal representation and accountability to constituents' (in Lister 2004:13-14). Steeped in suspicion, informants implied votes during elections were secured through fear, as illustrated in accounts provided by constituents of Woreda region, where elections were defined by fear and unfulfilled promises¹³⁴ (Hagmann and Tronvoll 2011). As Bekele (2011:355) queries, 'in a federal political system in which States are chronically dependant on the mercy of a federalism dominated by a single party, is honest dialogue possible?'

Ethnic federalism spatially carved up the already displaced along ethnic lines, causing unnecessary conflicts and animosity, with modernisation and development as the primary agenda. FSP was indirect and individualistic at best.¹³⁵ In 1995, the EPRDF introduced controversial land reforms which involved land ownership through the highly criticised Article 40.3 within the constitution (cited in Tronvoll writes 2007:27),

¹³⁴ As Hagmann and Tronvoll (2011) discuss, some informants from Woreda described how grain had been promised to them during the elections if they voted in a certain way. When they arrived at the polling stations there was no grain and they were told to return if the party won. Upon their return, following the EPRDF's success, they were further informed that there was no grain.

¹³⁵ Appendix M

The right to ownership of rural and urban land-as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the State and in the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or other means of exchange.

The actions of the State undermined the positive ideology portrayed within Article 40.3, suggesting ‘individuals do not own more than what they produce; their only rights are as tenants as the government is vested with total control of land and natural resources’ (Westermann et al. 2007:216). Under this constitutional article and ethnic federalism, the displacement and inhumane treatment of the vulnerable continued (Hagmann and Tronvoll 2011), nomadic herdsmen entitlements became uncertain (Sen 1981) and the displacement of Oromo communities due to the high, middle and lowlands being used for commercial agricultural developments became commonplace (Bondestam 1974; Hussein 1976).

Illustrative of this, is the experience of Russell, a tropical forestry consultant. He described to me how, in 2014, he requested barren land to cultivate and transform into a wildlife reserve for growing cash crops for the local community. Upon reading his proposal, the local municipality questioned why he would want barren land and insisted he accept prime farming land instead, as a goodwill gesture. Upon visiting the suggested site, Russell observed agropastoralists cultivating the land. When he voiced his concern about displacing the agropastoralists, he was told, ‘no need to worry, they’ll move’. Needless to say, he declined their ‘kind’ offer.

The two fundamental components of social protection are social assistance for the poor and social insurance for the vulnerable (Getu and Devereux 2013), with the onus placed on the State as duty bearer. Specifically relevant to the urban poor are allowances for income culture shock and physical security due to higher crime rates within cities and towns (Getu and Devereux 2013; Jones and Nelson 1999). Social protection should strive to address both the transitory and chronic nature of poverty. However, it became evident that the preferred trickle down system was not efficient in addressing the complex and multivariable nature of poverty, as the ‘vulnerable segments of the population who cannot take advantage of the favourable economic climate’ need ‘deliberate measures’ to reach them through formal and informal social protection (Teshome cited in Getu and Devereux 2013:95). While significant progress is being made under the EPRDF, and FSP¹³⁶ ‘has mov[ed] up the development agenda in

¹³⁶ Social protection is an ‘umbrella term’ for holistic protection mechanisms such as welfare, social safety nets, unemployment benefits and pension schemes (Getu and Devereux 2013).

Africa', it is not a priority as yet and there is still a long way to go (Ellis et al. 2009:234).