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The Art of Going Beyond in Hossana, Ethiopia

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THE ART OF GOING BEYOND IN HOSSANA, ETHIOPIA

A Thesis
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Masters of Arts
in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology
The University of Mississippi

by

Megan Flowers

May 2012
ABSTRACT

In this study, I examine what education as development means for the men and women who live in Hossana town, Ethiopia. The ethnographic focus of this study is on understanding how education as development evokes different meanings for socio-political participation by rural students at a teacher training college and townspeople respectively. I discuss these conceptual differentiations in relation to the changes in beliefs and strategies that have occurred in Hossana and greater Ethiopia elsewhere over the course of several decades of local and global changes in the social order. I use the emic category of yilhunnta, as the social recognition of kinship, and how it is used and expanded by actors along rural/urban, and gender divisions for evoking, critiquing, and tailoring the socio-political premises of development to local concern. As a prelude to the discussion of the chapters that follow, delineating yilhunnta and how it relates to differentiating local concerns about development and explaining my theoretical and methodological approach to this study.
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INTRODUCTION

In this study, I examine what education as development means for the men and women who live in Hossana town, Ethiopia. The ethnographic focus of this study is on understanding how education as development evokes different meanings for socio-political participation by rural students at a teacher training college and townspeople respectively. I discuss these conceptual differentiations in relation to the changes in beliefs and strategies that have occurred in Hossana and greater Ethiopia elsewhere over the course of several decades of local and global changes in the social order. I use the emic category of *yilhunnta*, as the social recognition of kinship, and how it is used and expanded by actors along rural/urban, and gender divisions for evoking, critiquing, and tailoring the socio-political premises of development to local concern. As a prelude to the discussion of the chapters that follow, delineating *yilhunnta* and how it relates to differentiating local concerns about development and explaining my theoretical and methodological approach to this study.

Kinship as the “core”, rather than “boundary” of people’s lives intimately informs how people relate to each other in broader socio-political processes (Van Vleet 2008:2). *Yilhunnta*, as the social recognition of kinship among all individuals, across all stratifications, is a moral order that critiques the idea of personal enrichment as naturalized. The social recognition of kinship finds spaces to critique a conservative, elitist sense of proper social order. Rural students and their families and communities seek to participate in an emergent social class that has political ties and obligations to urban places in networking the rural with the institutional. Therefore, the
moral order also occupies a domain of strategy within *yilhunnta* that translates to “going beyond the family for the family.” For Hosanna townspeople, the domain of social commentary within yilhunnta is more important in tying local concerns and socio-political participation to the developmentalist state. *Yilhunnta*, as a practice of interpreting, commenting, and regulating widening divergences through rich and poor, is a political challenge to discrete, elite consolidated influence in the developmentalist state.

To date, two scholars of Ethiopian studies define *yilhunnta* as, “the intense shame based on what others think and say and think about one and one’s family” (Mains 2007, Poluha 2004:147). In an urban ethnography of unemployed young men in Jimma, Ethiopia, Daniel Mains outlines the aspect of *yilhunnta* as the said or unsaid social commentary at work in local notions of occupational status to “draw attention to the importance of social relationships for understanding unemployment” (Mains 2007:660). The emphasis on avoiding “lower work” discussed among Mains’s interlocutors was also shared among my interlocutors. However, in my fieldsite, this avoidance of “lower work” or “simply sitting” is qualified in the domain of strategy. Delineated through my interlocutors’ expressed importance of their positions within the college, *yilhunnta* was framed not only as honoring the family, but “going beyond the family” to help the family. *Yilhunnta* is not only the said or unsaid negative social commentary circulating around people’s social orientations. I began to understand *yilhunnta* as a strategy of social distancing, self-evaluation, and self-revelation, as young men and women in the teacher-training program posited their positions within the college as important for avoiding *gulba sira* (work without purpose).

Like the category of *ziqittena sira* (lower work), non-artisan occupations, like porter, waiter, or shoeshine, which is typically understood as the appropriate work of younger boys,
were also grouped within the category of *gulba sira*. However, for my interlocutors to index this work as purposeless, rather than simply lower, makes visible *yilhunna* as a practice in not only maintaining one’s social orientations towards others, but improving them. This strategy excludes the small possibility of leaving the country in order to do “lower work” without being shamed (Mains 2007:660). Otherwise, like Mains’ informants, mine would otherwise “simply sit at home”. So, *yilhunnta* in the context of education trajectories, may give my interlocutors a sounder structural grounding to strategize for imagined futures, when forms of social reproduction appear to be in crisis (Weiss 2004). Therefore, I saw *yilhunnta* as a strategy of “going beyond the family” to fulfill familial obligations, which was then discursively and practically tied to the process of institutional intervention as a defining feature of classic development.

I did not set out to find education as development as a topic of study as education as development found me in ways I did not expect. In the winter of 2008, while doing an English teaching stint in France, questions that my francophone African students would ask me, such as why they had to learn to English and why education looked different in Africa provided me my first impulse to study education as a social, temporal, and political forms of development. Later, as I started my Master’s trajectory at the University of Mississippi, I began to review the social science literature on education and development. The topic of my research became clear: discussions about education and development as a form of individual consumption that defined people as “beneficiaries” against the global governance over the thinning of the African state left little room to talk about how local life not only entered discourses about education as development but constituted it.
Even when I read of groups in Africa and Ethiopia who did not fit the pattern of “beneficiary” who experienced uniformly development and education as a form of global governance, these cases were considered not typical to the widely discussed generalizations of neoliberalism within education and development as a process of personal consumption and benefit (Harvey 2005) against the “thinning of the African state” (Ferguson 2006) These views were not only typical of academia, but of local Ethiopians too. For instance, some people were critical of the Ethiopian state’s education policies as a problem of “over-rying for foreign support.” However, the local concern for critiquing the government and desiring more different representation along rural/urban and gendered lines within education projects illustrated exceptions to the rule of global governance and education participation as an unthinking consumption of foreign knowledge transfers that supposedly defines classic notions of development.

Seen in this light, this study is not only an examination of expectations, judgments, and action, but of meanings and of understandings. This study is about the dialectic between the politics of participation and intervention, between perceptions of state growth and state decline, and between meanings of social location and social power. An ethnographic account of this tri-pronged process is to provide a fuller picture of what “classic development” looks like in contemporary, post-socialist Ethiopia. Through an ethnographic account of the reasons people participate in education projects, the goal of my study is to contribute to the theoretical and empirical deconstruction of “classic development” beyond a singular analysis of global governance through intervention. I am not simply interested in the differences in relations between local participation in classic foreign development and the state, but how local participation has changed even as participation worked and continues to work in tandem with
both processes. What might education projects, and the people who engage in them, reveal to us about social relationships? How might these social relationships further our understanding of the interpretations of development and its implications in processes of belonging and sovereignty? An exploration of such questions may not only be interesting to other social science students, but to the people who appear as the subjects of their case studies.

**Education: power, relatedness, and belonging**

Social scientists have outlined why education matters to nation-states. This next group of literature delineates the ways nation-states may be concerned with how foreign-orchestrated education projects shape its legitimization of power. The nation state’s loss of control in economically vulnerable countries is a highly debated theme in studies concerning the commodification of higher education and broader transnational processes (Robertson et al 2006 Naidoo 2008, Kelk and Worth 2002, Epstein 2008, Gibbs 2004, Knight 2003). The researchers contend that the danger for vulnerable countries is that the impact of forces for commodification could result in a curtailment of the government’s ability to autonomously direct national systems of higher education.

In particular, Rajani Naidoo argues, “governments may lose leverage in the face of a heavy reliance on foreign providers who are likely to exert a direct influence on the terms of provision and an indirect effect on the development of policy” (2008:91). For instance, Robertson et. al, Kelk and Worth, and Naidoo, discuss how the transnational political forums, such as the WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank seek to diminish the capacity of governments to steer higher education by exerting pressure on governments to reduce state autonomy in order to open up to globalized market forces (Naidoo 2008:91). In order for dominant countries to further pressure developing countries to open up to the global market, discourses about social-economic
crises are underpinned by the assumption that global market mechanisms will ensure the amelioration of quality (Epstein 2008, Gibbs 2004, Naidoo 2008). Likewise drawing off of the analysis of market influence in education, this next group of authors is concerned with how education matters to the nation-state in terms of limiting the state’s expenditure in defining and educating its political subjects in social duty and obligation.

Researchers also discuss why education matters for nation-states as a means of legitimizing its power through touting “self-governance,” while weakening in sovereignty over its citizenry (Peters et. al 2000, Rose 1998, Castles 2004, Janks 2010, Ong 2006, Bernstein 2006). Drawing from Michel Foucault’s theory of “self-governance” (Foucault, Dreyfus, and Rainbow 1983:246) researchers discuss how market mechanisms inform education as a process of inculcating global elitists values of individual creativity, self-reliance, and self-determination over social duty and obligation. Researchers have glossed this process as the production of the “enterprising” or “neoliberal” subject, in which self-interest and consumer choice drive all aspects of life (Peters et. al 2000, Rose 1998, Castles 2004, Janks 2010, Ong 2006, Bernstein 2006). In order to understand the “enterprising” subject as a political subject, these authors contend that “self-marketing” makes consumption a public matter, as a way of voicing individual rights and freedoms, over social duties and obligations (Rose 1998:151, Peters et. al 2000:124-25). The implications for education institutions in creating individual political subject over a citizen is to tout everyone as formally equal, equally informed, while ignoring historical processes of socio-cultural subjugation within a nation-state (Peters et. al 2000:124-125). In this light, education matters to the state as a way of continuing its legitimization its power by widening the historical gap of inequities through “self-governance,” as its sovereignty continues to thin against global elitist hegemony (Ong 2006, Negash 1996;2006, Rose 1998).
The discussion above of the weakening of state sovereignty and the production of individual political subjects as helpful in understanding how education informs the process of the lessening of African state sovereignty (Ferguson 2006) and the process of defining socio-economic well-being by global elites (Harvey 2005). The two groups of literature outlined above are concerned with why education matters to nation-states, in terms of the problems of legitimizing its power, as its sovereignty over the production of duty and obligation by its political subjects wanes. However, my study is more concerned with why and how education matters to locals in constituting socio-political obligation and belonging, rather than simply consuming individualist values. As I have discussed above, the emic concept of yilhunnta, as a moral order and strategy for broader understandings of well-being, critiques an understanding of a singular neoliberalism (Larner 2003). My study contributes to the group of literature that focuses on how social duty and obligation is significant for producing and reproducing selves and futures (Weiss 2004, Smith 2008, Leinaweaver 2008), and how this process of reproduction relates to the developmentalist state (Mains 2012, Comaroff and Comaroff 2006).

In dialogue with other researchers of social class, kinship, and political belonging within development contexts, I suggest that a singular, top-down analysis of neoliberalism does not further our understanding of why and for whom aspects of education and development matter in local contexts (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006, Smith 2004, Mains 2012, Leinaweaver 2008, Rose 1999). These researchers have demonstrated that analyzing intersecting local processes of self-governance and interpretations of intervention in education and development can further our understanding of how local life negotiates and constitutes social class and political belonging, and how those processes relate with the state (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006, Smith 2004, Mains 2012, Leinaweaver 2008). This group of literature draws from the argument that processes of
transnational and state politics are working “in tandem” to reproduce, negotiate, and transform notions of social class and political belonging depending on the local contexts (Jackson 2007:138, McCarthy and Dimitrades 2000). By attending to the ways in which this tandem-ness in education and development is constituted in local, everyday life, I argue along with the group of literature that social duty and obligation is still significant in constituting social classes (Leinaweaver 2008) and political subjects (Rose 1999:178).

Although it is not the goal of my study to discuss why education matters to the Ethiopian government, a brief historical delineation of state-led education projects through the expansion of infrastructure can provide a preliminary understanding of how interpretations of education relate to the politics of participation and belonging within “development” (Mains 2012). For instance, after the structural adjustment policies of the in the late 1990s, the ruling regime of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) decided that their agriculturally based economy was to precarious to climate and international market forces (structural adjustments) to make it the primary focus of state-led development (Milkias 2011: 252). Under the Higher Education Expansion Program, the MOE turned its focus to teacher training college in 2003, with the implementation of the Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) task force (TESO 2003). The TESO task force set out to solve the goal of increasing the shortage of qualified teacher trainers by expanding the construction of teacher training institutes. The task force emphasized the purpose of expanding teacher-training institutes as a means leave behind the primary rural dependence on agriculture and to provide the majority of the population (80 percent living in rural areas, circa 2003) greater access to the “modernization of the economy” experienced in urban areas (TESO 2003). Despite critiques of state-led expansion at the “expense of quality” (Negash 2006:64, Olango and Lemma 2008:466), the strategy to rapidly
expand teacher-training institutions and universities was perceived by many Ethiopians to be instances of the growth of the developmentalist state, despite the state’s lessening influence over the content of education (Milkias 252). Given these instances of Ethiopia as a developmentalist state, a delineation of my methodological approach to my study may provide some preliminary understanding of how local life interprets through education projects why and for whom certain aspects of state-led (infrastructural) versus foreign-led (socio-temporal) development (infrastructural) are important.

A Note On Methodology

Like other anthropological studies, this one is based basically on the people who were most receptive to and curious about themselves, the issues, and the anthropologist. Some people I tried to meet, interview, and learn from in Hossana, Ethiopia, however, remained hidden from me. For my formal interviews, I had originally intended to use more random methods of selection. However, I was quickly dissuaded from this approach. It seemed that I had arrived on the heels of a mixed history of encounters and confrontations with ferenjis (westerners, whites), as volunteers, experts, and tourists. These confrontations and encounters have given ferenjis an ambiguous, oscillating reputation of impatience, arrogance, insincerity, transience, wealth, sincerity, and kindness. I knew that even though I would take measures to keep my volunteerism methodological separate from my research, there would be some overlapping as both positions intersect in the locality of interpretation and practice. I cannot separate myself from the history of foreign volunteerism in Hossana town. My technique for meeting many people and interviewing some therefore became reliant in the initial instances on the introductions of people, primarily male instructors, that I already knew, which were often prefaced with statements like: “She’s fine. You’re grade will not be affected by helping her,” or “I wouldn’t expect anything in return
from her.” Within a few months, such formal introductions became far less necessary, as I as able to contact students to help me find other students to talk with.

During my research, I interviewed a total of 14 students, two college instructors, and four community members. Nine of these students were young men from the Gedeo region and the Kembata region of the SNNPR. Four other students were young women from the Silte and Kembata regions. One student was an older woman, the wife of a HCTE instructor, from the Hadiya region, the ethnic zone of my fieldsite. The ratio of 9 men to 7 women approximately reflects the overall ratio of the student population for the academic year of 2010 to 2011. The two college instructors are both male instructors in the departments of Special Needs and Chemistry. These two instructors also helped me, along with a few other instructors, in establishing some of their students as my key informants. I did not interview any of my own students or any other student majoring in English. The four community members were two males and two females from various education institutions in town. These individuals were all involved with me either directly or indirectly in training sessions. I interviewed all of my informants as an individual researcher, separate from my work with IFESH. Please refer to the appendix to view my informed consent and interview script drafted before IRB approval.

After my arrival to HCTE in October 2010, I spent the next three months acclimating myself to my volunteer work, establishing key informants, and organizing my research schedule around my volunteer work. Volunteers are expected to work 7 to 8 hour days, record their work on a daily timesheet, and report it back to college and IFESH/Ethiopia administration for review. After informing the college and IFESH/Ethiopia of my research intentions, I was granted time each week to conduct research from mid-January to late May of 2011. I would reserve a few hours in the afternoon to interview one to two students a week. I would typically have three-
hour interview sessions three to four times for my key student informants. In addition to conducting semi-structured interviews, I conducted participant observation with student members of the drama club once a week. I conducted further participant observation with the gender club twice during the period of my fieldwork. At the very first meetings of my participant observation phase, I introduced my research intentions taken directly from my informed consent document. In addition, I posted two of my informed consent documents around the meeting places where I conducted participant observation with club members. I also conducted two participant observation sessions with community participants in local workshops not affiliated with my own training sessions. In the next section, I outline my intentions and outcomes in the process of interviewing my informants.

Matthew Gutmann’s warning of the “ethnographic sponge—the infamous fly one the wall—soaking up life around her” is sound advice for any researcher in anthropological exploration (1996:31). Fearing that I may “go sponge,” I wanted my interview styles to be more conversational than interrogatory. I attended other students’ clubs, sat in the café, and told any student or teacher willing to listen to me that I was doing research outside of my volunteerism. I desired to talk to any student who was willing to help me. Some of my male instructor friends were insistent on helping me find “the good students” to talk with, so that I did not “waste my time.” I wondered what made a student good? It seemed that being a good student meant being male, as I was having a hard time getting my male instructor friends to find female students to help me with my research. Then, I later discovered that five “good students” initially introduced to me were the new second year students of the new, recently established Special Needs Education Program, the first of its kind in the entire Southern region.
Fikre Jesus, one of my colleagues from the English faculty, had told me that the reason he chose these students is that they were older students, experienced with public speaking and proficient in English. He also thought that I would be interested in researching an academic area of the college that had never been researched before. I later asked my male instructor friends in Chemistry, Special Needs, and Natural Science to help me find women in the classrooms, who were willing to help me. I discovered that these seven women I interviewed were “good students” because these were the students who apparently spoke out more in the classroom and had more self-confidence. Some teachers, who were not helping me with interviews, noted that I may find it more difficult to find females to interview because they might be either too shy or not very good in English. Narratives of good students as having self-confidence certainly led me to structuring my interview towards eliciting how these “good students” understood self-confidence and how self-confidence was socially-classed, but discursively gendered in the college.

Within my research, by allowing male instructors to filter out which students I should interview, the “good students”, I am probably implicit to the process of a professional, middle class to speak for impoverished groups of rural women. Similarly, in my volunteer work, it is possible that the institutional pressures from HCTE and IFESH for me to render successful female participation, in exchange for further assisting the college, non-government groups have also shaped the conditions for a professional middle class to speak for women’s needs in a singular fashion. In practices of participant observation, survey-taking, narrative-based reporting, and quantitative analysis, volunteers and other institutional actors within non-government organizations who work practically with “target groups” often view themselves as doing the work of social scientists. In this sense, even though I have worked to keep my volunteerism and my research methodologically separate, my research approach has
unexpectedly overlapped with my volunteerism in terms of reifying the same process of silencing some women’s voices over other’s along social class and ethnic lines. Even though parts of my analysis are concerned with deconstructing the simultaneous institutional processes of silencing and “giving voice” to female students in the classroom, my position as a participant research methodology of gaining informants has reified the process of silencing in some ways.

Given my lack of command in spoken Amharic, I soon realized that students’ varied strengths of English communication limit the kind of more conversational interviews I desired to conduct. However, I let my informants know that they could switch to Amharic any time they wanted; and the contexts in which students would often switch would elicit more information about how work, education, and skill were more relevant to social orientations and family life than its relations to production. I also found that students, when I assured them that I could listen to Amharic, were more animate in telling me their stories and involving me within them. When students were more comfortable speaking with me, my opinions, and not just my questions, were raised throughout. For instance, I rarely used the term *yilhunnta* until others raised it with me, because I found myself studying the use of the term within the context of education institutions.

Some reactions to my research were playful. One day, after he knew me better, Abel, a second-year student, responded to my request to interview him by saying, “Whenever you want. Wait, you’re not a spy, are you?” Others were unexpectedly calculating. For instance, after discussing informed consent, some students discovered that I was not only conducting individual research, but also volunteering as a teacher training with the college’s English faculty. After consenting to interview time, some students seemed to view my research somewhat differently, as if they were thinking that anything they said against institutional authorities might end up harming or terminating their positions within the college. This meant that attempts were made to
keep things from my attention; especially if I inquired about how students viewed the importance of their position within the college. However, sometimes I felt that I was sometimes able to negotiate feelings of unease associated with my position as a teacher with two conservatively-used strategies: 1) conservatively assuring students that no one could have access to my field notes and 2) moving our interviewing locations from places where institutional authorities may interrupt, such as the college café, to more intimate places such as the college’s football stadium.

As a volunteer, few students, assuming that I was a giving volunteer with an ambiguously applied-slant to research, wondered if I would use the information given to personally find a solution to his or her economic problems. One man went so far as to ask if students could receive monetary compensation from participating. I assured them from the informed consent that students could not necessarily benefit from participating in my student.

I have used pseudonyms only for those people who have requested to remain anonymous. Some students asked me not to tape record them and remain anonymous. So to respect their wishes, I have also sometimes combined life-history details and comments in order to form a few composite informants. In forming a composite informant, however, I did not alter, but oblige to keep certain details in narratives hidden. However, some asked me to use their names, because they wanted their names to be associated with their help in my research. I suppose that my dual, but separate position as a participant researcher also led to people telling me about experiences and ideas that I was expected to write about for them. I have kept the citations from informal and more formal discussions as accurate as possible, cutting only some repetitious verbal mannerisms within and between paragraphs, though usually not between phrases. Unless otherwise specified, all dates in this study refer to the period from January 2011 to June 2011.
**Hossana Town**

Hossana is a dusty, arid town at 7,432 ft above sea level. The town straddles a paved road, which runs between Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, and Arba Minch. If you look in a Brandt Travel Guide book, Hossana is depicted as a rest stop midway to Arba Minch, a place where tourists visit the crocodile conservation reserve. You will also read that Hossana is the ethnic zonal capital of the Hadiya people. The Hadiya zone is an ethnically based zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People’s Region (SNNPR). The SNNPR is one of the nine ethnically based administrative regions in Ethiopia, known as *kili*. The ethnic basis of administrative regions, known as ethnic federalism and ethnic self-determination, is often considered one of the EPRDF’s most controversial policies (Milkias 2011: 86, Shinn et. al 2004:vii). One major concern is that the policy may lead the country in a process of “balkinization,” in which groups are turned against each other in ethnic-based conflict (Harrison and Drakulic 2011:163, Shinn et. al 2004:vii). According to Paulos Milkias, the argument is that the ethnic policy “revived Mussolini’s ethnic reorganization of Ethiopia during the Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941,” and thus is a legacy of colonialism (2011:86). In my fieldsite, the Hadiya are the dominant ethnicity--an identification that is often, but not always privileged under the policy of ethnic federalism when government elections for administrative staff take place within the Hadiya ethnic zone.
Far left: Map.1: Location of Ethiopia within Africa. Left: Map.2: Location of Hossana within Ethiopia. Below: Map.3: The S.N.N.P.R. Administrative Region. Hossana is the capital of the Hadiya ethnic zone.
To travel to Hossana, you purchase a ticket at the Merkato bus station in Addis Ababa and get into a large bus with about 50 people bound for either Hossana or Arba Minch. Most of the people heading to Hossana are either students coming home from school or men and women carrying bundles of things they have bought or are selling from Addis Ababa or Hawassa. From the Hossana bus station, I often contracted an auto rickshaw, called a badjaj, to take me back to the compound. Few people contracted auto rickshaws to go to the college, because they were more expensive and were slow. Besides the auto-rickshaws, the tour cars and public buses that pass through Hossana, there are a few cars that stay in town. Those cars are mostly owned by businesses and charity organizations.

Hossana is one of the many townships in the SNNPR region has been undergoing rapid infrastructural and population growth since the early 2000s under Ethiopia’s urban renewal reform. According to the 2011 report of the Hossana City Population Center, there are a total of 89,300 people in Hossana, 55 percent women and 45 percent men. This population of 89,300 people of the Hossana area does not include the people who frequently migrate to the township center for public and commercial services. Unmarried men and women from the rural areas migrate from the rural areas to Hossana to work as domestic servants, as day laborers, as students, or to just visit family and friends.

Gathering enough water, processing enough grain and spices, preparing enough food, harvesting enset (false banana), maintaining one’s relations with the supernatural, the family, and the people of your workplace is apart of the day-to-day lives of the people of Hossana. Most of the year, Hossana town is dry and dusty, surrounded by green pastures and rolling hills. Yet, during the months of July, August, and September the rainy season turns the town into a muddy and cold environment. The rainy season is a dreaded time because that is when most people
have less food, have difficulty keeping their homes heated, and must wait until the rainy season is over to plant crops. In Hossana, housing of mud, stick and cement walls, tin and thatched roofs, cement and dirt floors standing side by side illustrates a mixed (classed) residential housing that may seem foreign to the average American reader. Furthermore, houses can also speak to the importance of kinship, as some of them are decorated with pictures and messages telling the life of the family, often through religious and non-religious journeys.

Over half of the population in Hossana is Evangelical; while the other thirty percent are comprised of followers of Islam and Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. I met a few self-proclaimed atheists, but that was a rare occurrence. However, historically, the Hadiya people were followers of the *fandanano* religion, a syncretistic belief, with elements of Islam (Uhlig 2007:81). Only in the early to mid-20th century does Hossana and the greater Hadiya region
experience a shift towards primarily Evangelical Protestantism and, secondly, Ethiopian Coptic Christianity (Fargher 1996, Uhlig 2007).

happened in context of the Ethiopian empire’s colonial rule and their allowance of German Missionaries in the Hadiya zone (Fargher 1996, Braukamper 1973, Uhlig 2007). As the Hadiya people were under Amharic lordship, shifting to Coptic or Evangelical Christianity became a way of relating to patrons, gaining political and economic status by separating from a faith system that had become associated with enslavement (Braukamper 1973). Today, in Hossana, evangelicals shun secular music, drinking alcohol, and women were encouraged to wear long skirts instead of trousers. Such practices represent the importance of ethical idealism to Ethiopian Evangelicals as means of building and maintaining social and political relations in
Hossana town (Fargher 1996). Only later did I begin to see how the practices of Evangelical Protestantism were apart of the broader politics of participation and belonging within Hossana town. From my fieldsite, I illustrate how the broader politics of Protestantism intersect with the dynamics of gender and social class along rural/urban lines in shaping social actors’ understandings of their position within education institutions and education projects.

**The Organization Of The Study**

The following study is divided into three chapters, followed by a conclusion. Chapter 1 provides the reader with the ethnographic context of my participant research. First, I discuss how I came to volunteer with the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH), a private education charity organization, as a practical way of gaining access to a higher education institution within Africa. Next, I provide the context of IFESH volunteerism within the Hossana College of Teacher Education to provide a preliminary understanding of how my position would be interpreted by locals. In foregrounding the education process of rural students in Chapter 2, I begin with the broader history of state-led development and narrow it in to the history of Evangelism in the Hadiya region as a way of explaining how foreigners are considered separate, yet a part of the people’s discursive relations with development as a process of socio-political belonging. The history of Evangelism in the Hadiya region should also provide the context with how “intervention” is conceived within the context of Hossana College of Teacher Education.

In Chapter 2, I outline a college student’s joke as a blueprint for understanding *yilhunnta* as a strategy of familial betterment and its importance how students define why and for whom education matters. *Yilhunnta* makes visible English/Education as an experiential strategy of social distancing from markers of “ruralness” for the social, cultural, and political participation of the family, which is mediated by alienating social relations along rural and urban lines.
Drawing from Michel Taussig, the student’s joke is, therefore, a penetrating text on neoliberal capitalism as a social system. This text deconstructs the commonplace analysis that social class, like neoliberalism, is a “class project,” in which wealth is singularly codified and consolidated by the hands of an elite global few. As outlined in the student’s joke, English/Education is a commodity that consumes the individual/social spirit and therefore must be constantly maintained and regulated through yilhunnta. Drawing out the context of institutional intervention in student’s strategies, I argue that intervention in students’ practices of social distancing within yilhunnta places emphasis on women’s bodies as a means of constraining the social reproduction of “ruralness.”

In the final chapter, Chapter 3, I outline townspeople’s critiques of my work in volunteerism as a way of tying my resources with local concerns. As discussed above, the social recognition of kinship within yilhunnta as a moral order and form of comprehensive accountability in project participation is a response to the “lop-sided” exchange or lack of local representation in development program planning. Drawing from ethnographies of development brokerage (), I argue that the Hossana townspeople, under urban renewal reform, actively participate in contextualizing political-economic development as town concern, and framing patron-client relationships in discrete education projects as a discursive “suturing” (Hall 1991) of the developmentalist state to networks otherwise seen as privatized.
Not knowing what I was doing became very apparent as I mingled in the hotel lobby with other volunteers of the private education charity, the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH). After questions like, “Oh, is this your first time to Africa?”, and “How long have you been volunteering?,” I realized that I was one of the youngest, in-experienced volunteers there. Most of these women (and yes most were women) had Masters and Ph.Ds and had lived and worked in Africa for many years. Everyone out of my group going to Ethiopia was over 30, had at least a Master’s degree, and at least 3 years teaching experience. I had two years teaching experience and a Master’s in progress. Most had been to Africa at least once or twice through volunteer stints. I had never been to Africa. I was very conservative about revealing much about myself, especially the fact that I hadn’t finished my Master’s degree. At the time, I thought I didn’t want to tell anyone because I was intimidated because I fell so short of everyone’s soaring academic and professional experience. Honestly, I was a little intimidated.

An NGO, historically comprised of older African American women, did not match up with my idea of a volunteer organization. They did not embody the critique of the young, idealistic, and inexperienced volunteer that I had so often read about in my Jstor-capades. That young, inexperienced volunteer was me.

Since it’s establishment in 1981 by Reverend Leon Sullivan, IFESH has worked in more than 34 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. As of 2012, IFESH currently operates and supports projects in 10 African countries including Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ghana, Guinea, Ethiopia,
Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria and Senegal. This small, private non-profit American organization specializes in education systems, health, community, and conflict mitigation. The mission statement of IFESH is “to support African nations in their efforts to eradicate poverty, disease and inequity through self-help partnership programs.” IFESH implements “self-help partnerships focusing on impacting poor and vulnerable populations.” In terms of “partnerships,” IFESH has a strong historical practice of getting large multi-national corporations to invest in non-profit work that seeks to help community members in the production and extraction areas these companies have a vested interest in. Some of IFESH’s private donors include Shell, Chevron, Mars, Hershey’s, and Starbucks. Besides the private sector, IFESH also works to achieve their goals by aligning with the goals of International donors, U.S. government agencies, African governments at the local, state, and national level, and with civil society, including local communities and community-based organizations.

The notion of “self-help” is modeled after the founder, Reverend Leon H. Sullivan’s work in providing training and opportunities in industrialization centers for fellow African American community members in North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was a Baptist minister and a civil rights and anti-apartheid activist. As the first African American board member of General Motors, Reverend Sullivan, in 1977, pushed corporate social responsibility principles to be implemented in combating South African apartheid and U.S. de facto segregation. He later established IFESH in Scottsdale, Arizona as a way to bridge African American concerns to the anti-Apartheid movement of South Africa thorough education services premised on principles of self-help. According to IFESH’s website,

1 www.ifesh.org/about-us/
2 www.ifesh.org/what-we-do/
3 www.ifesh.org/rev-leon-h-sullivan/
Our commitment to self-help principles is based on the premise that, in order for emerging democracies to be sustained in Africa and for law and order to be upheld, a country's citizens must be literate and capable of making informed choices. Education and training must be the cornerstone of economic and social reform.

“Self-help principles” are never clarified, but I assume these principles are based on Reverend Sullivan’s eight “Global Sullivan Principles.” One of the principles concerns the ethics projects of multi-national corporations to “improve the quality of life” in places where donors have vested business interests. This development project may concern the process of donor and government partnerships using IFESH goals in education projects to claim responsibility on local issues of racial, gender, and ethnic discrimination (Tulley 2007). According to IFESH, “smart development” means including both the private and public sector to commit to “harness the know how of African peoples.” In Ethiopia, what this “know how” has primarily manifested in the training of teachers and education administrators with materials prepared by American volunteers and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education.

In Ethiopia, IFESH focuses on training and providing support to education administrators to develop curriculum materials and pedagogy. Emphasis is placed on strengthening “the quality of instruction by developing the capacity of Ethiopian teacher trainers in the areas of sociology, methodology, health education, computer skills, basic education and the development of curriculum materials.” Since 1995, in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), IFESH has assigned more than 150 volunteers to various teacher-training colleges, universities and the Ministry of Education. In addition, IFESH supports the Higher Diploma Leaders Program, an initiative of the country's Ministry of Education.

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4 www.ifesh.org/about-us/
5 www.ifesh.org/about-us/message-from-our-president/
6 www.ifesh.org/where-we-work/ethiopia-2/
Education. Volunteer educators and local staff were involved in introducing the first-ever Master's Degree in Social Work Program in Ethiopia through collaborating with the Social Work Education in Ethiopia Partnership at Addis Ababa University. IFESH also works with initiatives in preventing and controlling HIV/AIDS and increasing gender equity in education. IFESH’s past projects in Ethiopia have included *Capacity Building in Teacher Education Project*, *HIV/AIDS Project, Best and Brightest African Bankers Training Project, Schools for Africa Project, and the International Fellows Program*, and *African Education Initiative Support*. IFESH’s current projects in Ethiopia include *American Educators for Africa, International Educators for Africa, Support of sub-Saharan Africa Campaign, and Capacity Building in Teacher Education Project, II*. For my participant research during the 2010-2011 academic year, I was involved in the American Educators for Africa Project.

With support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through the 3-year $8 million American Educators for Africa (AEFA) Program, IFESH assists African countries in attaining “Education for All” goals. Each year for this program, IFESH recruits and assigns about 50 volunteer International Educators for Africa (IEFAs), about three to five to each of the nine countries: Benin, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria and Senegal. However, Ethiopia typically receives about 8 to 10 volunteers each year out of this group. This is because the Ethiopian Ministry of Education has emphasized the need for more volunteers to carry out training activities and provide other relevant support services. Volunteer educators work with local ministries of education to fulfill specific teacher-training requests while placing strict focus on instructive design; curriculum development; English as a Second

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7 www.ifesh.org/where-we-work/ethiopia-2/
8 www.ifesh.org/where-we-work/ethiopia-2/
9 www.ifesh.org/what-we-do/international-educators-for-africa-program/
Language training; delivery of in-service workshops to primary and secondary school teachers; demonstrative teaching and classroom observation; administrative management training; HIV/AIDS awareness; improvement of teacher resource centers; development of teaching and learning materials; and the promotion of child-centered learning and gender equity.

Volunteerism, in Ethiopia, has primarily circulated around implementing the initiatives under this project\(^\text{10}\).

In my decision to work with IFESH, I was worried that people would care that I was doing research through an organization that I intended to deconstruct. I was worried that my research analysis would become intimately shaped by the technical development categories I would eventually have to work under. For instance, my fascination with why students would come and enroll in a teacher training college, an institution of an increasingly de-valued profession, in some ways, theoretically aligned with IFESH and the United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) emphasis on the problem of enrollment and retention of students.

I was interested in the reasons students had come to the college and IFESH was concerned with the reasons students left the college. Yet, our interests connected through our attention to how students coped with the immediacies of institutional intervention. It can be argued that an emphasis on students’ immediate negotiations may take away from the significance of the structure of social relations in shaping a seemingly naturalized connection between education and the amelioration of poverty. However, I was more interested in why people where maneuvering through such technical categories of belonging. I was also afraid that I would be so busy with volunteering that my research would fall to the wayside. However, my

\(^{10}\) \url{www.ifesh.org/where-we-work/ethiopia-2/}
job description was vague enough for me to not know what exactly what was expected of me in that work.

I was also thinking about the daunting quarterly reports that were given to us with little explanation. All I knew is that we had to fill out the information sections about our plans, programs, and evaluation reports under a 1,000 word limitation and then give back to IFESH at the end of every three months. There were a lot more sections devoted to qualitative reporting and beneficiary feed-back, which surprised me. It surprised me because my experience with reading the reports of the development industry where primarily quantitative in rendering the “success” of said development projects. However, sections devoted to success stories and before and after photos, did constrain the content and method of how I could qualitatively report. At best, the layout of the report, I felt, would constrain a meaningful deconstruction. However, I was surprised to find a space for alternative suggestions for beneficiaries to provide. It seemed that IFESH was more concerned with critique coming from beneficiaries, which I appreciated.

As I read over this extensive report outline, I wondered what I was supposed to do to have a good report? I didn’t really know anything past my location in Hossana and my job description as “teacher trainer and community volunteer”. I didn’t want to do a bad job for IFESH; but, I also did not want to mess up my chance to do good research.

Despite my reservations about participant research, I chose IFESH because it was one of the volunteer organizations that I encountered that focused specifically on education development programs and Africa; two topics at the top of my research interests. I selected IFESH’s assignment as my field because this site was already related to discourses and strategies of higher education alternatives, classic development, kinship, and identity formation. Even though Peace Corps volunteers had the most interpretive power in establishing and conducting
their own local projects, I was not willing to commit an excessive amount of time to conduct research. However, I discovered that IFESH would give me more interpretive power than I expected in how I would conduct my volunteer work. Since most of the IFESH volunteers were experienced, older educators, IFESH did not see it necessary to give a strict methodological training, but to communicate and give detailed reports of their work. Program objectives were given, and educators could use their own teaching experiences and revise and renew them to fit program objectives to local contexts. What exactly these volunteer educators had accomplished in my field site became my interest to find out.

**Volunteerism: A brief history**

Some volunteers do not hear anything about their site or really what they are expected to do as a volunteer. The country representative of Peace Corps/Ethiopia, Ato Pietros, told me that it is Peace Corps procedure to not inform their volunteers where they will live and work in Ethiopia until about a month after in-country language and orientation training. I felt lucky to get an orientation and training within the first week’s stay in the capital city Addis Ababa (even though it was not as intensive as Peace Corps’s). It was on the third day of the in-country orientation that Ato Getnet, the country representative for IFESH/Ethiopia, said he wanted to give me a special history about my “site”: Hossana. He said that he had never done this for other IFESH volunteers. He felt that I needed to “know the history in order to not repeat it”.

Shannan was the first IFESH volunteer to come to Hossana in 2002, just after the establishment of the teacher-training institute. She worked as a “Higher Diploma Program Leader”, which I had no idea what that meant beyond the idea of training the college instructors. She also had established a “girl’s club” for the female students of the University. Shannan still works in Hossana with her own NGO called “H2O Empower”, which involves digging water
wells, building libraries, and donating books to the town’s institutions. Shannan is highly
respected among the townspeople, Ato Getnet added.

“She is an older woman and, in our culture, a respect is shown to older people in
positions of authority. She became more than a teacher trainer. She became a mother to
community members. It might be more difficult for you to get respect from other people,
including your co-workers, because you are so young. But if you do a good job and work
with your elders with respect, you can do a great job”.

He proceeded to present the very achievable possibility of being a young, but good volunteer
through the history of the following two volunteers: Natalie and Holly.

After Shannan finished her two-year stint, Rose also worked for two years as a Higher
Diploma Leader. Natalie, in her late twenties, was also respected by IFESH and local
institutional authorities in the work that she did. She did many workshops, taught several
courses, and advised the drama club and the gender club. In the gender club, Ato Getnet added,
she motivated girls to have self-confidence by playing soccer with them. She came back
independently for a few months after she got an international scholarship to pursue her Ph.D in
Australia. Then, that’s when Holly came. Holly was a thirty-something who started working as
a co-coordinator for the English Language Improvement Center (ELIC), a recent project started
by a group of English and Finnish donors and aid agencies. Holly left Hossana after a few
months, because she was repeatedly asking the college administration to support her project to
establish an English language laboratory, while apparently showing them little respect with her
patience. I learned later, from Hossana locals, that Ato Getnet rushed down from Addis Ababa
to deport her out of the country after she attempted to hit the finance coordinator in the head with
a tea cup after he supposedly laughed at her for calling him lazy. After that, IFESH/Ethiopia
decided to calm down tense relations in Hossana by going on a one-year volunteer hiatus.
In 2008, a twenty-something girl named Rhonda came to Hossana to teach spoken English classes and to act as the co-coordinator of the English Language Improvement Center: ELIC. However, apparently what made her fall short of the supposedly higher standard set by Shannan and Natalie, is that she focused primarily on the few courses she taught through the English department. Although Ato Getnet typically expects young IFESH volunteers to only teach courses, he wished that she would have done more workshops and programs to benefit teachers and other members of Hossana town. The people of the college and Hossana town had come to know her as a fundata, which literally translates as explosive, but equates to our idea of a narcissistic, “high-strung” person. After Melissa, for the next year and a half, IFESH would not post any volunteers in Hossana. In 2010, I was the next one. It was not clarified exactly as to why I was chosen. However, I was told that it was based on the need and availability of volunteers.

“So, as you can see,” Ato Getnet said, “we have had some inconsistencies in volunteering in Hossana.” Ato Getnet speculated that this might be the case because of Hossana’s relative isolation from larger cities and from apparently harsher conditions than other IFESH volunteers typically experienced: such as a lack of good health clinics, and clean, running water. While Ato Getnet speculated, I decided that if I gave handful of trainings in addition to teaching the Spoken English courses per the quarterly reports, I would do more than he expected, given my teaching credentials. The critiques of inconsistency and inexperience in volunteerism did not surprise me, being that I encountered such discussions in academic literature. However, I was surprised that the biggest critique of volunteers in Hossana was not simply inconsistency and de-contextualized planning, but disrespect, which stemmed from an evasive or conflicting social orientation towards colleagues.
The emphasis on “cultural sensitivity training” at the in-country orientation started making a lot more sense to me. The focus on building rapport, engaging in “talk stories” with institutional authorities, and the importance of accepting offers for tea, coffee, or lunch, no matter how busy we thought we were all had very real consequences on how we would be supported as a volunteer in our “sites.” I had caught a glimpse of the political implications for IFESH’s reputation among Ethiopian education institutions. IFESH could lose beneficiaries if IFESH volunteers conduct themselves in work poorly. I began to realize how easy it was for any of us volunteers to get kicked out of our institutions and to tarnish the credibility and influence of IFESH among Ethiopian educators. I was surprised by this contemporary position of volunteers, who partially take on the role of diplomat. This role of maintaining good relations has become increasingly important, given the inconsistencies of “foreign expertise.” Ato Getnet thought it best that I know the history of volunteer relations in Hossana, so that I would not repeat it. Yet, how would this mixed bag of volunteerism in the history of the college shape people’s expectations of me? I got the hint from Ato Getnet that although less would be expected of me because of my age and race, people would also not want me to do a bad job. This became apparent in the constant re-telling of volunteer history to make visible to me local strategies in my field-site.

**Hossana College of Teacher Education**

Hossana College of Teacher Education is a government-led, three-year institution that only trains primary school teachers to teach certain subjects, such as Chemistry, Math, Amharic, English, and Civic Education. Hossana College of Teacher Education is among four other colleges of its kind found in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region. (SNNPR). When I was not teaching my spoken English class or hosting workshops for primary school
teachers at the college, I would occasionally leave town for conferences or workshops in Hawassa, the regional capital of the SNNPR. From the bus window, I would, at times, encounter wives, sisters, mothers, and children crying and wailing as they watched their men leaving on the bus for a difficult journey to South Africa. Workinesh, the wife of a professor at the college, explained to me that after the men traveled as far as they could by bus in Ethiopia to the border of Kenya, they would go by foot for about four to six months until they reached Johannesburg, South Africa. Sometimes they would run out of money and starve. Others would perhaps get killed by lions or highway robbers. But for those who made it, they looked forward to selling belts, towels, and wallets to black South Africans. They could send a lot of Birr to Ethiopia for the small amount of Rand that they would make. For those who could afford it, they would send their daughters and sons to college in South Africa. Ato Teshome, one of the presidents of the college, had sent his daughter to a fashion school in Johannesburg. I was surprised to know that anyone’s daughter in town was going to fashion school. Most Hadiya from Hossana town attended national universities or, sometimes, universities abroad. Universities in more economically developed areas, such as in Europe, North America, Russia, and South Africa are desired more, because there is more funding for better quality education. These sons and daughters of townspeople typically later became sociologists, education managers, or engineers. It was not typical for townspeople with greater education and monetary resources to send their sons and daughters to a teacher training college. This was a place for professional instructors and rural students of various ethnic backgrounds.

At Hossana College of Teacher Education, many instructors after getting their Masters or Bachelors’ Degree may travel far away from their husbands, girlfriends, boyfriends, or wives to find work. Zuditu and Yimata both had husbands who worked at the Bonga College of Teacher
Education, 200 kilometers southwest of Hossana. When I first met Zuditu, she would often show me pictures of her husband in an album and talk about him with this profound sadness. The way she spoke about him led me to think that he was dead. Until, one day, during the Christmas break, I saw him bouncing his twin babies on each knee. Zuditu said that she thought that my participant research was a part of doing mandatory civic work for the government, a type of work, that she considered a sacrifice for me. “Why else would you come here? These conditions must be difficult or undesirable for you. They are certainly for us.” Most government workers, which include instructors in government schools, can be appointed to work in places that may or may not be desirable for them. Zuditu qualified that most here at the college, both faculty and students, are often separated from members of their families. “That must be difficult for anyone”, she said. Wait, I thought, the students are not from here? I was about one month into my volunteer work; and I had not realized that most of the students who attended Hossana College of Teacher Education were not from Hossana town.

The first indicator that led me to inquire further about student demographics was my reoccurring encounter with the semantic disconnect between the college and the community of Hossana. Many college instructors were more aware of my job as a volunteer than myself; and they would often critique me of my lack of focus on the Hossana community in my volunteering. I often remarked that I was doing work for the community by providing training for college students and primary school teachers. The typical response was that work for the college, although very necessary, does not necessarily affect the Hossana community. I was surprised to discover that most people considered the college not to be a part of the community. At the time, I did not see it necessary to ask many people about this. But, to the few people I inquired, the
answer was that the community likes the reputation the college gives to the community; but that the college at its services were not integral to the everydayness of community life.

Most of the students would go back to their villages from their ethnic zones; and the instructors and volunteers would do their work oftentimes discretely in the college and among the other education institutions in town. Community members, outside of formal participation with education institutions, would not be informed on or “benefit” from college activities at large. This note is not to excuse the exceptional local and foreign volunteers, whether affiliated with the college or not, who have devoted their time and energy into building and expanding community infrastructure and public services. However, members of the Hossana community with ties to local government and other managerial positions, are typically separated from college activities. Yet, they have the political and economic resources to influence student attendance and institutional logics circulating in the college.

Everywhere I walked on campus, I would introduce myself in my best Amharic, which I from my neighbors who lived next to me on the college compound. I would walk up to groups of students waiting around outside before their instructor arrived to start class. Some students would immediately giggle because it was unexpected to see Amharic coming from a white mouth. I asked students about their majors, if they were first year, second year or third year, and where they were from. Students that I had met were primarily from rural areas from five different ethnic zones: K’mbata, Hadiya, Silte, Gurage, and Gedeo. Although the college, as a government-supported institution, has quotas in terms of equal ethnic and gender representation, I met no one from urban or semi-urban areas.

Although Hossana is the capital of the Hadiya zone and the home of this teacher training college, I did not meet any students who grew up in Hossana. However, some students I met had
traveled with their siblings to Hossana from rural Hadiya areas to attend secondary school up until 10\textsuperscript{th} grade, the year of national preparatory examinations. Some of those students explained that they did not pass the exam because they were sick or did not have the immediate support from their families like other students who were from Hossana. Some of those students also had dropped out of preparatory school because they thought they would have more access to better instruction and books. The college library did have the largest donated collection in town. Students also indicated that the college’s monthly allocation of “pocket money” was important for living and supporting some of their siblings in school. This government teacher training college does not have a dormitory; so, the college gives the students about 250 birr (about 14 dollars, circa 2010) a month to rent an apartment and buy some food from the market to prepare. The “pocket money” is not much to live on, students say, especially if some families are not able to send their children extra money to cover living expenses.

A few times, community officials in a few of Hossana’s local non-government programs would ask me to visit their public and private high schools to counsel English student club members in activity organization. When I arrived to Wachamo Preparatory School, one of the officials would proudly introduce to me students who had scored in the 90\textsuperscript{th} percentile on the national preparatory exams. I discovered that most of the students who were in preparatory school had grown up in Hossana town or had relatives to support them in Hossana town. It was easier for those students who did not have to travel great distances away from their families. Being from Hossana town was also a great advantage not only in terms of having immediate support from family members who taught in schools, who had businesses, and, in general, who had slightly better wages than farmers, food market women, and craft workers. Living in Hossana also meant having access to the plethora of resources, such as donated books,
government and NGO public services, computers, and community youth activity centers focused on tutoring and counseling.

When I was conducting fieldwork between January and June 2011, I knew for a fact that Hossana town was the zonal capital out of the four surrounding zones to have a strongest presence in international humanitarian assistance, such as food and medicine donations from the U.N. and the CDC, local non-government organizations focused on health and education, and international non-government organizations, such as IFESH, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), and Peace Corps. I knew that students who were reared in Hossana or had family in Hossana had the greater advantage in attending university than other students who came from rural Hadiya or other ethnic zones. Below, I provide a general outline of gender and social class relations within the college, which will help contextualize rural students’ negotiations in fulfilling and exceeding familial expectations and obligations.

I was surprised, at first, first by the number of students who attended this small college on the edge of town. About 700 students attended the college. When you look at the freshman intake, the ratio of men to women is 1:1. If you look at the gender ratio of the students in their third year, the ratio is more like 2:1. The year before my fieldwork, about 550 students graduated from the college: about 350 boys and 200 girls. The argument typically is that men are just better at education, at working hard, and at teaching others. I was told by both men and women within the college that women often do not have the confidence to work hard and tended to rely too much on their male counterparts. Many of my instructor friends would tell me that most female students were afraid to speak up in class, because of their self-confidence problem. I was told that the reason why so many women were silent in their classrooms was because of “rural culture,” referring to the supposed practice of non-professional (rural) men and women do
not typically mix in “talk circles.” However, given my encounters with students within other people’s classrooms and my own, I knew that I could not explain away students’ problems of self-confidence with gender.

I did see many male and female students not talk in classes, while the same male and female students answer all of the questions. All of my students did work together, a few sometimes cheat together, and yes, some students would rely more on the stronger students in class, but it certainly was not gender-specific. I remember writing in my field notes that it was possible that even though many students, both male and female, had problems with self-confidence, the process of self-confidence had something to do with social class, and not gender. So, it surprised me to encounter over and over again the discourse that rural male students were considered culturally more inclined to hard work in education, whereas some rural female students knew better how to “help themselves” from the hard work of male students.

However, many other female students and staff explained that female students need extra help in school because many of them do not have the extra time, like other male students, to devote primarily to their studies. This includes the extra time needed for unpaid work. I discovered that some of my own English students were failing because they had little time to devote to schoolwork over supporting their children or their male siblings. In Ethiopia, women may help around the house of their single or divorced male siblings, especially if the woman is not married. There were many college female students doing just that. All institutional actors commented that female students had more trouble in school, because they had too much on their minds, and thus, lacked self-confidence to be “better” students. Yet, the reasons why were varied in gender-specific ways. Female students who I interviewed expressed that unpaid work and the pressures of fulfilling familial obligations back home were mental processes that are
necessary to block from the mind in order to think clearly. Many institutional actors, both males and females, would attest these processes to women having a “troubled mind.” Yet, when I had the opportunity to speak with male instructors in a smaller, often one-on-one setting, more male instructors, possibly feeling less constrained, were more ideologically sexist in their explanations. The college’s concern for female retention as a problem of self-confidence illustrates that in teaching, although discursively known as men’s work, there is a structural desire for the profession to become feminized, not simply more equitable in representation. I began to understand this desire for more women to become teachers as a socially transformative process that I delineate through practices of “going beyond the family,” locally glossed as yilhunnta. Going beyond the family is a socially classed, non gender-specific process. However, the implications, I argue in Chapter 2, are gender-specific.
HISTORIES OF INTERVENTION AND CONVERSION

As discussed in the introduction, the goal of this stand-alone section is to provide instances within Ethiopian history that may provide the reader with a better understanding of the historical continuity of the interventionalist processes of classic development within the context of my fieldsite. I begin with the broader history of state-led development and narrow it in to the history of Evangelism in the Hadiya region as a way of explaining how foreigners are considered separate, yet a part of the people’s discursive relations with development as a process of socio-political belonging. The history of Evangelism in the Hadiya region should also provide the context with how “intervention” is conceived within the context of Hossana College of Teacher Education. These instances illustrate how local life and foreign presence within development projects have historically influenced each other in development intervention; and how this intervention relates to the emergence of rural participation in an urban middling class in Hossana and, broadly, the legitimization of state power in Ethiopia.

The Developmentalist State: Continuity In Relations Of Power

Under the Derg (*The Committee*) regime that replaced Haile Sellasie in 1974, the language of development (*limat*) was increasingly employed as the state carried out a number of large projects aimed at improving the quality of life (Donham 1999). This period represents a movement toward legitimizing power through state-led development, rather than individual patron-client relationships. Perhaps the most dramatic intervention under the Derg was the major resettlement campaign that took place during the famine of the 1980s (Pankhurst 1992; Pankhurst and Piguet 2009; Scott 1998). Under the leadership of Mengistu Haile Mariam, the Derg forced rural residents to settle in villages to improve access to government services, organize farmers into cooperatives, and promote mechanization (Scott 1998: 248). Between
1984 and 1986 over 600,000 people were resettled (Pankhurst1992:56). Alula Pankhurst has explained that in a context of famine and dependence on foreign aid “resettlement was seen as a positive and purposive measure initiated by the government under the leadership of the vanguard party” (1992:53). In other words, resettlement signified the power of the state to act on behalf of its people. The fact that such state-led resettlement ultimately resulted in dramatic failure at great human cost was one of the many reasons for the mobilization of massive resistance to the Derg and its eventual fall in 1991 (Pankhurst 1992:52). The resettlement campaigns of the 1980s are an example of how attempts to legitimize state power through development in Ethiopia have often devolved into repression.

Structures of rule have changed from imperialism, to communism, to federalism. However, based on research conducted among children in Addis Ababa, Eva Poluha has argued that the patron-client model represents a source of continuity in Ethiopian power relationships extending from the pre-revolutionary period, through the Derg, and to the current Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) regime (2004). Under the revolutionary Derg, the state increasingly sought to legitimize itself through large-scale development, but the patron-client model has persisted as an important dynamic for structuring relations of power (Hoben 1970). Like the power relationships described by Hoben among the Amhara in the 1970s, in contemporary urban and semi-urban Ethiopia subordinate individuals and groups accept and support the rule of others as long as they are provided with the social, emotional, and economic safety (Poluha 2004:95).

In interviews I conducted with students on life after the college, young men and women often expressed the idea that it is the government’s responsibility to provide them with an education and work. They blamed the state for the problem of unemployment, often referring to
the historic continuity of patron-client relationships among government employers. Young people were very skeptical that the government would solve their problems. However, on a personal level, they sought to form relationships with government workers to receive increased access to opportunities for education, work, and housing support (often in the form of a monthly stipend). Even at the lowest levels, government workers, such as established government teachers, were able to provide some economic and social benefits to friends and family. They ranged from expediting bureaucratic paperwork to providing access to valuable opportunities with development NGOs. In return, government workers received social support that was important for accumulating local power and prestige. The possibility of gaining government work, as the best form of security outside of working for an international non-government organization, strongly pervaded students’ and in-service teachers reasonings of what brought them to teaching.

The power of the state as legitimized through development and the continual importance of personal patron-client relationships provides the basic context for understanding the Hossana community’s commentaries and critiques on the privatized proliferation of government and private schools, despite discussing the broader needs and concerns of the community with infrastructure-building in community access to education resources and training facilities. Personal relationships continue to be very important for power-dynamics (Mains 2012:7) circulating around education projects in urban Ethiopia. These relationships need not be formed with specific patrons; although some locals might agree that aligning themselves with a ferenji (Westerner) might be more beneficial. Nevertheless, individuals generally seek to embed themselves within social networks as a way of relating to the state.

**Economic Restructuring and Development Practice**
Although Ethiopia’s history differs from that of former European colonies in Africa, the rise of the developmentalist state in Ethiopia during the 1970s mirrors trends found throughout the global south (McMichael 1996; Rist 2002). Through borrowing internationally, post-colonial governments expanded dramatically by investing in education, health care, infrastructure, and other public services (Pankhurst 1992:52). In Ethiopia, as in other countries, discourse glossing poverty and need was used to justify the expansion of the state. For instance, in justifying the massive resettlement plan, Mengistu Haile Mariam, the leader of the Derg regime, evoked the rhetoric of need and the potential for growth, “while we have we lack, and when we could be lending we are beggars” (Pankhurst 1992:52).

The coming to power of the EPRDF in 1991 marked a significant economic and political transition, but state-led government continues as a means of legitimizing centralized political rule. Soon after the government came to power, the regime began to open national markets and privatize public holdings (Ellison 2009). This shift was shaped by a need to access funds through the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As in other African contexts, structural adjustment policies directed from the IMF and the World Bank have created patterns of uneven international investment and worsened pre-existing debts (Ferguson 2006: 11, Dibua 2006: 3). Fluctuations in the international price of coffee, Ethiopia’s primary export, and regional drought also contributed to a long period of economic problems from which the country has recently recovered.

There is evidence that, similar to other African nations under the structural adjustment policies of the IMF and World Bank, Ethiopian state programs have been rolled back. In 2002, for example, the state engaged in a major resettlement plan in response to famine. Over 600,000 people were relocated between 2003 and 2007 (Pankhurst and Piguet 2009:138). For better or
for worse, a state that physically moves so many people clearly cannot be said to have abandoned the business of governing. A major mobilization of troops to fight a border war with Eritrea from 1998 to 2000 is some evidence of the ability of the Ethiopian state to take on major projects without the assistance of private contractors, despite economic restructuring. Some of the troops from Hossana who fought in the border war speak of it with great pride as they are now drivers for government and private colleges.

Although there is some continuity in the role of the state in shaping people’s everyday experiences, important changes have emerged during the post-1991 period. The Derg regime was also limited in the services it could provide, but after 1991, IMF-mandated reforms required a significant downsizing of the public sector that has shaped people’s relations with the state (Ellison 2009). Under the current EPRDF regime, many public services are also now provided by private entities, local and international, and are paid for by consumers. For instance, in terms of education, there has been an opening of expensive and high-quality private schools. In Hossana, a private school called Vision Academy opened up with 30 students 2007. Six years later, it had more than five hundred students in grades one through eight. The state continues to provide low-cost schools that are utilized by the majority of the population. Although these government schools are found in both rural and urban spaces, these high quality private schools are only found in town centers. The gap between public and private schools, particularly at the primary level, is so great that some of my interlocutors at the government college claimed that people should not have children without the ability to pay for private education. Some of my interlocutors’ narratives indexed a desire to become owners and directors of private primary schools as a more profitable way to their selves and their families and to provide more access to higher quality education and resources for students. However, in terms of post-secondary
education, government institutions are a better quality in terms of training and resources in the Western tradition. The large-scale government sanctioning of college students serving as civil servants in primary schools under the Derg regime (1974-1991) and the mass proliferation of government primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions in late 1990s is further evidence of the ability of the Ethiopian state to take on major projects without privatization. The latter instance represents this continuation of the process of the developmentalist state, despite economic restructuring (Negash 2006).

**Education: Evangelism Missions and Local Control Over Schools**

African scholars have outlined education in post-colonial Africa as largely shaped by the work of colonial or other foreign missionaries, who were concerned with the project of civilization over conversion (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Beidelman 1982; Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson 1982). The connection I outline between Evangelistic thought and institutional intervention in the process of self-revelation and self-revolution has a history with the Evangelical church’s emphasis on conversation and conversion rather than “modernization” (Falge 2009:205, Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: 311; Donham 1999:247). In terms of the implications of conversion, I align my context with Donald Donham’s critique of the Comaroff’s argument of conversion as a surrendering to capitalism through “long conversation” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:311). In dialogue with Donham’s ethnography of the Maale of Ethiopia, I argue that the “long conversation” was shaped by a particular position of a country within a global system dominated by capitalism (Donham 2001:134).

In his ethnography, he argues that the Maale actively sought conversion as a way to negotiate a position of marginalization, in which some Ethiopians of Orthodox Christian or Islamic backgrounds saw people who practiced animistic or syncretic belief systems as not
“true” or “full” Ethiopians (Donham 2001:134). Given the Hadiya’s historical practice of
fandaanano, a syncretic Islamic belief system (Uhlig 2007:336), I contend that a similar
experience of marginalization has shaped the “long conversation” of conversion in the Hadiya
region, and informs Evangelical Protestantism as an important aspect of people’s socially-classed
identities in Hossana. I draw from Brian Fargher’s historical outline (1996) of the Evangelical
movement in Southern Ethiopia, pre-Italian occupation, to illustrate the local practice of tying
evangelical thought to education as a means of institutional intervention and of social class
participation.

From the 1920s up until the south’s experience of the Italian Occupation, some of the
first documented foreigners were German evangelical missionaries later associated with the
Sudan Interior Missions (S.I.M.) (Fargher 1996). The S.I.M. missionaries found their greatest
response in the triangle of land just south of Addis Ababa, which is connected to the peoples of
the Sidama language family. In the Oromyffa language, Sidama is a term that means non-
Amharic and non-Oromo peoples. The largest groups of people in this triangle are the Gurage,
the Sidamo, the Kafa, and the Hadiya, the ethnic zone of my fieldsite. Because the Hadiya
historically are located in the northern most part of the Sidama triangle, the Hadiya, who were
predominately Muslim at the time (circa 1920), were the earliest noticed by the historians
associated with the S.I.M. (Fargher 1996:34).

The S.I.M. did not request permission from the government to open academic schools,
nor did the government exert pressure on the Mission to do so. According to Brian Fargher in his
historical outline of the emergence of Ethiopian Evangelism, since academic education was
considered an acceptable method of missionary work, the mission’s decision to not engage in
education projects in Ethiopia is significant (Fargher 1996:123). Instead, in Hossana, the
missionaries before 1944 helped established the Southern Synodus Church, which is today one of the richest, locally run institutions in Hossana. Today, the church is run by locals; and it is this church that gains the most funding from USAID outside of the government education institutions. Although the Church is now involved in community youth services, gender and HIV/AIDS education, historically education played no part in the missionaries outreach in Hossana, or in any southern center for that matter. It was their philosophy that conversion was more important than any “project of civilization” (Fargher 1996:124). However, medical services were often provided for those who openly converted to Evangelism (Farger 1966:123). It is this historical process of conversion that would lead to the creation of “the new spiritual community” (Fargher 1996:128).

The S.I.M. missionaries viewed conversion as ideally instant in practices of testimony and congregation among the newly evangelized people to be naturally magnetic (Fargher 1996:128). As the group of Evangelical converts grew in Hossana, the responsibility of witnessing and obtaining testimony was increasingly given over to local converts rather than the expatriates. The expatriate missionaries provided the converts with some new concepts, among them being instant conversion (testimony), ethical idealism, and restructuring to small family units. In terms of a new community of converts, they were more interested in emphasizing the power of God, rather than God’s mercy, as emphasized in the expatriate’s homeland (Fargher 1996:130). According to Brian Fargher, “the ‘two Kingdoms’ preaching, i.e. deny Satan, be freed from his domain, and accept Christ, be subject to him, offered a demonstrable freedom from fear” (Fargher 1996:130). Conversion, “freedom from fear,” was not considered real unless it was accompanied by constant profession of one’s engagement in ethical idealism; whether it was denying secular music or drinking. The focus on not engaging in “mixed company”
between men and women was not particular to converts, but an Ethiopian practice that took shape in the evangelical concept of family re-structuring.

From the beginning, converts and missions did not see it necessary to regularly associate with each other in terms of group worship. If congregation happened, it would be informal, which has changed as the practice of going to church has become more important (Farger 1966:189). However, unplanned or unexpected congregation is a historical continuity, according to locals. The South Synodus Church that the missionaries helped build was not intended to be led by the missions, but by the growing group of converts in Hossana town. However, the missionaries would often use accumulated funds for converts’ interests in building their own academic institutions (Farger 1966:190). It was not the expatriates, but the locals who filtered, took control, and tailored these aspects of evangelical thought and practice to education institutions. This process of contesting and tailoring is informed by the historical relations of power within in Ethiopia that I outline below. It is the continuity of patron-client relationships as a way of politically relating to the Ethiopian developmentalist state that have continued through assemblages of foreign relations in surprising ways.
II. YILHUNNTA AS FAMILIAL STRATEGY

It was a sunny Monday afternoon, and I was sitting in the English Language Instruction Center, a corner of it devoted to me as my office. I was grading papers on phonemic recognition from a recent test I gave my Spoken English class. I would normally be sitting around the café grounds with the other instructors enjoying an exceptionally strong cup of *macchiato*. But, today, I was trying to keep myself busy, while waiting alone for the English Drama club to come and get the key for the practice room. Abiyneh politely knocked at the door and waited, as most students treated the open-access English center almost exclusively as the offices of Megan, the volunteer teacher, and Ontoro, the coordinator of the center. Then, anticipating my usual emphatic reply, “Please, do not knock”, Abiyneh popped his head through the door, and said, “Hello, sorry, teach-iyeh (my teach). Key, please.”

I was, in fact, not Abiyneh’s teacher or the teacher of any member of the English Drama Club. It is a practice of deference that teachers expect to encounter from students. “Teach-iyeh,” however, not only shows deference, but the suffix -iyeh also denotes a less rigidly formal relationship. Most of these students, although freshmen, were more near to me in age than their other instructors. Ato Sakata, my colleague from the English faculty, had elected himself as advisor to this club, which he loved and supported intensely. Sakata had originally written his own play about English and the importance of female retention. At the first meeting, he had presented it to the club to perform for the annual English Day Celebration. Club members told Sakata that they were having trouble understanding the more difficult language of his script. So,
they decided to orally record the narrative and dialogue of the play. The club had their own ideas, their own program in mind.

Today was one of the few days that Ato Sakata could not attend the Drama club meeting to view the progress of their performance. So, I decided to ask the club if I could tag along again this time as a researcher to do some participant observation. The members agreed on the condition that I must participate this time in giving constructive criticism of the program performance, and not simply sit there and observe, like the time before. I agreed. While I helped students clear the desks away, the club officers discussed the outline of the program activities with the other members. First, there would be a moderator to lead the audience through each segment. Then, some of the members would do a news-reading skit, pretending there was local T.V. news show in Hossana town. Then, one student would tell a joke about the importance of English. Finally, the main drama performance would begin. At this point in the meeting, however, the students were ready to hear a joke. Desta came to the front and announced, in Amharic, that he had helped write this joke and was certain that everyone would find it amusing. Desta’s friend, Lemma, pounded his fists playfully on the table and cried, “Icebreaker. Icebreaker”. Desta waved his hands at his friend, and said, “Now, please, do not disturb, my student. My joke is ready for your learning ear.” I laughed hysterically along with other students at his impersonation of a teacher. Slightly annoyed, Desta began telling the joke over the roar of my laughter.

So, as the joke goes, there were these three, rich landowners, who all lived in the same village. They had so much money they had everything an Ethiopian could have. Except, English. They did not have English. The first landowner proposed to go out to the town and buy some English. Everyone agreed. So, all three men set off to town. They stopped at the first
shop they saw. A young man was standing behind the counter. All of his items were stocked neatly on the shelves behind him. It was a fine store, well stocked with hard to find items like tinned fish, chocolate bars, and saltine crackers. The first landowner, without visually perusing the shelves, asked, “Do you have any English?” The shop keep replied, “Well, we don’t have much English to go around”. “Well, what do you have?”, the first landowner impatiently inquired. “All I have is this one word: Yes,” the shop keep replied. The first landowner said, “I’ll take it”, and grabbed the word and handed the shop keep a wad of bills”. They continued on to the next shop, while the first landowner was looking over his new word. They soon came upon another good shop. This time, the second landowner asked the shop keep, “I’ll buy all the English you’ve got.” The shop keep replied, “All I have are these two words: We three.” “I’ll take it,” the second landowner replied, and neatly folded the words at put them in his pocket. The three landowners continued further into town; and soon found another shop. This time the third landowner asked, and he bought the word: “Ok.” On the way back home, the three landowners came upon a man, dead in the road. As they looked upon the dead man in the road, a policeman came up on them, and asked, in English, “Do you know who did this to the man?” The first landowner replies, “Yes.” Then, the policeman asks, “Well, who did it?” The second landowner replies, “We three.” Then, the policeman orders the three landowners, “Go to jail.” The third landowner replied, “Ok”.

Everyone immediately started laughing, and Desta, the guy who just told this joke, hyperbolically bowed, and then took his seat. I was sitting, smiling, because I really was not sure what Desta had just said to the rest of the Drama Club. Tomas, the guy sitting next to me asked, “Did you understand the joke?” I honestly replied, “No.” So, the Drama Club, of whom I had been observing as researcher for the past few weeks, elected Tomas, who they thought was
the best in English, to go to the front and tell the story in English. When Tomas finished the joke, he asked, “Now do you see why it is funny?” I said, “I think so”, thinking that just the idea of being able to buy bits and pieces of language was funny.

Anthropologists have long noted that jokes are largely work as social commentary. I thought that Desta, who had written the joke, maybe was commenting on the fact that richest landowners in Ethiopia never had to earn anything. They never really needed English, so they just tried to go buy some. But, what was I going to make of the three landowners getting in trouble with the law for their lack of command in English? Why was the idea of buying English funny? These men could walk anywhere confidently without feeling fear or loss. Yet, when they decide to engage in the commodification of language with absolutely no strategy or desire to use English, they are held accountable, as symbolized in out-of-place English-speaking policeman. These landowners had to make no sacrifices in owning the little English that they owned, and, therefore, knew. Yet, when the landowners were commanded by the policeman to account for another human being, English became no longer a thing to own to them, but a simple technology of communication for personal benefit. Yet, for students like Desta, English is much more than a communicative technology.

Desta’s joke about English is a narrative about the strategy of yilunnta, how it is used, who uses it, or how one can use it. I thought of this joke as a sort of blueprint to help me understand more about the concept of yilhunnta as both an interpretation and a negotiation of current climate of hard times. For instance, in Desta’s joke, he explains that the three rich landowners only use English for status purposes. Therefore, their use of English is largely unthinking. The three rich land-owners got in trouble because they could not account for others in their consumption of English. Therefore, by holding the three rich land-owners accountable
through the policing metaphor, Desta illustrates that using English is for people who do not have enough financial, social, or political capital to become socially mobile. Desta indicates that for rural students, like himself, there must be reasons for participation. These reasons must not be based on personal benefit or status. The concept of *yilhunnta* evoked in this critique means that “going beyond the family” means that a participation in communities of practice outside of the home requires that wealth and value be defined by production and effort. Rural students’ families are the reason why you have come to participate in English/Education. In particular, the sacrifice of self and family in constant negotiations of constraints, such as social distancing from markers of “ruralness,” frames “going beyond” as a form a social mobility that does not divorce itself from social responsibility/benefit. My interlocutors’ explicit critique of English, normalized, as commodity dialogues with Michel Taussing’s ethnography “The Devil And Commodity Fetishism in South America” (1980).

In Michel’s Taussig’s ethnography of plantation workers in Bolivia, he argues that his interlocutors have an understanding of commodity fetishism similar to Marx. Commodity fetishism, as a Marxian generalization, concerns the viewing of “human relations underneath relations between objects” (Rubin 2007:5). In other words, social relations are expressed in the idiom of exchange; and this exchange is mystified, considered a natural aspect of the commodity itself. For instance, in Taussig’s ethnography, the framing of money as the immoral material of the devil is a local moral critique and a creative response to European capitalist exploitation and its consequences. To the outsider, seemingly “magical” or “irrational” practices around money are, to locals, relevatory of the narrow elite interests human production serves in the valuing of wage labor (Taussig 1980:70-88). Taussig’s ethnography is an anthropological response to Weber’s concept of “primitive traditionalism” by arguing that responses to processes of
capitalism do not necessarily indicate a changing of “value practices” (Taussig 2002: 474). Responses, instead, indicate a “persistence of value practices,” as a mode of accountability and negotiation within capitalist exploitation (Taussig 2002: 474). In my context, the concept of yilhunnta does not necessarily change in value within English/Education, but persists, as a social recognition of kinship, as a moral order on for whom English/Education matters. The valuing of English/Education among global elites as an object of individual desire for “prosperity” is put under the analytical lens of rural groups, the target “beneficiaries” of the interventions I encountered.

The idea of gaining prestige through learning English is a part of going beyond one’s culture to experience the “right culture”. It is a strategy of social distancing; and it is the practice of social distancing within different social interactions that highlights the moralities that frame yilhunnta: sacrifice, family, personhood. Sacrifice of family for family in the practice of social distancing is the framing that outlines yilhunnta not only as a strategy of socio-economic negotiation, but also indexes tensions in the socio-cultural production of family and personhood. I first discuss the notion of sacrifice in yilhunnta using Desta’s joke as a referent point for narratives of yilhunnta I encountered. I discuss how sacrifice is perceived through the practice of social distancing required to go beyond the social capital of one’s family. Where these practices of social distancing branch off, I indicate the asymmetrical implications of social distancing as seen in the intersections of yilhunnta with gender and ethnicity.

Most jokes I heard were indeed didactic like Desta’s joke. Many jokes I heard spoke to “feeling comfortable in one’s skin”, to “understanding the here and now”, and to “the goodness of one’s journey”; jokes that I thought were often directed at me when friends sensed my experiences with social anxiety. Desta’s joke invoked a uniqueness that made it funnier than
most Ethiopian jokes I heard. Maybe I thought his joke was funnier because it was not directed specifically for me to laugh at myself and learn from it, personally. At first, I thought the moral point of the joke was to exemplify to other students at English Day about protestant work ethic in relation to the acquisition of skill. I still think that was one of the points of the joke. Yet, I think that another important point of the joke is that the acquisition of English is a strategy that denotes sacrifice, meaning that learning English is not for the benefit of the self, but for the family. The fact that the three rich landowners want to buy English to embellish their status or to flaunt their ability to expend gets them in trouble when they are held accountable by the law for the dead man in the road. Ethiopians delineate personal accountability and accountability for others in the same breadth. Ethiopians do not categorize the personal and the social in accountability, but consider these concepts intimately linked. When English becomes a commodity for the three rich landowners, they have no control over it in contexts of accountability. This lack of control concerns expression or flexibility in socially unfamiliar contexts. In particular, the land owners’ inability to express themselves to properly account for their relationship to the dead man in the road led them to be personally accountable.

The punch line is that for many students hearing this joke is that the concept of accountability in knowing English is intimately linked to strategy of self in the name of familial obligation. Using English as a strategy for bettering the family involves sacrifice in moving from the comforts of home to better the home. Using English references the seeking of an education, and it is education that serves as the avenue for bettering the family. Acquiring commodities for self-interest, as the joke illustrates, does not work well within ever changing, unfamiliar contexts. Sacrifice concerns the tensions felt in yilhunna: “going beyond the family” simultaneously “for the family”. Learning a kind of skill or work outside of the familiar context
of the family business, typically farming or work in grey markets, simultaneously can strain familial networks as students seek to strengthen the family’s ability to socially reproduce, to manifest imagined futures in flexible ways given the ever changing, unfamiliarity of downward-sloping economic climate.

When I asked students to tell me a little about themselves, they all immediately began to introduce their family members, what they did, and their village back home. From the beginning, my interlocutors framed their narratives from my questions about self in terms of their family. At some point in the interview, my interlocutors would explicitly state why they had come to the college, for their families. Yilhunnta has long been understood here and in other contexts as working or orienting the self for the social and economic benefit of the family through what some Ethiopian scholars refer to as “fluid occupational castes”. However, in this context, yilhunnta takes on an additional meaning of “going beyond the family” in order to fulfill familial obligations indexed in the mainstream concept of yilhunnta mentioned above. Students would illustrate that education was a trajectory for “going beyond the family” that has been met with ambiguity and tensions within their family networks.

As in many non-Western contexts, many Ethiopians with strong ties to rural kinship networks sense a strong obligation in work to support such networks (Leinaweaver 2008, Nearly all of my interlocutors, who are all from rural areas, spoke to the importance learning English and using education trajectories to better support their families. In particular, Tariku, as special needs education major at the college, would often discuss, during grade school, he migrated often to Dilla, the capital city of the Gedeo region, to work as a photographer. Tariku often talked with me about his love for portrait photography, but stressed inability to support his family with the meager income it provided. The rich landowners did not set out to buy English
to make them richer. They simply wanted to own it as a status symbol, illustrating, in this case, that English is a personal benefit. Yet, for people like Desta, English, and education trajectories, in general, is not a personal benefit; it is a strategy for family support. Support does not necessarily mean only material support. Using cosmopolitan or urban culture associated with speaking English is a strategy of social distancing that is indexed in the notion of *yilhunnta*, as “going beyond the family”.

Desta’s social commentary of the three rich landowners can be seen as the model for intersecting processes of social distancing, self-evaluation, and self-revelation. The model illustrates social distancing as requiring the self-evaluation of experiential, holistic knowledge. First, the emphasis on the landowners’ ability to walk anywhere they like without feeling fear is an important aspect of social distancing that I refer to as social flexibility. Secondly, English, as a communicative skill, cannot be bought and fetishized from its context, or it hinders social flexibility. Without strategy in acquiring English as a skill, then one may become visionless, unable to change or negotiate in sudden, shifting contexts, as illustrated in the landowners’ encounter with accountability. Thirdly, English is a skill that must be used to shape other intangible skills, such as persuasion or being culturally conversant with notions of accountability. Thus, without self-evaluation of why the three landowners wanted English, they were not able to undergo self-revelation in encounters of social or moral commentary. Social distancing, self-evaluation, and self-revelation, as aspects of self-confidence, index why and for whom education really matters. English, as a metonym for education, is a structurally carved-out space for the majority of rural families who desire participation in an emergent social class, not the kind of ruling social class, or exceptional feudalism, that the three rich landowners represent in Desta’s joke.
The position of the students within the college marks a strategy of social distancing, in which Western education trajectories within government schools provide an opportunity for many farmers’ children to not only become government workers (teachers), but to gain a social education. Technologies of social distancing, such as using English, represent consumption of foreign knowledge that does not require necessarily thinking beyond one’s means, but thinking beyond family knowledge. Using English, then, may ease feelings of anxiety or resentment associated with social distancing and negotiating the unfamiliarity of living, rather than migrating to work in urban spaces. In an interview, Fatima, a second-year Chemistry major, told me that when she finishes school, she wants to help her family with more than supplemental income. She wanted to help her family to “be able to walk anywhere unfamiliar they want without feeling fear.” When I asked Fatima why that was important to teach to her family, she talked about how easy it was for the townspeople in Hossana to walk around confidently. Here, she explicitly notes how education denotes a technology of social mobility that stems from the spatial practices of urban space, or any place that marks unfamiliarity in social capital. When I further inquired about Fatima’s desire to acquire greater mobility in urban space, she responded that she wanted to be visible in the legitimate spaces of the town.

“Before I attended high school in my home area, I would travel with my mother at least 30 kilometers to work in the Hossana town market every Saturday. We made butter, cheese, and pottery. The people of Hossana town would see carrying the pottery on my back. They gave me bad looks that made me feel afraid or upset,” she said. “Some of these townspeople and farmers see that we are hard workers. But, they do not appreciate the kind of work we do”.

She added that her position in the college has given her a structurally safe place to have positive visibility and participation in legitimate spaces of urban community. Work in the community’s institutions rather than temporary spaces carved out for rural people, such as the food market or tej bet (honey wine house), allows Fatima to receive a social education, albeit with some
resentment. She says that not only does she receive resentment because of her orientations to

craftwork in rural life, it is her religion as well. She would often tell me how people would tease

er her for wearing a *niqab* instead of just a hajib or a jelbabiya. Some Muslims and Protestants,
she said, would tell her that she was acting too Arab. “I do not like this place”, she said, in one

interview. “But, I am doing my education so my family can have one.” Her social education she

receives at the college and in urban space, in turn, is seen as an opportunity for her family to also

receive a social education. As she mentioned before, they will learn like her to better move

throughout urban spaces by learning how to negotiate resentment and shift to different kinds of

work.

The idea of increased mobility, of transience in different areas, particularly urban areas,
speaks to a kind of valued, cosmopolitan self who can easily practice social flexibility, and is

culturally conversant. This idea is considered a skill of the self, which involves a process of

overcoming fear. In coming to the college for the first time, students would often discuss their

fears of an unfamiliar college with unfamiliar rules and regulations in an unfamiliar town. “This

is why so many of our students may drop out, because they do not have this skill,” Sintayou told

me. “They cannot make the unfamiliar to be familiar. They are too afraid to move, to orient

themselves.” I replied, “Well, maybe they don’t like the town or the college.” He said, “Yes,

that’s possible. But, most people would not give up one of their few chances to help their

families.” I added, “How is overcoming something like social anxiety a skill? Isn’t that just

getting back to ‘normal’?” He replied, “It’s not normal for most people to have anxiety. But, for

people like me who come to this college, many of us very far away from our families, and we

experience anxiety.” For Sintayou, anxiety was the brain tricking you into thinking that you

have no right to participate in the world around you, rather than from the experiences of
resentment that Fatima discussed with me. It was unfamiliar places that did not feel welcome to you or for you to participate in. It was not only where that made you feel unwelcome, but what or who. The ability to overcome anxiety, then, is viewed as a skill of the self, a skill that requires self-awareness and the ability to practice stoicism in difficult situations in order to successfully negotiate the constraints of unfamiliar social situations. Later on in my fieldwork, I began to see that the process of overcoming difficult social interactions, remaining flexible, and the kind of emotional or spiritual labor to attain or perform a kind of cosmopolitan social class had very specific implications at the intersections of gender, religion, and ethnicity. These sorts of implications I flesh out later on in this chapter. First, however, I prove it useful to outline the shared experiences of students engaged in education trajectories so as to better delineate the mainstream understanding of yilhunnta as a familial strategy.

All of my interlocutors posited the salience of their position in the college through a language of distance in relation to their family; academically, socially, and physically. Most of my interlocutors were the sons and daughters of farming families or of widowed mothers who travel to be house servants in nearby towns. When I asked them to introduce themselves, they immediately began to talk about how their parents are not learned—that they are the first in their family to go to college. Most of my interlocutors who came from farming families stressed that their families fully supported their decisions, expecting more income to supplement the precariousness of farm work. Students would stress this as the expectations of their families, but told me that their eventual plans to continue to university, to “upgrade in professionalism”, exceeded their families expectations. Yilhunnta not only is about fulfilling existing or emergent familial obligations and expectations, but creating more time in going beyond them. The process of “upgrading” shapes education as a flexible space to exceed what families can and imagine
they can practically do on their own. Plans about what university would be like beyond the college would often dominate over the narratives of why they decided to enter the college.

Whether these students had indeed passed the university entrance examinations or not, they all discussed how the college gave them more time and access to resources to have a consistent, yet flexible future of “betterment”. The concept of *yilhunnta*, as going beyond the family for the family, is not be confused with some sort of class consciousness associated with the growing instability of farming life in Ethiopia. *Yilhunnta* as “going beyond the family” is tied up in value systems that are not simply an economic response.

On the “surface”, sacrifice represents the expenditure of family resources that education trajectories require to support a strategy. Yet, when that expenditure is to support a strategy that requires aligning the self with social orientations away from the realm of the family, then sacrifice denotes the tensions of conflicting interests. In the notion of *yilhunnta*, intersecting processes of social commentary and honoring the family as they further circulate through institutional logics of the college begin to take further shape as a moralized process of socially distancing the self from the family for the family. Simultaneous practices of familial fulfillment and resentment can and have shaped some of my interlocutors’ experiences of tension that has lead to a sort of social anxiety, often glossed under the term sacrifice.

Cyclical experiences of anxiety, embarrassment, resentment, joys, and hope intersected my interlocutors’ narratives of their families’ attitudes towards their child’s engagement in a primary educator-training program. Samuel, Tariku, Tedle, and Ammanuel often spoke about how their parents or other family members did not think that teaching primary school was a viable avenue for the economic development of their family. Desta, Sintayou, and Ammanuel, as sons of rural primary school teachers, spoke about how their parents thought that they were
“better than teaching”; that they were ready to go onto university. As young men, the resentment experienced from family members stemmed from the fact that education trajectories take away from work, such as help on the farm or in the home, which can immediately fulfill family needs. Tariku, Tedle, and Samuel talked about how the loss of their fathers or mothers from health complications has led towards more pressure to find work that will foster immediate results. Yet, all of these students expressed that their families’ hoped that landing a job in teaching could better fulfill existing familial obligations and expectations. Most of my interlocutors intended to go beyond those obligations and expectations, and sometimes equated sacrifice with the idea of surplus in time and resources as survival in ever shifting experiences of hard times.

As discussed above, the strategy of “going beyond the family” in yilhunnta requires the practice of socially distancing the self from the social reproduction of their larger, rural farming families. In practicing yilhunnta, narratives that speak to the necessity of having self-confidence in the college references self-confidence as a product of social distancing towards hegemonic social class that are connected to urban spaces. Within the context of Hossana, some of my interlocutors have interpreted the culture of urban space in which increased visibility within organizational cultures of the town, such as in education, local government, or other “development work” is performed as individual desire and expenditure. Everyone in the town knows that the students are here at the college to help their families, but “going beyond” often requires acting as if yilhunnta is an individual strategy. The idea that such practices of individualistic excess, surplus, and expenditure are products of owning, rather than working the land, informs people what it means to be cosmopolitan. These characteristics of hegemonic social class are encapsulated in the rich landowners of Desta’s joke. The prospect of rich landownership in Southern towns like Hossana and Jimma are some of the reasons why people
first flocked to these growing towns (Mains 2007). Desta’s joke about the three rich landowners illustrates the model of self-confidence that speaks to students’ performance of social class. The experience of surplus works as the idiom in how students imagine the socio-cultural framework of social distancing. The ability to act like one has a lot of surplus means acting like one has the resources, such as time, money, and extra energy produced out of ownership, to mobilize in social situations. Doing individualism, then, may be a familial sacrifice for a surplus in order to “go beyond”. Sacrifice is the recognition that the problem of economic betterment is relegated to the family. Displacing family from the mind, then, sometimes helps students to think about themselves, a process of self-evaluation necessary for self-confidence. Performing yilhunnta as if it is for the self, rather than for the family, as indexed in narratives points to the idea that family is both the cause and the cure of poverty.

Desires for consistency through surplus (doing individualism) and sacrifice mean limiting the social reproduction of students’ orientation towards existing family structures. One way the strategy of yilhunnta may work to limit the definition of family is to look at how education trajectories shape the limiting or delaying of forming relationships or families. For example, a delineation of the moral codes that students placed upon themselves in unfamiliar urban spaces denotes such space as providing the opportunity to maintain consistency in going beyond the family. Nearly all of my interlocutors expressed both the fear and the advantage of living in an unfamiliar urban area, away from their families. Although it is expensive and uncomfortable to live in a cry bet (rented room) away from the family, the unfamiliarity and distance from their villages also may grant them the space to not get too involved with making new friends or forming new relationships in town. The unfamiliarity of place becomes a space in which students to some degree can limit experiences of social commentary outside of the
classroom that may form unwanted encounters with interruption—limiting the need for surplus in time.

Using the unfamiliarity of place in order to purposely limit one’s presence in public space, especially in terms building rapport, outside of the context of the college is a constant negation, given the fear of falling under the town’s social commentary on the morality of one’s social orientation. The most fear expressed in the possibility of interruption was emphasized in narratives of abstaining from “mixed company”, or building rapport between genders. Limiting mixed company outside the college so as to abstain from the possibility of interruption does denote sacrifice in that socializing or having heterosexual relationships with the opposite sex represents family as the cause of economic problems. For example, all of the students I interviewed spoke of the delay of getting into intimate relationships, getting married, or having children as intimately linked with limiting one’s presence in public space, especially with mixed company. Many male students explained when having a girlfriend or friends who are girls, family, friends, and community members may begin to contemplate or pressure you into marriage. Hanging out with a person of another gender could be interpreted by others as a lack of care or seriousness about your education. Desta, a third year natural science major, explained that, “People may begin to look to see if I have money, or think I should ‘take care’ of my girlfriend and her family. I cannot obligate myself to anyone else but my family, not even myself sometimes”, Desta said, laughing. These kinds of narratives on “abstaining” as a performance of a cosmopolitan social class usually followed my prompt, “Tell me a little about your friends”. I assumed that they were translating the Amharic understanding of friend, *quadenya*, which, lately, conjures immediate references to having boyfriends or girlfriends. The
sexualization of friendship between men and women is shaped by the importance of abstaining from mixed company as a symbol of supposedly resenting rural family life.

The creation of smaller families in rural space represents heterosexual displays of morality as semantically linked to coupled ideas of work ethic and of economic improvement that shapes local understandings of appropriate social class. Markers of “appropriate families” are not necessarily shaped along ethnic or gendered lines. Typical discourses about family planning that shape this image of “appropriate families” is shaped along social class divides constructed between rural, more migratory life and urban, more stationery life. Many of my interlocutors, both male and female, spoke to the importance of having smaller, stationery families in order to attain consistency in one’s resources and presence in one’s rural community. Consistency, students posited, allows for families to become economically developed. This meant having jobs where traveling long distances either to participate in food markets or grey markets in town are not necessary. Performances of moral restraint through limiting social orientations towards “mixed company” are a socially classed process students engage in to imagine new family structures, futures. Although students’ narratives of supposed moral restraint are considered socially-classed, gender-neutral processes of reshaping rural family life “for the better”, existing negative commentary about “rural family life” is discursively directed towards female students within the college. A delineation of the commentary surrounding cultural practices in the formation of families, such as arranged marriage, illustrates rural families as unaware of emergent understandings of yilhunnta. The discursive critiques circulating within the institutional logics of the college assume the role of “awareness-raising”. In a delineation of “awareness-raising” programs, I explore how religious discourses inform the
perception of “going beyond the family” in *yilhunnta* as a process of faith. This process, I argue, is gender-specific.

**Gendered Interpretations of Yilhunnta**

Aklilu, a Chemistry instructor who lived in my compound, said he would do me a favor. Without my response, he added, “She may have a little trouble with the English language, but I chose her because she is a good student for you to interview.” I regretted never asking Aklilu what made Fatima and the other female students he chose for me to interview as “good”. I had wondered if Aklilu had selected these girls as “good to interview” because he saw in them the social transformation required in “going beyond the family”. All students spoke to the importance of social distancing in *yilhunnta*, but the processes of “overcoming” was discursively directed towards girls in *yilhunnta*. I was thinking that Aklilu chose these girls because they had continued to pursue education despite their families’ supposed initial reactions and wishes. Nearly all of the girls that he chose for me to interview discussed their ability to “overcome” family life in order to make it better. Given the female students’ awareness of this gendered process as “appropriate” in the formalized logic of the college, I had assumed that these students were sharing these narratives of “overcoming” because they assumed that it is what I wanted to hear, given my association with Aklilu and the college as an instructor. Some of male interlocutors did talk about “overcoming” the loss of family members. For male students, I saw narratives of “overcoming” as speaking specifically to the importance of supporting processes that seek to further weakening kinship networks. Doing something unwanted, but supposedly necessary was understood more in terms of Western notions of sacrifice. However, notions of sacrifice were not infused in women’s narratives of “overcoming” in *yilhunnta*. Narratives of women “overcoming” were directed in naturalized problems of social reproduction in rural
family life. Social transformation was more associated with women’s narratives of “overcoming”: particularly in considering social reproduction of “rural life” as “backwards” in economic development. I argue that a delineation of narratives of “overcoming” as social transformation illustrates that, for women, *yilhunta* should not only be considered necessary for bettering family life, but should be wanted. Even before I began interviewing female students in the college, I encountered within the institutional logics of the college narratives of “overcoming” in women’s engagements with education trajectories as desired social transformation.

It was a Wednesday. “International Women’s Day”, and I had been promising Nouria and Marta that I would attend the program. Afternoon classes had been canceled, and students were gradually making their way back from having lunch in their homes. I noticed some of the girls from my English class had gathered under the large tree near my office for some shade, probably waiting for the program to begin. *Oh, hell*, I thought. I forgot that I had scheduled an interview with Fatima today. Before I had a chance to open the door, Fatima, wearing a flowing, maroon-colored *jilbabiya* approached me and told me that we would have to reschedule the interview because she was in the gender club and had to help with the program. I looked at the girls under the Acacia and said, “Looks like I can go now.” When I walked up to the stadium around 3, I saw the girls and they asked me to sit next to them. Laughter, guffaws and giggles, rippled through the stadium seating, Abiyneh and Emmabet, two very visible students in the college, were dressed up like an old rural couple. Emmabet was wearing an old stained house dress, stirring the pretend pot of *shirro*. The play was in Amharic, so Dinkinesh would lean over and tell me the important things that the actors and program participants said. Dinkinesh whispered in my ear, “This is about the importance of female retention in school.”
In the drama, a girl struggles to convince her parents (Abiyneh and Emmabet) to let her go to school instead of being married off to two relatively well-off farming families. When the two men from the same village came to propose the arranged marriage to the parents, everyone laughed at how excited Abiyneh and Emmabet were to marry their daughter off to both. High-fiving each other over and over again, they exclaimed, “Yes, we are twice as rich!” Laughing, Alemash told me that she had never seen parents so selfish”. The brother, who was attending high school to go to university, overheard his parents’ selfish plan. The brother intervenes in the affair by first telling the girl and calling the police. She begins attending school against her parents’ wishes, and the parents wonder if she knows their plans for her. On the day of the weddings, the police wearing dark vests and yellow construction paper badges, came to put an end to the celebrations. As the police decide on a whim to drag the parents off to jail, the girl jumps out from behind the paper paneled gazebo. She breaks the fourth wall, rhetorically asking the audience, “Now, who needs ignorant parents?” The performance ended with all of the gender club participants handing out or throwing paper hats they to recognize International Women’s Day. Nouria said to me “heads up”, and threw me red hat. I put it on and turned to Alemash. Apparently I had not noticed the writing on the front of the hat. “Females are like drills, like machines”, Alemash read. I asked her what that meant. She said, “You know, they are strong. They overcome.”

I first thought that this encounter was only about the practice of women socially distancing themselves from family practices of arranged marriage that mark rural families as “ignorant” or “backwards”. The parents are framed as ignorant, because the practice of “going between families” is a devalued strategy of fulfilling familial obligations by creating more ties to those obligations. As the girl tells her hyperbolically careless family in the drama, “I need to go
beyond you to help you”. It’s devaluing speaks to a global discourse on the culture of poverty as the population problem. But, instead of re-outlining already well outlined details on the salience of having the “right culture” to have the “right population”, I focus on the gendered implications of strategies concerning “life chances”. Dinkinesh’s comments about the necessity of the girl to “overcome” the supposed problems of her rural family spoke to the strategy of yilhunnta for girls as more than daily practices of social distancing I saw in my male interlocutors’ narratives and practices.

In my field-notes, I wrote that “overcoming” spoke to the discursive push in the college for female students to not simply practice social distancing, but to experience transformation. Men and women in the college do not have a different understanding of “going beyond the family” in yilhunnta. Everyone seeks the same social and political participation in social mobility that teaching, known as government work, can potentially provide. However, on the administrative side of the college, the college has expressed that it, like most other schools, have problems in meeting gender equitable enrollment and retention quotas given by the Ministry of Education. College administrators tell me that rural culture teaches these girls to be silent before boys in class and to feel that they do not belong in school. However, as I will illustrate below, making girls feel that they do not belong is not so much a problem of “culture,” but that the clash of Western notions of gender inequity and local notions of gender complimentarianism in work results in mixed messages that girls receive about their ability to “go beyond” for their families.

For instance, women are often told my development practitioners, college administrators, and college instructors that they are naturally equal with men and should participate. However, the local idea of gender is that women are to support, elaborate, and build from what men own. It is a form of complimentarianism that stems from the not so unique idea in the Global South
that men own the land and women own the crops (Goheen 1996). If men are understood as the
producers of knowledge in education, then women are understood as the owners, users, and
processors of the product. In the classroom, this means that women are socialized to elaborate,
build from, synthesize, process, and critique the articulations that come from male student’s
mouths. However, the Western notion of gender inequality clashes with the local notion of
gender complementarianism, means that women are supposed to go against this socialization of
complementarianism and have the same role of blunt, singular articulation, like the men. These
expectations are not necessarily a new experience for women when they come to the college, but
greater institutional emphasis on women to become primary school teachers means that the
emphasis to socially distance the self from complementarianism is placed only on the heads of
women. The male role to provide singular, blunt articulation, like the land for the crops, is
rendered as an invisible role. Institutional intervention is not concerned with it, because the male
standard behind Western notions of reaching gender equity. In other words, the standard for
gender equity is being “like a man.” This discourse entered institutional intervention and gave
women mixed messages on how to articulate themselves in the classroom.

At first glance, from the Western valuing of the male standard of gender equality evoked
in the drama, I did not think that women understood “going beyond” in the same way. I thought
that the mixed messages that women received gender equality at school and gender
complementarianism at home indicated that women understood “going beyond” the family
differently. For instance, in the drama, the girl’s personal desire for school over an arranged
marriage did not seem, at first, to match the idea of “going beyond” as a means of familial/social
benefit that I encountered when I interviewed only boys. However, when I later began to
interview women at the college, personal desire had little to do with why they came to the
college. As both men and women have put it, “Everything is done in the name of the family.” In terms of “going beyond,” the notion of “overcoming” hardship mirrored men’s discussions of sacrifice. “Overcoming” is a form of sacrifice, but the amount of work that women must do in “going beyond” is greater than men.

Rural women, like most women elsewhere, are understood as the bearers of social reproduction. Since women are supposed to act like men when they come to college, they are told they are not confident when they articulate themselves in ways that promote the local concept of gender complementarianism. For instance, one instructor explained to me, “The females in the classroom wait until a boy says something sometimes. Then, they take that answer and try to do something with it. It is not original knowledge. This is a problem of self-confidence.” Although all rural students come to the town with issues of self-confidence, because they are told that what they know about life from rural areas is not good enough. However, women, when they come to the college, may experience a compounding of issues of self-confidence when they are singled out as the inhibitor to gender equality. When practices like arranged marriage, are marked as problems of rural life, as “inhibitors” to development women must put forth more emotional work along with the unpaid work they have to do in supporting male kin they male live with in town. The women in the college do not understand “going beyond” differently from men, but, as a strategy, they may experience it in a more intense manner. By coming to the college and being told that their position a “one who owns the crops” is bad, they are told they must now articulate “fields” of knowledge like men. Reporting is thus valued more over processing and building rapport and synthesizing that has been socialized in women. If they do not act like men, then they are framed as lacking the necessary criteria to “go beyond” the family. This, lacking of personal criteria, I explain through the etic concept of
“fractured personhood.” Since I experienced discussions of women not acting like men in context of evangelical thought about “whole personhood” and self-confidence within Ethiopian education institutions, I coin the term “fractured personhood” for the idea that women are considered to lack the ability to articulate themselves like men in the college.

A social education is seen as not simply a way to make more money, but as a necessary means for becoming “a whole person”. Yet, silence of the girl, in letting her brother speak for her publicly, as she simultaneously seeks out her education probably represents the girls’ overcoming of a pathologized state of being; “a fractured person”. This state of pathology is interpreted as lacking an important aspect of self, that otherwise makes a person “whole”. This aspect of self concerns the ability of women to practice social flexibility, or to act like they have the socio-economic resources with which to negotiate. Expressing one’s experiences of overcoming the “backwardness” represented in older, rural family members is a practice that women may or may not use to visualize and manifest yilhunnta as “going beyond the family”. The discursive emphasis on self-expression as a marker of social transformation is informed by the import of intersecting protestant ideals of work, of confession, and of therapy as factors of appropriate personhood. Education trajectories, then, as extensions of state intervention, also work as confessional spaces, in which narratives of overcoming inform a state of becoming.

The emphasis on the “wholeness” of the person is shaped by the history of the evangelical movement in Hossana, in which its mission statement is attending to the needs of the “whole person”. Therefore, interventions in the Western emphasis on female retention through “gender equality” are infused with evangelical thoughts on instant conversion, ridding the secular out of all aspects of life, which includes constantly admitting one’s faults and sins. Through these everyday practices, able-bodied people consider themselves in a constant state of
“cleaning up their own acts.” The everydayness of self-monitoring, particularly in getting people to experience this self-monitoring, defines the concept of “whole personhood.” Everything about you is being self-evaluated, honed, no aspect of personhood is left unturned, nothing is lacking. Evangelical thought is a part of every aspect of Hossana town life.

As discussed in the section, “Histories of Conversion and Intervention,” evangelical Hadiya people from town are the most dominant in government and other public education institutions. For example, the emphasis on “wholeness” implies that technical problems in education institutions, like female retention, are not going to be solved simply by providing more academic assistance. As one of my informants from a local Evangelical Church said, “The whole person needs to be addressed---physically, emotionally, and spiritually. If girls are not able to voice what prompts them to reach outside of themselves, then that is asking them to be less than whole.” This statement implies that to get to the “wholeness” of the women is to learn how to publicly illustrate self-awareness of one’s surroundings, to voice a desire for self-transformation. This self-awareness indicates one’s self-control over one’s surroundings. With this idea of self-control, one is able to become a “whole person” who can then manage the diverse political valences of social interactions. In other words, a “whole person” is a flexible person. The emphasis on the “wholeness” of women in the teacher training college references the institutional desire for women to learn how to practice social flexibility in unstable, marginalizing contexts.

If women are being told to “act like men,” over their socialization of gender complementarianism in the classroom, when they come to the college without carrying the role of men in “reporting” knowledge, then their focus on their own role of synthesizing and processing reporting knowledge is framed as a lack. For analytical purposes, I call this lack
“fractured personhood,” because women are measured up against the intersection of the Western concept of “gender inequality” with the evangelical concept of “whole personhood.” For example, the idea of testimony to achieve “wholeness” informs the constructed need of “talk therapy” projects, in which the girl, through disclosing information, learns to live with her life problems. In other words, flexibility displaces the emphasis of social responsibility ridding processes of exclusion with the simultaneous project of inclusion. The need for institutional intervention codes the idea of opportunity and success through vertical relatedness as linked to not being a “rural woman”.

Gender pejoratives shape the idea that to have individual responsibility is shed markers of “traditional-ness” associated with farm life. In institutional intervention, women are encouraged to render technical their social position, by displacing experiences of marginalization. People, both within my volunteer organization and my college, often advised me on how to model myself as a “therapist” by encouraging women to communicate their life problems to me so as to learn how to live with those problems as they learned. Because of my gender, I was encouraged to start or support gender clubs and activities that helped women gain more self-confidence to help them stay in their education trajectories. I was repeatedly told by other instructors, some of my male English students, and some of the girls I interviewed that either girls were indeed less skilled than boys, or perceived that they had less skill than boys. As one man told me, who wants to remain anonymous,

“It is difficult for girls to be self-confident. They are not good in English or in education, in general. They are not ready to learn this different kind of knowledge. Yet, we need them to change to become better. We have a problem of female retention in this college. And it is the girls’ experiences with bad culture that keeps them from transforming.”

I was surprised by this remark. Yet, it was certainly not the only time I would encounter this idea of self-confidence as gender-specific. In my own experiences, I found both boys and girls
who had social anxiety, who feared they had little self-confidence needed to teach in a classroom. I could not excuse away students’ fears to gender or their ethnicity, their “K’mbatanness” or “Gurage-ness”. I found many students to have issues of self-confidence, which concerned their ability to imagine or self-evaluate themselves within the college and future teaching community. The discursive push for girls over boys to have self-confidence indicates that the process of social distancing from family life is more important for girls to experience. Female retention was important not only because it was apart of the Ministry of Education’s initiative on gender-equal access to education adopted from the global initiatives of the United Nation’s *Millennium Goals*. The idea of girls’ engaging in *yilhunnta* means not simply socially distancing the self from markers of family life, or changing the structures of family life. Speak English, get married later, get a stationery job, have a smaller family. These practices “going beyond the family” were not gender-specific. However, the idea that the process of self-confidence, of how one performs self-evaluation, should be understood as not only a skill, but as an aspect of personhood was gender-specific.

As Tigist, a second-year Chemistry student told me,

“I don’t know why other girls fear, because they are silent. I once feared, but I am not like that anymore. I have overcome my fear. *Mamaskar no* (It is to testify). But, me, I told myself that I am a human being. Just like those boys. And just like you. The way I survive is that I do not think of my family’s poorness. I have to train myself by separating myself. All of these parts of me are becoming learned. I can be made of skills. And, when I take notice, I understand myself better. And, that takes skill.”

The *ability* to speak about why or how Tigist has decided to have *yilhunnta* is locally glossed as *mamaskar*, meaning to testify. Testifying, within the evangelical context of “whole personhood”, is considered a holistic skill, or a skill that comprises and shapes all other intangible skills. In the context of the college, testifying is a practice that concerns framing your experiences of social constraints, anxieties, or sacrifices in narratives of growth or accumulation of the self. The
phrase to me, “I can be made of skills” sounds like imagining yourself as a marketable end product. This marketable end product stems from a process of negotiation that involves taking one’s experiences of constraints or other forms of oppression, analyzing them, and then re-processing those experiences as skills of negotiation and flexibility. Testifying, then, acts a social translation of one’s process of learning or attaining flexibility, while keeping the source of difficult experiences intact, such as experiences of silencing or intimidation or sexual harassment within the context of the college. Testifying can happen within all kinds of social interactions and is subject to moral commentary, since it acts as a translation. All students testify with different institutional actors, when they are engaged in a process of social distancing in yilhunnta. However, the implications of testifying in the context of the college are gender-specific.

The women here who testify the importance of their positions within the college are subject to more explicit moral commentary. As the target group of “whole personhood” discourse, female students are asked not only to consider skills as an aspect of personhood, but to desire, to voice faith, and to transform the self into this image of “whole personhood”. I found it interesting that in her primarily English narratives, Tigist, when she switched to Amharic, would interchangeably use the terms mamaskar and nazaza (to confess) when she talked about how she was a poor student who made bad grades and thought she desired undeserving help from her teachers. Only did she receive help, she said, when she finally expressed to her teachers her desire to learn and become skilled through talking about her ability to overcome her difficult experiences. I began to see nazaza as a gendered framing for mamaskar. Confession works as the frame for testimony when the process of self-evaluation (in testimony) becomes of self-revelation when it enters the frame of moral commentary on the bodies of women as social
reproducers of “bad culture”. Through Tigist’s narratives I began to see how my other female interlocutors were also speaking towards this practice of testifying as a moralized process of transformation, of “whole personhood”, and not simply a process of social distancing that is subject to social commentary. In all of their narratives, the process of testifying was always coupled with narratives of overcoming silence or fear. Mystifying the act of testifying as only specific and necessary to women, in turn, mystifies the process of yilhunnta as more than a strategy. Compared to what is asked of men, women are expected to think of yilhunnta as a way of being. Yet, I want to make clear that the women with whom I spoke were not so unaware of this process of mystification. This process of mystifying yilhunnta is also under the lens of analysis, if not constant negotiation.

For girls to engage institutional intervention that goes beyond basic subject tutoring means pretending you have the privilege and resources to exercise flexibility in increasingly unstable socio-economic contexts. Like Tigist, my informants experience a great amount of work in strategizing around the simultaneous opportunity and marginalization that institutional intervention represents. The opportunity that exists through such engagements falls under the woman’s careful establishment of social obligation from teachers. The majority of instructors, being male, would often tell me how girls would often come to them and ask for tutoring assistance. It is actually required by all instructors initiate and conduct a minimum of 15 hours tutoring time for each class each semester, especially for freshmen girls. For girls who would come to them and initiate sessions such as extra tutoring often led instructors such as Aklilu, Fekade, Sakata, Fessah, and Yacob to further conduct “life skills” or “gender” sessions to assist girls in transitioning to college life. These instructors were often very animate in talking with me about gender issues, since they were helping me conduct research and had conducted their own
social and science-research in their Masters’ programs. They talked about feeling obligated to help the girls who showed them initiative in wanting to go beyond what they know. One instructor, who wishes to remain anonymous, told me how a girl who was very silent (a code for fear) in the classroom. One day, he said, she approached him in his office and made public to him her inner feelings. The reasons why she did not want to talk to anyone were that she did not trust anyone, he said. She had been in a secret homosexual relationship, in which she was sexually abused. “The reason I am telling you this,” he said with pause, “even though I am a male instructor, this girl reached out to me. Now, I can help her help herself. Imagine what you can do Megan with girls knowing that you are here to facilitate.” I thought that the ongoing suggestions for me to counsel girls in self-confidence as a “gender issue” illuminates institutional intervention as a part of some of my interlocutors’ strategies for “going beyond the family”.

What was interesting is that I found similar narratives in my female interlocutors that spoke to strategies of overcoming fear and poorness through practices of garnering social obligation from institutional authorities. In several interviews with Marta and Gete, two second-year Chemistry students, we would discuss how interesting it was that instructors would support them more and provide them more visibility in the classroom after sharing “life stories” about wanting to overcome “difficult transitions” between experience and possibility. Yet, in the context of instructors’ narratives about gender issues as “self-help” issues, the practice of seeking support through confession morally codes the girls as both responsible and irresponsible. In establishing support from her Chemistry instructors, Marta talked about how her silence and invisibility in the classroom as a freshman made her “like a poor student with no vision”. She added, “I did not know how to help myself”. The implications for establishing social obligations is to gain favor from a faculty member in order to gain credible visibility in the
classroom, outside of being singled out. Marta has said that gaining support from teachers has helped her “gain her vision”. Vision speaks to the practice or ability of imagining a new future that speaks to the amount of spiritual labor women do in the religious context of “whole personhood” to experience yilhunnta. The gendered process of being rendered invisible, confession, and transformation is not specific to Ethiopia or in education contexts, but the implications for female students engaging in process of “speaking out” as confession is contextual and asymmetrical. Accounting for the differences in implications requires understanding how ethnocentrism and religious bias in Hossana shape yilhunnta as a strategy for social transformation.

**Conclusion**

English, as a metonym for education, is a structurally carved-out space for the majority of rural families who desire participation in an emergent social class, not the kind of ruling social class, or exceptional feudalism, that the three rich landowners represent in Desta’s joke. Desta’s joke, however, illustrates that the consumption of English/Education does not make one richer, but that the production of its utterance shapes an unjust process of social and cultural impoverishment. It is commonplace within a global elitist framing that English is, naturally, a “language of prosperity” (Feng 2011:77). The naturalization of this commodity (Taussig 2010), however, is deconstructed through the concept of yilhunnta, a socio-cultural symbolic system that Desta’s joke represents. Yilhunnta, as an individual/familial domain of commentary and strategy is relevatory of the real social relationships produced out of putting English/Education on a global pedestal as a basic, individual human right.

*Yilhunnta*, then, makes visible English/Education as an experiential strategy for social, cultural, and political participation, which is mediated globally and locally by alienating social
relations along rural and urban lines. Desta’s joke, like the narratives of Michael Taussig’s interlocutors (2010), is representative of a penetrating text on neoliberal capitalism as a social system. This text deconstructs the often commonplace analysis that social class, like neoliberalism, is a “class project,” in which wealth is singularly codified and consolidated by the hand of an elite global few (Harvey 2005). English/Education, as a foreign commodity, cannot be understood in a singular fashion in which people consume it (Taussig 2010). As outlined through Desta’s model, English/Education is a commodity that consumes the individual/social spirit, and therefore must be constantly maintained and regulated through yilhunnta. Yilhunnta, as a practice of interpreting, commenting, and regulating widening divergences through rich and poor, is a political challenge to discrete, elite consolidated influence in government. This modeling of yilhunnta can be seen in the process of holding accountable the three rich landowners of Desta’s joke.

Yilhunnta is the personal and social project of “honoring” and “going beyond” the family that binds Ethiopians in social relations understood as separate and primary over relatedness in property, or market relations. Yilhunnta is the social recognition of kinship among all individuals, across all stratifications, is a moral order that critiques the idea of personal enrichment as naturalized. The social recognition of kinship finds spaces to critique a conservative, elitist sense of proper social order. Rural students and their families and communities seek to participate in an emergent social class that has political ties and obligations to places in networking the rural with the institutional. Students select and engage in aspects of exceptional feudalism, such as the process of geographic and social mobility, and turn it into a strategy, rather than given, unthinking status. Students are able to engage in this process of geographic and social mobility associated with Education/English trajectories, which also
intersects with existing practice of circulating rural family networks through unfamiliar, uncomfortable spaces to become represented in positive urban place: institutions (Leinaweaver 2008). Elitist principle becomes grounded in rural practice in which English/Education trajectories not only engage families and communities in social education, but are the safe spaces in which students can experience the rural/urban demarcations of political participation in order to re-interpret and re-define the rural/urban demarcations of political representation. I translate the practices of rural participation in urban networking as a social class project that can be likened through the social interactionist model of an autopathic, social flaneur (stroller), described in students’ narratives above.

In The Painter of Life, French poet Charles Baudelaire has described the flaneur as a landless, middle-class person who leisurely walks through urban space in order to experience it, define it, and portray it on his or her own terms (Baudelaire 2010). It is in literary studies and philosophy that authors have described the flaneur, or stroller as one who delineates the “paradoxes” of the city through an experiential intelligence of distanced observation (Baudelaire 2010, White 2001, DeCerteau 2011). The social role of this stroller uses a unique vantage point of experiential intelligence of being an outsider within urban place in order to mediate the rural/urban divisions in political participation and representation (DeCerteau 2011). In my interlocutors’ narratives, the concept of flaneurism, in this strict observational sense, was not adequate for translating the social interactionist foci of this strategy of social class participation and identity formation. Instead, I took Tariku’s practices of photography to explain how the mode of participation in strolling, known as “triangulation” in photography, is an important factor in the self-relevatory, or “autopathic” process of gaining self-confidence.
Students’ practices of social distancing uniquely found at the intersection of *yilhunnta* with education are a process of detaching immediate markers of one’s orientations in rural life, such as “mixed company.” This process of situational, professional detachment allows students to suture (Hall 1996) themselves to analyses and interpretations of socio-political participation in urban space. Some theorists on urban life and transgression have described this process as “triangulation” (Whyte 2009), in which the act of visibly capturing the town, such as through photography, provides explicit spaces of discussion, interpretation, and reflexivity of the person’s interests and concerns with city life (Debord in Knabb 1981:307-8, Jenks 2003:149). Photography, like speaking English or attending college, speaks to Ervin Goffman’s findings (1959) that “strangers need a reason to enter engagement,” (Stevens 2007: 62). Students’ participation in social distancing through English/Education is the “external stimulus” (Whyte 2009: 154), which seeks social commentary and institutional intervention as a rural strategy of gaining positive visibility and participation in urban space. This desire for socio-political participation is regulated by the social commentary that stems from evangelical practices of ethic idealism, such as avoiding “mixed company,” and of testimony. This protestant regulation speaks to the event of autopathic conversion as a means of entering conversations, interpretations, and practices of social welfare and extending the possibility of socio-political visibility to rural networks.

As I have outlined above, rural students’ desires to walk through any unfamiliar space without feeling fear is a process of self-confidence that concerns a state of being “self-strucken,” or excessive feeling of how others understand them. Autopathic experience is purposely experiencing resentment to attain a heightened sensibility of this harm and to find resolution out of it (Moras 1905:139). The institutional intervention in garnering female students’ testimonies
of being “self-strucken” indicates that females are expected to explicitly disclose their “reasons for entering engagement” with the socio-political possibilities in urban life (Stevens 2008:62). I explain to the reader that this evangelical process of testimony within the education trajectory of female college students is met with the strategies of these students (yihunnta) in attaining socio-political recognition and obligation from institutional actors. *Yihunnta* is the process by which the social recognition of kinship maintains the possibility of crosscutting rural/urban divisions in the practice of extending external definitions of social welfare beyond the realm of the individual mobility.
III. YILHUNNTA AS DEVELOPMENT BROKERING

I sat down to have a few draft beers, while waiting for Fekade to join me. It’s Saturday, market day, which meant that Molalish, Fekade’s wife, was out getting groceries for the week with her “helper”. For me and Fekade, Saturdays meant lazing around at Tameray Hotel, a Coptic Christian restaurant, to pound a few Meta beers—“the beer of choice for the elderly”, as one of my students would say. I was sitting by myself listening to a grinning, young waiter talk to me about how great America is. “Your country is so great because black and white live together in harmony there”. Having heard this story over and over again, I nodded and decided this time not to correct his idealism with histories of racism. Then, a man I had met a week before at a high school asked if he could sit down with me and talk. He was a teacher at a local high school, who, along with other faculty members, had invited me to help them establish English club activities at their school. I invited him for a drink, but he told me that he was an Evangelical Protestant, meaning that he would not be joining me.

We talked about how quite a few former volunteers had found Ethiopian husbands, some even deciding to remain in Ethiopia to build new homes and have children. Then, he started telling me about a book by an anthropologist about Hummerland, the region of the Hummer people, southwest of Hossana. It struck me at the time why he transitioned from talking about volunteers to talking about anthropologists. I wondered if he had somehow found out from someone that I was conducting participatory research at the college. It would only be later that I understood why he made such a connection. He was telling me volunteers and their
organizations in classic development intervention take on the work of anthropologists. Development practitioners in intervention are the people that do the job of representing the “other”, in that their representations most shape and reflect mainstream notions of Ethiopians.

He continued his story not of the Hummer, but of the anthropologist, switching the classical direction of representation from the “other” to the “expert”. I suspected that he would liken this anthropologist to me, or use her to call out information about me. I suspected right.

He began telling me about how this woman came to gather all of the folktales about the Hummer and record them. He said that one-day, this woman went to go watch boys in a marriage ceremony, where they wrestled to win a wife. She was invited to be apart of the ceremony, and reluctantly, she accepted, fearing that she would not be allowed to experience it any further. Well, she became someone’s wife, as she had gratefully accepted the terms. “She married a dirty, ignorant man”, he said. “She wanted so badly to become immersed in the culture, to be apart of the culture”. I roll my eyes and Temesgen laughs and continues to tell his story, this time with a more applied slant that spoke to perceptions of volunteer work. He said that she saw all of the problems more deeply and found a solution to them as she set out to do from the beginning. I thought, *Wait, didn’t she just set out to document folktales?* He said, “She made a sacrifice. She left her comforts of home and stayed here in Ethiopia and sacrificed everything.” Then, he explicitly turned the narrative onto me, “That is why I appreciate you. You are making a sacrifice”.

I felt my soul balding, a little. I am always at a loss for words when people say that I am making a sacrifice. Temesgen’s persistent silence was a demand for me to speak. I remember spurting out some sort of defense about how sacrifice is supposed to be self-less, but that I was not self-less. He later responded that he did not think that I was self-less, but that, my interest in
local life was the “service work” of my state. When I tried to correct him, he added, in reference to his story, that like the anthropologist, locals are actively working to get me involved in the “service work” of the Ethiopian state. Surprised by that comparison, I asked him what he meant by that. He replied,

“Our state is growing fast in its reach, with roads built by Chinese, schools built by Finnish people, and the like, but it cannot keep up with places other than Addis. The government is not willing to be specific to our needs.” I replied jokingly, “What, like me?” Then, he replied, “Look, are you ready to make the sacrifice like the anthropologist?” I wanted to say no, but I restrained. He said, “Are you ready to marry yourself to our Ethiopia?” Embarrassed, thinking at the time that Temesgen’s commentary was just a clumsy pick-up line, I said that I had a boyfriend. He replied, “Of course you do.”

Then, later, I remember writing my field-notes that maybe he wanted me to admit that I would certainly never marry an African to call my intentions and dedications into question; to get me to reflect on my commitment and intentions in engagements with broader issues. So, what was he trying to call attention to me? I noted my initial disgust in reaction to his comment on my position in the college, that I was “making a sacrifice.” I later realized that whenever commentary was more explicitly pointed at me, I would often write very reactionary, less analytically sound notes. In particular, I had ignored writing in my fieldnotes about his comparison of me with the developmentalist state in terms of sacrifice. Yet, when I looked over my transcription notes, I began to rethink my initial thought about the comparison. Initially, I thought that I was observing the process of the lessening of state sovereignty, or the non-profit sector taking over the public arm of the state, which anthropologists describe as characteristic of neoliberal Africa (Ferguson 2006, Mensah 2008, Harrison 2010:26-27). Yet, Temesgen’s
critique of the state was framed in terms of a metaphor of uncontrollable growth. This idea of uncontrollable growth does speak to mainstream Ethiopia’s view of progress, in which growth happens with the strengthening hand of the government (Mains 2012). However, what makes the growth almost excessive to the point it seems a bit unproductive stems from the government “over-vying” for aid from too many different foreign sources of knowledge.

I frequently encountered in local critiques the images of a government that strongly regulates, but is corrupt in its “over-vying” for foreign aid. In other narratives with community members, a process of “confusion” was often explained as the reason that the government was both growing in corruption and regulation of services. For instance, I had an encounter with Mengesha, whose name and life details I have kept disclosed because he wishes to remain anonymous. We were having a discussion about workshops at government schools. At one point, he told me that the country would continue to “simply sit” because the Ethiopian government is growing in corruption because of its de-contextualized regulation of education services. I noted that Temesgen’s image of a growing, yet de-contextualized government served as a referent for understanding how foreign development practitioners fitted into this growth, rather than my understanding of practitioners taking the public arm of the state over. How could people, I thought, discursively relate to the government in terms of education services, if foreigners were taking over the job of the state? How could a transfer of foreign knowledge, a devaluing of Ethiopian knowledge(s), represent the growth of the state? I looked to Temesgen’s narrative for direction.

I began making connections between Temesgen’s marriage metaphor as a way of actively using private entities to marry local concerns discursively with the idea of state progress. When I thought about commentary of “sacrifice” on both the anthropologist/volunteer and the state,
Desta’s joke about the three landowners came to mind. Within the terrain of development work, Temesgen’s narrative serves as the point of departure from Desta’s joke (see Chapter 1) for understanding the mainstream role of yilhunnta as social commentary on not only orientations of social class, but of political relatedness and progress.

I was, to Temesgen, perhaps sacrificing the immediate comforts of my American home for personal benefit. I did not come to the college to help my family or better my community. I was supposed to help these students in their strategies of yilhunnta; and, in exchange, I may gain some status from professionalizing off of my work and research here. The kind of process students at the college negotiated and grappled with every day to attain. However, like the three rich landowners who represent Ethiopian elitism, I as a “private exceptional” did not have to give much thought to my position as a volunteer in the college outside my immediate planning and organizing. But, here, Temesgen was, like the policeman from Desta’s joke, holding me accountable for my lack of understanding yilhunnta as a strategy and my non-committal approach towards education projects, which I assumed were not a local concern. Temesgen was pointing out that education projects support a strategy of “going beyond the family”, but not for the townspeople. Through the image of the anthropologist as a sort of information sponge, Temesgen was commenting on my volunteer work relations with the community as largely de-contextualized. In this sense, providing an education for the townspeople is not so much a social education, but is a forum. Without recognizing this, my work might as well have been like the work of the anthropologist in Temesgen’s narrative: personal siphoning with stand-offish observance. For townspeople, the domain of social commentary within yilhunnta within the terrain of development is more important as a strategy for localizing education projects to group interests, but also discursively tying an idea of state progress to it.
In this chapter, I use Temesgen’s narrative of the anthropologist/volunteer in reference to Desta’s joke as a model to delineate the ways in which yilhunnta distinguishes between the concepts of political-economic development and socio-temporal development along rural/urban lines. Under the critical lens of yilhunnta, locals deconstruct the idea that “capacity building” projects are “development” for the country. I explore how these critiques of social-personal accountability call for intervention to problems of the present (infrastructure), not of the future (socio-temporal). For instance, I exemplify local concern for developing the “here and now” through emphases on the building of community infrastructure. Townspeople’s commentary distinguishes development projects between concepts of economic capital (present problems) and social capital (future problems) along rural and urban divisions. I use local critique of my position in volunteerism to delineate the implications of “going beyond” within development projects genre of “consciousness-raising” projects in classic development shapes discrete assemblages of belonging, in which participants critique and make claims to the “expert.”

“Going beyond” is a concept of articulating betterment, which symbolizes independence from paternalism. Since the conceptual frame of “going beyond” (yilhunnta) is the articulation and critique of paternalism, is mobilized in patron-client relationships often found, but not inherent to classic development contexts. Within the patron-client relations of “knowledge transfers,” this idiom of anti-paternalism serves as a mode of articulation in which locals “go beyond” the everydayness of their social networks as a means of tying interests and creating consensus as a form of resistance to the current climate of hard times. This theorization of “going beyond” in development contexts illustrates that the “knowledge transfer” that is central to “capacity building” projects should not be understood as a development in human capital expansion. Local interpretations of the differential role of the state and foreign entities in
bolstering the concept of “going beyond” (yilhunnta) illustrate how expectations of development shape the way townspeople perceive of themselves. How this idiom of anti-paternalism is qualified along rural to urban lines, I argue, illustrates how the everydayness of development in town life shapes regional identities formed out of the dynamics of generation and social class. Surprisingly some, but certainly not all, interpretations of regional dynamics of difference and inequality were considered natural, or of the body. This is reflected through the saying that rural people are born with “hard hands, rigid minds.” This socially classed and generational regionalism manifests itself through the re-production of group solidarity among townspeople through a structural feeling of “hyper-awareness,” and being born into it. This “hyperawareness” that I illustrate through local interpretations of “going beyond” stems from locals’ socio-historical engagements in the mechanics and premises of development work that seeks to “raise-awareness.” A more important implication of this process of identity assignment is that foreign-mediated government projects and government mediated foreign projects may then only support the interests of a growing professional middle class despite intentions to expand access of urban institutions and ngo projects, be it in education or health, to rural networks.

Temesgen’s narrative represents the concept of yilhunnta as a mode of articulation on the intentions of foreign “expert’s” engagements in communities of practice. This mode of articulation happens, as I discussed through Main’s article in the introduction, with all Ethiopians in communities of work. What are your social orientations in work? Are these relations appropriate for bolstering your family’s social reproduction? Meaning, have you exceeded your parents’ expectations? When this mode of articulating betterment through the importance of the dynamics of social relations in work enters the development context, the structure of power differentials frames the idiom of “going out/beyond the parental house” shapes yilhunnta as
concept of anti-paternalism. For instance, Temesgen’s marriage metaphor illustrates a potential for the foreigner to leave the house of paternalism by ceasing to engage with the Other simply for her own benefit. This narrative of marriage illustrates this idiom of independence from the paternal house because it is typical for most, but not all. But, leaving the parental house for reasons of “going beyond” illustrates the growing necessity to leave the home to marry yourself, to commit yourself to the betterment of familial reproduction. Calling my commitment into question through the idiom of leaving the paternal house is also bringing the potentiality or tangibility of the paternalism of my relations with locals into view.

In Temesgen’s narrative, the moment the anthropologist stops being an “ethnographic-sponge” and starts participating, she immediately “goes native”. The hyperbolic shift from one extreme to the other is commentary on the practice of “knowledge transfer” within development projects. On the surface, the fact that the anthropologist would only pay attention and attend to the here and now of local concerns after she entered into Ethiopian family structures makes visible the interpretation that ferenjis (whites, Westerners) are often there to take information, however irrelevant, and better themselves off the backs of Ethiopians. Temesgen’s interchange between anthropologist and volunteer also frames the volunteer as a front for this process of information-sucking for professionalism. Through the frequent interchange between anthropologist and volunteer, Temesgen deconstructs the commonplace idea among local and foreign development practitioners that “knowledge transfers” are top-down and informative. Through these direct critiques, I encountered a logic of lop-sided social exchange through using discrete education projects to assemble interest groups.

Temesgen’s delineation of the anthropologist’s immersion into local kinship networks as the only way to understanding local strategies makes visible the commentary on how foreign
exceptionals cannot easily understand the different socially-classed strategies of people under a developmentalist state. Within education projects, urban locals interpret and provide commentary on the importance of contextually tailoring the appropriate concept of development to a “target group” along rural/urban lines. This commentary is mirrored in Temesgen’s question of whether or not I was ready to make a sacrifice to help the community of Hossana. The question of my readiness is directed to make visible the fact that I am not well-read in local concerns and politics. This terrain of interpretation intimately frames the politics of participation.

The entrance of the anthropologist into discrete family networks mirrors the volunteer’s entrance into discrete communities of practice, which will hopefully represent such groups as a microcosm of Ethiopian interests in institutional intervention, at large. International and, sometimes, local non-government organizations in project work seem sometimes more like ad hoc assemblages of colleagues with their entourages than broad, standardized arenas in which community interests are aggregated. If the concept of sacrifice in yilhunnta is the commentary that makes visible one’s social orientations or ties in communities of practice, then the position of the anthropologist/volunteer is enmeshed in patron-client relationships that are at work in the overrepresentation of “awareness-raising” workshops in development work. To grasp how these assemblages come to be important for local concerns, I frame Temsegen’s narrative as a model of patron-client relationships, which proves useful to infer about the role of yilhunnta in articulating the role of paternalism in development.

As discussed in the previous chapter, yilhunnta is the concept of “going beyond” the parental home without making your own home. The straddling between two homes is a typical experience of students who travel back and forth from the countryside seeking support and
comfort from their families in the exchange of transmitting and interpreting values and practices learned from their new environments. However, as briefly discussed in the previous chapter, getting an education was, at times, articulated as a means of breaking away from the *paternal* home. Leaving your father’s house to make a house of your own without marriage is considered a symbol of independence, in which parents allow their older children to be “left to chance.”

Almaz, a government nursing college teacher, speaking of the reasons why she left her home in the Gurage countryside, she revised the old Amharic proverb. She said,

“The proverb, I think, can no longer be ‘the wise peasant who silently farts as the lord walks by.’ With your father, who is the lord of your home, if something happens and nothing can be provided for you, he can no longer be your lord. You must fart loudly. But, in so doing, do not forget to give back to the lord’s home.”

Migration to the market town of Hossana often reshapes the children as the providers. Therefore, parents are hesitant to assert their authority, in having say over when and whom they marry or their participation in celebrations or religious ceremonies. The socio-economic promise of development and the possibility of something happening to your father or your father’s land shapes the father of having less authority and financial power in how, where, and when older children make their home. This sort of circumstances are the “pulls” a new population with ties to rural networks no longer particularly centered on the regional market that defines Hossana.

“Going beyond” the *paternal* home to become a regional migrant, who makes economic remittances and social exchanges between development and cosmopolitan values and practices that base social capital. This community of townspeople comprise of regional migrants from the Hadiya countryside and even less from the Gurage and K’mbata lands. The community of this larger market town hold jobs in of professional, market, construction, and domestic services. Typically, given that Hossana is the zonal capital of the Hadiya ethnic zone, the Hadiya have a greater say in electing other their family members and other friends from their village to fill the
managerial positions in town. However, despite some variance in ethnic backgrounds, most people maintain their ties to rural kin, by participating in, giving back, and exchanging with village life back home. The regulation and maintenance of these ties through exchange reshape the social reproduction of family life. In the exchange of “capacity building” discourses and practices, the mode of this re-articulation of family life is framed by the concept of yilhunnta, the reasons for “going beyond” the paternal home. Mirroring this concept of “anti-paternalism,” the paternalistic conceptual approach to “capacity building” projects are then the context where reasons for “going beyond” generational dynamics of social reproduction back home.

Since the zonal and town government of Hossana left the Opposition Party in 2005 favor of the EPRDF regime, the presence of development projects has sharply increased in Hossana Town. Through tactics of coercion, such as the withholding of food aid and participation in government-controlled welfare projects, the lesson is that as long as people support the government, the government will provide health and social services. Townspeople have marked a little improvement in health and food distribution services. Yet, the highest increase of development presence, locals indicate, has been in terms of education and other “capacity building” projects. “Capacity building” is a conceptual approach to development, in which the goal is to indicate and analyze the supposed “inhibitors” of realizing the development goals of nation-states. However, these projects become paternalistic when development practitioners promise to help a community in exchange for an agreement that the community must change the way they think or live.

For instance, undermining local practices such as flexible appointment times take place by negatively labeling it as an “inhibiter” to development, rather than understanding that maintaining positive social orientations in communities of practice and expanding networks in
the Hossana community is more important for growth than showing up on time to an appointment. In my own experiences and other encounters with other development practitioners, such value judgments are often given with little understanding of local administrative cultures. Therefore, “capacity building projects,” such as the ubiquitous “Continuing Professional Development” program which focuses on standardizing administrative “best practices” for institutional effectiveness by dismissing current practices and contexts without consideration of its local value. Such dismissals are labeled as “corruption,” which indexes the fact that participants in workshops mostly have less say in the matter of planning and implementation, which often results in de-contextualized workshops.

However, in claiming “corruption,” local participants may refuse to implement transferred methods in their own schools. For instance, John, who requested his Ethiopian name to be changed to a Western name, would often discuss with me about his disgust with “capacity building” projects. He would often frame the discrete process of selecting participants in both local and foreign-supported education projects as a form of “corruption” that lends to a state of “being too aware.” Since we were friends, he immediately excused me as an exception. He said, “We have so many donors and agencies from different countries, England, the U.S., Finland, Germany, and Korea, and so forth, telling us what education should look like. We do not need a bunch of different volunteers to ‘raise awareness’. Perhaps, the problem is that we are too aware.”

I asked him later what he thought about this state of “being too aware”. He replied that the government grows materially and politically in strength from such workshops. He added that government grows in its own progress through regulation of education services, by supporting the principle of “awareness.” Here, John’s discussion is in dialogue with Max Weber’s delineation of bureaucracy as the process of separating the means of administration from the
people involved in them (Swedburg and Agevall 2005:20). In this sense, the implementation is transient and de-contextualized when the government requests foreigners to be in charge of the transfers.

Abel, an instructor from a private college in town, dialogued with John when he discussed my supporting role as a foreigner in tying local interests to the patron state of the EPRDF regime. In an interview, he told me that “Our government has so much money and the people of Hossana are so very aware about development. This is why teaching each other is important. We and the government need to have a consensus, or corruption will continue.” I asked Abel, “So what does this have to do with me?” He replied, “We would just ask you for money, and even if we get the little money from you, the government knows our context, it provides for better or for worse. But, there is no listening from there, because they are too busy listening to all of the different foreigners. If we don’t get foreigners to listen to us, then we will not really get what we need.” I asked, “What’s that?” He replied, “development.”

This discourse on the role of the volunteer in local expectations of state-led development continued in my encounters with townspeople, both my “beneficiaries” and non-beneficiaries. One time, I was visiting a school to conduct some classroom observation on teaching English reading comprehension. One person stopped me on my way to the school director’s office. This person, named Kebede, heard I was also doing research in the school and wanted to have “his say.” Kebede told me, “So, is it really true that you are working for our country?” I replied that I did not understand his comment. He added, “What are they getting out of it? You do not know, is that?” The fact is that I really did not know, but figured at the time that I could just walk up and ask.
This the state of “being hyperaware” that John, Abel, and Kebede indicate stems from the Hossana townsperson’s everyday experiences with development discourses and practices through constant engagement with development organizations, institutions, and practitioners. These teachers and instructors of the town consider this hyperawareness in context with their identifications as “government workers” (literally appointed by state-led institutions). This identification stems from the socio-political dynamics patron-client relations that have shifted from lordship to government administrator shape expectations of the state as the provider of development to the town. Patron-client relationships are not a historically unique context in articulating local concerns. What is particularly unique about patron-client relations is that since the shift in these relations from lordship to government administrator, all international non-government organizations are government organized, which now provides the context in which the volunteer he diplomat between the patron state and the client citizen.

Power relationships in much of Ethiopia have long been legitimized by the perception that those in power provide protection and support for their subordinates (Hoben 1970, 1973, Poluha 2004). In his work on land tenure among rural Amhara, Allan Hoben (1970,1973) explained that relations of power were almost entirely vertical and were generally structured along lines of a patron-client relationship. Put, simply, lords provided a degree of protection for peasants and sometimes assisted them in litigating for land. In turn, peasants paid taxes in the form of grain and labor, and gave their lords social and political support. In this sense, the continued power of the lord was based partially on his ability to provide tangible benefits for his subjects. With urbanization, government employment took the place of nobility as a source of power and a means of distributing favors to others. As Hoben (1970:222) notes in describing Addis Ababa under the reign of Haile Sellasie, the authority of the lord had been replaced by the
government administrator, and education has somewhat taken the place of military activity as a means of accessing social mobility. This historical process of power transfer in education managerial positions is indexed in my interlocutors’ narratives of corruption within the allocation of resources and jobs of zonal and town education administrations.

Many of the dynamics I describe concerning the relationship between “consciousness-raising projects,” infrastructural and “capacity-building” development for education services, and relations with the state applies to Hossana as it applies broadly to urban Ethiopia. As Hossana town began to develop in a permanent, semi-urban population after the brief Italian occupation in 1941, dynamics similar to other Ethiopian cities in the south began to take hold. Land and political presence in local government was expropriated from the local Hadiya Muslim population and the K’mbata population, and an urban middle class of government administrators emerged that consisted primarily of Hadiya Protestants. Among men, access to prestige and income were both closely bound together with government employment, and the developing occupational and classed-based hierarchy was mapped onto religious and ethnic identity (Mains 2012:7). Ethnicity, gender, nationality, and religion are highly relevant for how individuals position themselves in relation to the state in Ethiopia (James et al. 2002). However, for the sake of analytical focus, I put these issues aside to easily facilitate the primary interconnections between development and generational and regional dynamics in relations to the Ethiopian state.

Hossana, like many larger towns growing out of rural places, is an area characterized by locals as a place that is both “sped-up” and “slowed-down”. The politics of time are reflected in the physical structure of the town, which is in a contradicting state of both constant and abandoned urban construction. It is this temporal contradiction that shapes the interpretive frame of the “here and now” of hard times. As this temporal contradiction of being both “sped-up” and
“slowed-down” intersects with the terrain of interpretation in “development” these terms take on a process of moralization: no longer “sped-up” but “catching up;” no longer “slowed-down” but “falling behind.” Produced out of this temporal contradiction is a structural feeling of penchant progress that, with the expansion of present time, may on the surface mirror Western notions of boredom (Mains 2007). For instance, a fellow participant in a local government workshop for librarians wrote to me on the back of a participant survey form, “Sometimes I feel that we are simply sitting, while other more urban areas like Addis feel the more positive effects of our big government.” This stems from experiences with a process of rhizomatic implementation, in which group interests in state-led development initiatives are ongoingly de-racinated, negotiated, and shifted into different assemblages as foreign presence in knowledge transfer projects has changed and shifted in the town (Deluze and Guattari 1987: 88-89, Collier 2009). This non-standardized implementation process shapes feelings of frustration for a “sped-up” change.

These temporal interpretations of anti-paternalism through the idiom of “going beyond” demonstrate how development re-shapes generational dynamics in family life. These generational dynamics can be analyzed initially through interpretations of my position in the town as a diplomat to the patron state.

My encounters with articulations of local expectations of the state as the patron, known locally as “the one who recognizes us” (secures rights through political support), implies that contemporary volunteers of development intervention play a more diplomatic role in helping to meet local expectations of the state. What surprised me about these encounters is the explicitness of local critiques of my position as a diplomat rather than an “expert.” My position of inexperience often shaped spaces in which participants chose to be my informants as a means of providing analytical insight to education projects in Ethiopia. This critique of my position as
the “expert” in the transfer of knowledge was elicited by these three men’s delineation of the problems of their “hyper-awareness.” The problem was that of paternalism, unnecessary for townspeople more versed in development logic than me. Thus, my position as a diplomat in government organized “capacity building” projects provided the context in which I would encounter the articulation of “going beyond” in distinguishing local concern of the townspeople.

For instance, in interviews with Abel, John, Kebede, and Almaz, these primary school and college teachers touched on the importance of my position in relating local concern in infrastructure and material resources to the state, who has historically organized the expansion of public schools. For instance, after sitting in on a local library services training workshop organized by an international book donor, Almaz, during lunch, had a few words to contribute to my research. She said, “You are doing research on education participation. What did you think about this workshop?” I shrugged my shoulders and answered with a question, “Have you seen the books yet?” She replied, “Yeah, but where to put them? I am a librarian and we don’t have a library or shelves or chairs. What shall we do? Put these books under a tree?” I shrugged my shoulders again, which I think frustrated her. She replied, “As the state tries to work on other infrastructure, like this Gibe III dam, they turn their eye away from giving us the resources needed. I know that your organization can only give a few things like chairs and a few computers. But, it is important that you let them know that they need to help these foreign organizations to know what we need.” I told her that I would let Ato Markos know, who was the head of the Ministry of Education at the time of my fieldwork. I told her that I did not know what that would do, though. In order to better understand my role as a diplomat in local clients’ relations to the patron state, I frame the interview data above with the theory of “development brokering.”
In political anthropology, brokerage is an approach that seeks to illustrate the agency of local actors as they actively engage in political, economic, and social roles, rather than through “functionalist scripts” (Mosse and Lewis 2006:11; Vincent 1994; Lewellen 2003). British Anthropologist F.G. Bailey in India and view patron-client relationships as an enlistment by a weaker developmentalist state to control the unpredictability of the state’s efforts in economic development (Bailey 1963; Boissevain 1974). Yet, at the same time, Eric Wolf’s (1956) work on brokerage between the local community and the Mexican state frames the position of the “broker” as a powerful, yet marginal figure located in social spaces between donors, the state, and beneficiaries. In dialogue with Eric Wolfe, studies of development brokers and the critiques and commentaries within them can “provide unusual insight into the functions of a complex system” (1956:66).

It is within Francophone Africanist Literature, that Bierschenk, Chauveau, and Sardan have well-conceptualized brokerage within the development context (2000,2002). Bierschenk, Chauveau, and Sardan have examined the role of development brokers within national and international levels in Africa as an important mode of political action within the context of international aid (2002). Focusing on particular groups who specialized in the acquisition, control, and redistribution of development “revenue,” they illustrate that development brokers are “the key actors in the irresistible hunt for projects carried in and around African villages” (2002:4, emphasis in original). They place brokerage within the politics of a post-colonial state, where power is exercised through formal bureaucratic logics and networks, in which there is a site of activity among intermediate actors and organizations (Bierschenk 2002). My concern in aligning aspects of this line of study with my own becomes is how the operations and strategies
between local actors and volunteers, as foreign organizational intermediaries, come to relate broadly with state-led development.

In dialogue with David Mosse and David Lewis, it is the process of “translating and creating context by tying in more powerful supporters, and sustaining interpretations that development, although highly unforeseeable, becomes real” (2006: 13). As outlined above, within the local development context, I argue that the international volunteer and the entourage of local participants in workshops act as an assemblage development brokers, with international volunteers having more influence through projecting activities and organizational resources through bureaucratic planning knowledge. As outlined in the ethnographic context above, development is a process of political belonging, in which the circulation of interpretations is a strategy to relate to a process of re-growth of the Ethiopian state. As the intermediary between local actors, the state, and foreign organizations, I see discourses among international volunteer agencies that emphasize “community self-determination” represent the power of locality in brokerage relations as a site of political contestation, rather than as a site of preparation and development for political literacy, as my volunteer organization, IFESH, describes it.\(^\text{11}\)

In my context, this lop-sided assemblage of development brokers is a forum of negotiations; the process of critique and tying zonal and national education projects and resources to local concerns is a salient aspect of this forum. One insight that I have demonstrated within this assemblage is that the intersecting domains of kinship and personal/social accountability indexed in Temesgen’s model patron-client relations illustrates that the social recognition of kinship as a moral and political order. The mapping of this moral order onto patron-client relations is a political action that seeks to challenge the influence of exceptional

\(^{11}\) www.ifesh.org/about-us/
feudalism, or global elitism, in the Ethiopian government (Smedley 2007:49). The role of these middle-class assemblages in Hossana seeks to shrink the growing cleavage between rich and poor in urban space through broader dual processes of social relatedness and accountability, as indexed in yilhunnta (Smedley 2007: 53). If the “betterment” of rural life is shaped by social capital of town life, then the “betterment” town life is shaped by the history of elite government influence against expansion of a middle class in urban spaces. In the process of tying foreign volunteers within local concerns and relations with the state, townspeople educate idealistic volunteers on the temporal politics of development along rural/urban lines.

Abel, John, and Kebede, who had also joined the local library services workshop, had a few similar words to say about my role as a diplomat to the state. But, in so doing, they evoked interpretations of “going beyond” (yilhunnta) to indicate the paternalism of “capacity building” projects. For instance, in an interview, I asked the question “Tell me a little about your previous experience with workshops.” Abel replied,

“I have worked with many ferenjis who have good intentions, but some, without knowing, give us the same information over and over again. I know how to shelve and catalogue a book. I know how to keep a book clean. I know this stuff already. I have left my father’s house, because there was nothing for me there. I was not born with hard hands and a hard mind, like my father. He cannot change, it seems. After we lost the farm, it is because of yilhunnta, that I left here to become a primary school teacher. I know too much of the same thing. This is why I am different from my father. He knows so little of the same thing. This sort of information on how to take care of books is more suitable for the teachers of the countryside. Few have books for the school. But, if they get them, they just lock them up, like a precious gift that must not be soiled with rough hands.”

Here, Abel’s discussion of the necessity of “capacity building” projects for rural life reveals how yilhunnta, as a concept of anti-paternalism, is mapped onto the body, in those born without “hard hands” and “hard minds” can best adapt to fast economic and social changes associated with structural adjustment policies. The value of inflexibility in the kinds of work
people do in rural life, whether it be farming, herding, or craftwork, shapes feelings of antipathy by farming families to less valued kinds of work, such as craftwork or domestic work. To Abel, people in rural life all have “hard hands” and “hard minds”, and inculcating the value of inflexibility, for Abel, is a sort of self-induced, paternalism, not only for the spouse and children, but also for the paternal head himself. By moving “capacity building” projects to rural areas, Abel suggests that the paternalism he experiences would not have the same effect, because, he says, “Rural people do not see or refuse to see the idea that our culture is the problem. It is a necessary, even if it is not for their best interests.” How can paternalism, I thought, which is not in the best interests of rural people, be necessary? Through other interpretations of “going beyond,” I better understood this concept of anti-paternalism as a re-framing of generational dynamics, which, in turn, reshapes values of inflexibility in social reproduction of the lives of farming families.

Kebede and Almaz’s interpretations of “going beyond” in development contexts re-shapes generational dynamics between them and their rural ties. For instance, like Almaz emphasized earlier, Kebede said that the economic remittances that he gives back to father’s home in the rural country side means that his father can no longer tell him who to marry and what to do in his life. After I asked him to tell me a little about his family, he responded, “My father when I decided to leave the house to become a government worker, he said that I could not do all things without him. Not now, I told him.” I asked him why not. He replied, “My father has done everything under his father, but I cannot be this way. I am participating in all things development education, and if he and my village cannot take my advice practically, then maybe this work is best for the ferenjis. The town life must have some freedom from talk about rural life to get better so as to better provide. Foreigners do not need to remind us. We are very aware. Some ferenjis, by the way, are like children, here. Their lack of understanding, but their often hard, stubborn minds makes them to be children. Change and hard minds do not go together. Only is this so with a child’s mind.”
Because I was so young, like some other volunteers before me, Kebede did not want me to fall into the mistakes of the past. He wanted me to learn so that I could succeed in my job, and in so doing he shared with me the importance of “going beyond” the paternalistic ways that is indexed in the image of “hard minds.” Similarly, in Almaz’s interpretation of “going beyond,” I encountered the connection between young foreigners (who make up the bulk of volunteers in Ethiopia) and the loss of parental authority from the monopolization of economic remittances and social exchanges by townspeople over their rural networks. For instance, in an interview, I had asked Almaz what had brought her to work in Hossana. She replied,

“I have left my father’s home because I wanted to make more money by becoming a teacher and getting economic and job upgrades by participating in as many development workshops as possible. These certificates we receive are important for our upgrading potential. There is nothing for me at my father’s home, but he insists that I am still his property. Yes, I am not married this is true. But, I am the one who provides all things, so how can I be property? It seems that I and my colleagues understand what providing in the development means better than anyone else. Perhaps, these unprogressive education workers in town, like those Koreans, should move to the rural area. Ideas about what is good and bad or modern and not modern does not seem to change or is very slow to change. These two not so opposites belong together, like an arranged marriage.”

Like the other interpretations of “going beyond,” Kebede and Almaz left rural life because of the very framing of rural life as an “inhibitor” to development. First, Kebede’s narrative of the reasons for “going beyond” means that along with economic remittances, social remittances from “capacity building” may be passed along to family and village members. Yet, Kebede, mentions that his father and his village’s refusal to “take advice practically” in context of his valuing of inflexibility means that with regional migration to sites of development work comes the reshaping of regional dynamics along generational lines. Kebede, Abel, and Almaz both indicate the value of inflexibility as a part of the discourse on rural life as “traditional” and apart of the inflexible unprogressive development work of foreigners. Kebede’s own valuing of
inflexibility with *ferenji* children, such as myself, signifies the loss of authority in paternalistic approaches to modernity that mirrors the loss of authority of the rural paternal home.

The concept of anti-paternalism in the work of modernity such as in “capacity building” projects and in the loss of control of rural networks over migrants means that expectations in changes of social reproduction of supposedly paternalistic rural life must be met with paternalism in “capacity building” projects. The framing of both development practitioners and the rural paternal home in generational terms implies that my interlocutors are beginning to change the ways they understand themselves in relation to the ineffectiveness of “capacity building” projects to meet expectations of modernity through development. My interlocutors have either married without parental consent or have made their own homes outside of marriage. The experience of having a home unconnected to the paternal home at the intersection of the paternalism of “capacity building” discourses re-shapes generational dynamics in the sense that rural families and foreigners can both be childish. What makes them childish, according to my interlocutors, is that foreigners may have power without authority and their family members may have authority without power. This concept of anti-paternalism implies that townspeople do not see themselves as already “modern,” but that “modern” knowledge indexed in capacity building projects has given townspeople more authority over their rural kin networks, but has left them with limited power or say in defining the “inhibitors” of social change in the social reproduction of rural family life. This dual experience of paternalism along the supposed binary opposition of urban/modernity and rural/tradition leaves my interlocutors with the feeling that they are the only adults in the development context. The authority and adulftication identity asserted by my town interlocutors means “capacity building” projects are understood as a sort of generational enclave in which the traditional, anti-progressive work of capacity building projects are childish. As
Almaz indicates in her narrative, if some foreigners, including myself, cannot act as diplomats for townspeople then their paternalism best fits with the supposed inflexibility of my interlocutors’ paternal homes.

Neither foreigners nor their family members can mobilize both power and authority in their interactions with development discourses and practices. However, in my interlocutors’ expectations of me as a diplomat in the development context of the concept of anti-paternalism in “going beyond,” my interlocutors may seek to mobilize how I exercise my power and how authority is generationally re-shaped along rural and urban lines as a means negotiating the “hard-mindedness,” or the clash of Western and local ideas about social reproduction changes as a means of developing economically. This leaves my interlocutors in the middle waving their hands and saying that changing social reproduction has only happened for them when their own position in the modes of production in farming family life have been put at the margins or from the economic crisis of farming life itself. The Western knowledge transfer isn’t intrinsically good or authoritative, but that the circumstances which cause people to leave the paternal home for the paternal home of “capacity building” work are powerful and authoritative.

As Kebede and John have indicated before, within the past generation or two, the education and work of regional migrants has been largely shaped by the demands of their rural networks. But with the context of constraining grain distribution, the devaluing of currency, and the alienation of usufruct rights to only farmers of certain cash crops, such as enset (false banana) and teff (a type of grain), have pushed most rural people only enough land, about 10 acres, for subsistence farming and little surplus for the market with no extra land for the extension and expansion of familial networks (Crewett, Bogale, Korf 2008). The inability for families to have enough land to transfer or to provide for expanding families has shaped the
conditions for regional migration. And in the context of Hossana, participation in education and education development workshops is what it means these days to be a government worker. Teaching and being a development worker is the highest sought after work without leaving the country. In dialogue with James Ferguson, this migration is never unidirectional, but rural networks expand into towns and cities, and are constantly maintained. However, in my context, the generational dynamics, in which rural networks are maintained, have implications on the devaluing of rural reproduction. In dialogue with James Ferguson, this reshaping of generational dynamics, in the inclusion of foreign development practitioners, also illustrates that the dichotomy between urban/modern and rural/traditional is a falsity (1999).

James Ferguson in his work on urban migrants in the Zambian copperbelt, indicates similar connections of migrants to rural networks. He indicates the very real consequences in which members of rural kin networks may threaten to take away support and a place to live, if and when the mining migrants loose their jobs and pensions. In Ethiopia, this would also be the case with regional migrants in the kinds of temporary, contract positions in construction work. However, the constraints on farming and the proliferation of “capacity building” work in towns has reshaped the duration and frequency of migrations to economic remittances and social exchanges. Region migrants come back when they are needed, not simply when they need to come home. With the proliferation of education institutions and education as development work since the structural adjustment policies of the 1990s, the work of regional migrants in “capacity building” projects has led to the interconnections of networks through social capital remittances, not simply economic remittances. The influence of education development projects in regional migration, has in turn, shaped the concept “going beyond” as an anti-paternalist approach, which is a theory about the importance of place in relations of power and authority.
Mobilizing and negotiating between the paternal home of development and the paternal home of the rural countryside, my interlocutors, through their interpretations of “going beyond” through the reshaping of generational dynamics, theorize about the importance of place in relations between power and authority in the development discourses on the modern and the traditional. *Yilunnta* (going beyond), as a concept of anti-paternalism, which recognizes that power and authority are either separated or out of balance when local administrative practices in articulating and tying interests in planning processes are taken out of context by the essentialist approach of “capacity building” as labeling practices as strictly “good” or “bad.”

**Conclusion**

Adultification, understood as growth in social responsibility and accountability in shifting expectations of the role of the state and the volunteer in local concerns for development. Through my interlocutors asserted anti-identity of adulthood through articulating “childishness” in the imbalance of power and authority along international and rural lines. This articulation is accomplished by synthesizing local and Western interpretations of inflexibility and how my interlocutors’ expectations of the state, of family members, and of volunteers relates to the separation of power and authority in development contexts. Adultification is means of balancing power and authority to put local concerns for infrastructural development into implementation. It is a constructed asserted identity, but it is also primordial in the sense that “going beyond” is deeply felt and consequential in family life. Limiting, delaying, modifying, or situationally employing local practices such as arranged marriage and the situational appointment in all communities of practice. *Yilunnta*, going beyond, within the development context, is about the balance of power and authority in tying local concerns with the means of achieving implementation. Aligning local concerns with the state’s own infrastructural implementations
indexes this concern for the balance of power and authority between the international and local intervention. Social reproduction is not changed because local practices, such as the situational appointment (local) over the fixed appointment (Western) (Ingold 2007:104), are conservative, backwards, primordial. The economic, political, and social circumstances that have shaped my interlocutor’s engagements in “going beyond,” such as Hossana’s transition to support of the government and the simultaneous cutback in grain distribution and constraint in usufruct land rights means that education and “capacity building” are powerful because they have been made that way. The mobilization of power of the state and the volunteer in urban development and the authority of rural networks in social reproduction illustrates, in dialogue with Ferguson (2010), that the dichotomy between urban/modern and rural/traditional as a falsity.
CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I have examined what education as development means for the men and women who live in Hossana town, Ethiopia. The ethnographic focus of this study is on understanding how education as development evokes different meanings for socio-political participation by rural students at a teacher training college and townspeople respectively. I discuss these conceptual differentiations in relation to the changes in beliefs and strategies that have occurred in Hossana and greater Ethiopia elsewhere over the course of several decades of local and global changes in the social order. Through interconnecting interpretations, I have delineated the emic category of *yilhunnta*, as the social recognition of kinship, and how it is used and expanded by actors along rural/urban, gender, and generational divisions and dynamics for evoking, critiquing, and tailoring the socio-political premises of development to local concern.

In Chapter Two, with rural students, the concept of “going beyond” the family has to do with the importance of social responsibility and familial betterment in the process of social distancing for increased participation of rural networks in the social and political resources of education institutions and other forms of government work in Hossana town. In Chapter 3, for townspeople who are already established as government workers, the concept of “going beyond,” when it more explicitly enters “capacity building” projects, is evoked as a concept of anti-paternalism. Interpretations of “going beyond” in *yilhunnta* were articulated through the reshaping of generational dynamics between my informants and their rural networks. The
further mapping of generational dynamics onto the problem of my position as an expert illustrates the mobilization of resources from foreigners and rural family members by my informants. Aligning local concerns with the state’s own infrastructural implementations indexes this concern for the balance of power and authority between the international and local intervention. Therefore, *Yilhunnta*, going beyond, within the development context, is about the balance of power and authority in tying local concerns with the means of achieving implementation.

My initial interpretation of this study is that I have over-emphasized on the negotiations of the supposed “pathologies” of rural women through the supposed dialectics of self-identification in institutional participation. For instance, my focus on the processes and negotiations of “fractured personhood” and “social transformation” has caused me to largely ignore the study of rural women’s understandings of what makes them whole. I have only begun to illustrate some instances in which kinship is understood as a core to life experiences, rather than a boundary. However, the frame and flesh of that core and its implications in everyday life has yet to be discussed. Certainly, one of my primary constraints in making such explorations outside of my research focus deeply concerns my insufficient grasp of Amharic, Hadiyissa, or other mother-tongues of the college students. Language barriers have certainly effected the way I have interpreted student’s stories; and students have indicated the problems of reaching full expression in the dialogues we have begun.

Perhaps, an alternative approach to the politics of participation in higher education institutions would be to focus on the real and tangible experiences of rural women’s life. An attempt to capture the experiential knowledge of rural women would further our understanding of theories of belonging and strategies for autonomy that do not specifically have to do with
boundary-making. As a prelude to asking questions of this kind would the researchers need to go beyond the focus on the process of institutional intervention and broader theories of “fracturedness.” The experiences of my interlocutors in negotiating the fracturing or injuring of their minds and livelihoods is not a foreign context, but is a shared experience of oppression among African women, the diaspora, and other women of color\textsuperscript{12}. Who you are and where you come from certainly shapes different implications in degree and kind in the shared experience of oppression\textsuperscript{13}. The entering of dialogues on the context, the content of women of color’s wholeness would further our understanding of the frame and content of resistance.

\textsuperscript{12} Cited from a conference discussion I had with M. Jacqui Alexander at the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Annual Recovering Black Women’s Voices, Lives on October 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2011 at Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

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Appendix: Oral Consent Form
Hello, my name is Megan Flowers. I am a graduate student of cultural anthropology at the University of Mississippi. I am in Ethiopia because I want to do a research project. I also think that the stories people tell me may provide a fuller picture of the role of teachers and teacher training in Ethiopia.

My research is not a part of my volunteer work with the IFESH organization. My research will not shape IFESH’s decisions and actions in their own development projects. All conversations and notes from conversations will be kept confidential, between the individual and myself. During our conversations, I may want to record our conversations using an audio cassette recorder. You may refuse the use of audio recording in any of our conversations. If you consent with the use of audio recording, you may ask me to stop the recording device at any time during the conversation. Furthermore, if you do not want to continue the conversation, you may ask me to stop at any time for any reason. You are not obliged to tell me any reasons in wanting to stop the conversation.

When I write down my research, I may want to share some of your stories. You may refuse my request to quote your words as you have given them to me in our conversations. If you want to read my finished paper in the spring of 2012, inform me and I will oblige.
Interviewee____________________________

Pre-interview arrangements

Re-informing interviewee on informed consent

Concerning structure of interview

Asking again if interviewee wishes to continue (may do this periodically in interview itself)

Warm up for interview

Brief introduction of myself.

Do you have any questions about my research or myself before we begin?

Interview itself

Personal History

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.

2. Tell me about your family.

3. And what about your friends? Tell me about them.

Attitudes toward work/teaching

4. Why did you decide to go into teaching?

5. How does your family feel about this?

Perceptions of college participation

6. Tell me a little about this college since you have been here.

7. What brought you here to the teacher training college?

8. Why are you interested in the teacher training college?

Perceptions of the role of college
9. What would you do if you were not attending this college?

10. What are you going to do later after college?

11. Is the college important here?

Perceptions of social class

12. Tell me a little about friends or family members who you consider clever (gobez) or skilled?

13. What does it mean to be skilled?

Closing Question/Open for additional information

15. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

16. What questions would you ask if you were conducting the interview?

Post interview/Saying Goodbye

Thank them for their time.

For questions, concerns, or anything at all, give the interviewee my contact information. (Phone number, email address, office hours)
Appendix: Chart of Interviewees
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<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<th>Student/Teacher</th>
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VITA

I, Megan Elizabeth Flowers, grew up in Magnolia Springs, AL, a small river community near the Gulf Coast. In 2004, I graduated from Foley High School and moved to Mississippi. In 2008, I got my B.A in English Literature at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi. Having lost professional interest in English Literature, I discovered a discipline that could make anything interesting: Anthropology. In 2012, I graduated from the University of Mississippi with an M.A. in Cultural Anthropology. Some have asked me what I will do with a degree in anthropology.

My answer:
I’m going to be an anthropologist.