

'People who once had 40 cattle
are left only with fences':
Coping with Persistent
Drought in Awash, Ethiopia

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Research question and literature

How do men and women (of different groups, ages and statuses) use changing household structures and relationships to respond to risks and adapt more effectively?

- Gendered negotiation of intra-household relationships and resource access and how this varies across different household structures is not well understood in literature on climate change adaptation (Tschakert and Machado, 2012; Djoudi et al, 2016; Bunce and Ford, 2015; Aregu et al, 2016)
- Our dataset enables us to make a unique contribution to these debates by showing how age, gender, and location jointly shape household structures and relationships, and consequently, the nature of risks as well as adaptation

Context and Methodology

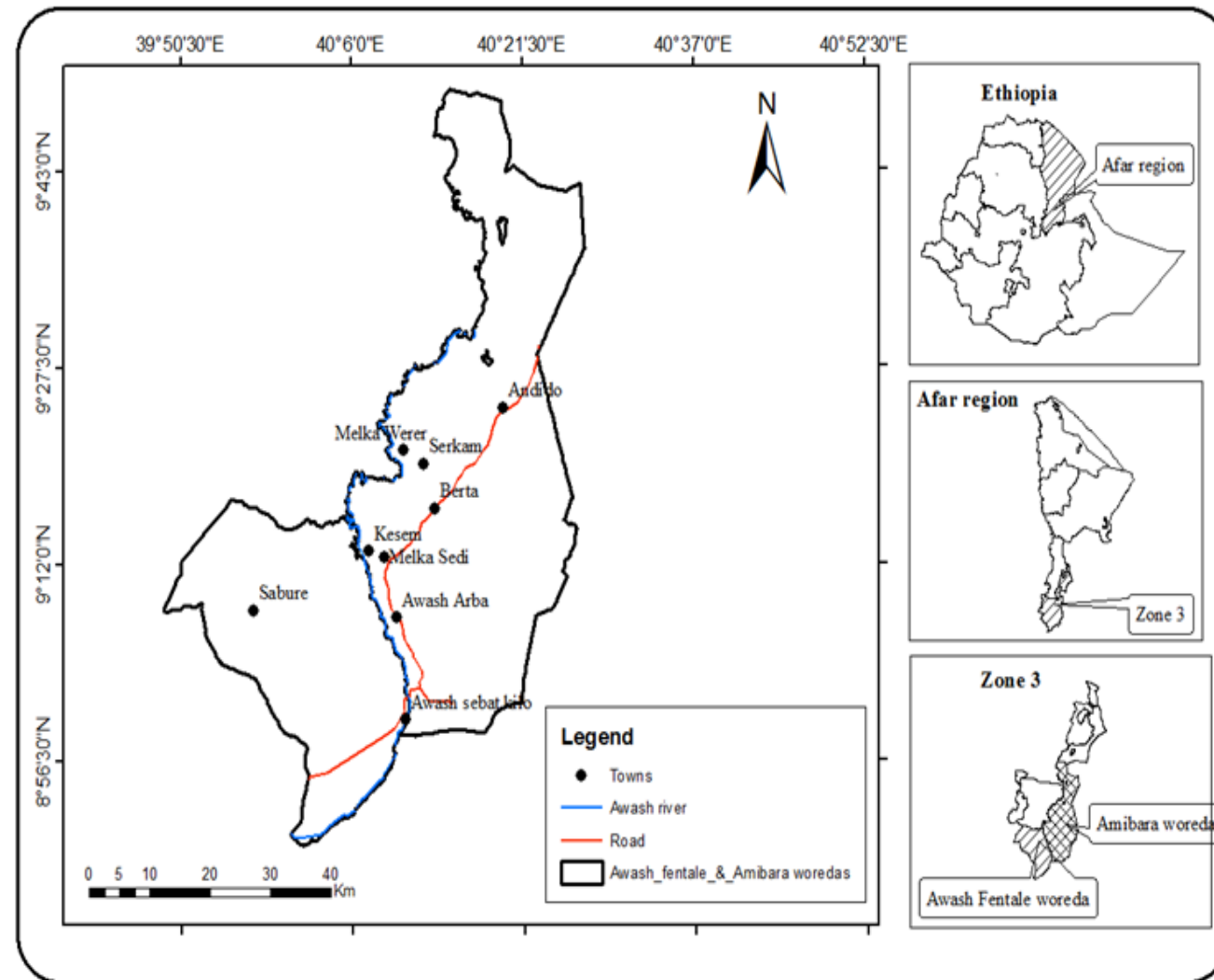
Methods and sample

- Life history interviews n=35 (20 HHs)
 - Respondents: Household head and senior man or woman
- Sites
 - Pastoralist village Dileyu (n=13)
 - Agro-pastoralist and peri-urban centre Melka Sedi (n=6)
 - Urban neighbourhood Awash Sabat Kilo (n=16)

Context

- Awash Sabat Kilo is on the outskirts of Awash town, Sabat (7) km from the customs post on the Djibouti road
- Melka Sedi is located close to the government-owned sugarcane plantation at Kesel Toli (also known as Mus or Banana Kamp)
- Dileyu is a small pastoral settlement a short motor cycle ride from Kesel Toli

Study Area Map



Model

- ▶ The paper uses Dorward et al's (2009) taxonomy devised to categorise the strategies and aspirations of poor people in Mexico and Bolivia.
 - **'Hanging in'**: through travelling longer distances to pasture or moving family members and high value livestock to traditional rangelands,
 - **'Stepping up'**: through engaging in activities alongside pastoralism, including migration, and
 - **'Stepping out'**: through moving to urban centres and engaging in non-agricultural activities

Findings

Hanging in

- ▶ Migration in search of pasture and water are a life style for pastoralists
- ▶ As a result of the drought, the Afars travelling further to pasture on a daily and a seasonal basis and consequently spending longer periods of time away from home.
- ▶ Sometimes whole families moved, but often it was just men or occasionally older women or boys.

Stepping up

- ▶ Many households have moved from a predominantly pastoralist livelihood into agriculture (agro-pastoralism) and other forms of livelihood diversification.
- ▶ having multi-locational households and household members enables households to diversify income-generating activities.
- ▶ Remittances are an important part of diversified livelihoods.

Findings

Stepping out

- ▶ Most of the urban households (the Afars) were migrants and in many cases the move to town was in response to the impacts of drought on their livelihoods.
- ▶ These migrants engaged:
 - Salaried work
 - Daily labour
 - Petty trade (e.g. selling potatoes),

Aspiration

- ▶ Aspirations for children were uniformly framed around education and urban employment ('work in an agricultural office or the water sector or anywhere else in a government office' or in professions such as engineers or doctors).

Conclusion

- ▶ pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in Awash are experiencing considerable stress due to climatic changes.
- ▶ This is felt in a range of ways – water (both for domestic use and livelihoods) and pasture scarcity, erosion of herds, declining quality of livestock, decline in agricultural production.
- ▶ People manage this challenge through livelihood diversification, including migration to urban centres, and spreading households across pasture land and rural and urban centres.
- ▶ Given the severity of the problems faced by pastoralists, the fourth category of ‘falling down and out’ needs to be added in Doward et al’s taxonomy .

Recommendations

- ▶ To improve the wellbeing of people living in semi-arid areas like the Awash River Basin, the focus should be on supporting adaptation and resilience, including:
 - Decent work that is not reliant on natural resources/ vagaries of the weather and climate

- Direct support for opportunities for young people [e.g. skills training that matches up with the realities of the job market; matching young people up to jobs], taking into account youth aspiration
- For people who remain dependent on natural resource-based livelihoods activities, support to strengthen their resilience to the negative impacts of climate shocks and stresses

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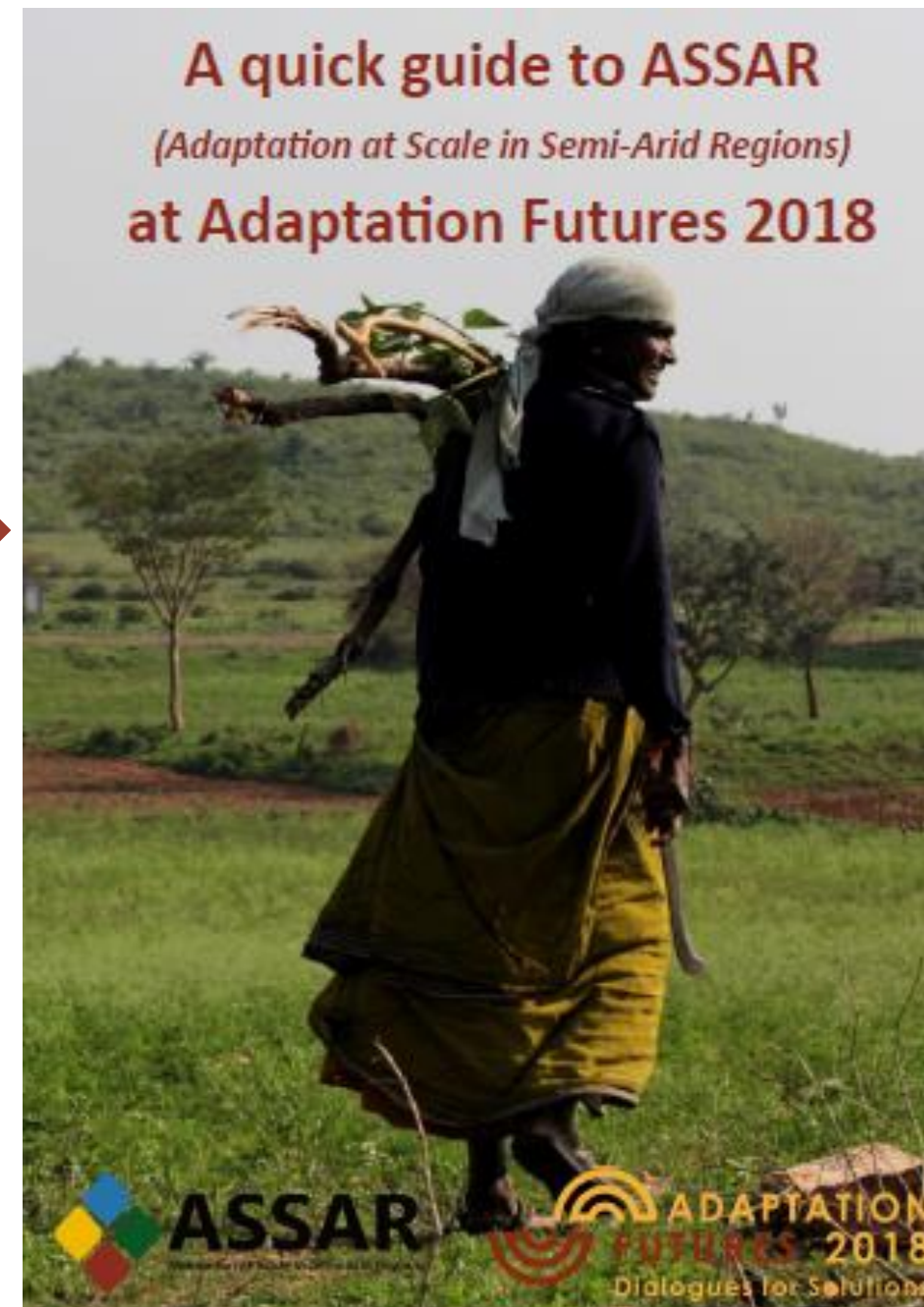
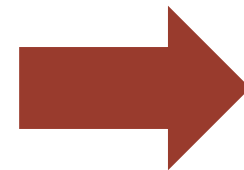
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